

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS DIGEST

MAIN NEWS

- Guardian reports that Tory leaders are claiming privately they are set to win a number of Labour seats in London and West Midlands not previously thought likely.
- Mirror puts on its front page Harris ITV survey of Tory marginals showing Conservative lead cut to 2%.
- Sun says Alliance hope has vanished because they have slipped so badly in polls.
- Reports that you are being hunted by an IRA killer, Kevin Barry Artt who escaped from the Maze in the mass breakout and is funded by Libyans to the tune of £1m.

- All political leaders condemn smear tactics after Steel announces he is suing Star and Sun and others over allegations about his private life. Star apologises. Julia Langdon, in Daily News, blames the press for the Steel story.

- Alliance would pay for its programme with £15bn sell-off of State assets (Express)

- Aims of Industry says Labour would halt industrial development.

- Mail says the Militants have captured CPSA - an embarrassment for Kinnock - Macreadie has scraped in as general secretary and his supporters have got a majority on the executive.
- Iain Sproat canvassed as successor to Harvey Proctor.
- Telegraph says invisible earnings are set to jump by between 5 and 15% this year.

- Iraqis Exocet an American frigate in the Gulf - apparently by mistake.

- 4 Britons dead in mid-air collision with another light 'plane in Belgium.

* MAIN NEWS (Cont'd)

- Prospect of a £4 a quarter cut in gas prices because of lower oil prices.

- Mail says Home Office has appointed a black community relations officer whose moderate views have outraged the hard Left to the Police Complaints Authority.

- Signs of unrest in Fiji against coup. Telegraph says the key to the takeover are fears by the previous Government that the new one will uncover corruption.

- Many features on Lord Laurence Olivier, actor, 80 on Friday.

- Memorial to Dambusters unveiled in Lincs.

ELECTION

- Star's poll of polls forecasts you will be returned with a majority of more than 100.
- Sun leader says politics has surely never seen anything quite as comical as the Owen-Steel duo. In theory they are inseparable; in politics they disagree about practically everything. Alliance is less a dual personality than a split personality.
- Another Sun leader asks what kind of man is Jeremy Corbyn who stands in solemn silence to honour 8 dead IRA terrorists. Instead of presenting himself for Parliament he belongs in the museum of anthropology - under a glass plate along with other lowest forms of life.
- Mirror devotes a whole page to a leader attacking you as arrogant, blinkered, divisive, patronising; report says Owen is so frightened of losing his seat he has offered a cut price ticket on his campaign jet to his local paper.
- Today leads with parties unite in condemning lies, smears, and dirty tricks; leader on the politics of the smear says that newspapers which indulge in smear tactics for political purposes are not just a disgrace to journalism; they interfere with the very foundation of democratic system.
- Daily News: Steel to sue over smears. Liberals think slanders could backslash on Tories; leader alleges Steel smear emanated from Perth, or its near environs. Elsewhere it is turning out to be the moral election, and it turns a leader on the Cup Final against you by saying that you lay little emphasis on consensus.
- Daily News features the wives of Kinnock, Steel and Owen.
- Express: Steel lashes lies as rivals plead: Keep battle clean. Inside big news feature on "Maggie's town hall revolution - Tory plan to crack down on big spenders as fairer poll tax takes over from rates; leader on private lives and public men says private lives of politicians must not become an issue. Current rumours are nothing but idle gossip and it is unacceptable that certain newspapers should stoop to this kind of journalism.
- Mail: Steel anger over lies and smears. Leader on why the Socialists are in the dock says Labour has a nerve in asking "Who's got the worst criminal record?" in Britain over a picture of you. It is not Tory LAs which nag, hamper and harass the police or prevent policemen talking to children. If you want to sentence the police, rather than the criminal, to hard Labour then you know where to put your cross.
- George Gale, starting work in the Mail, asks whether we undervalue you because you are a woman. Britain can't afford to be governed by anyone else but it has been remarkably churlish to you.
- Telegraph on "Buoyant Tories aim for new gains". Steel takes libel action. All political leaders bar you are to guard against fatigue in campaign. Leader, rather implying Tories were responsible for Steel smear, says political dirty tricks are double-edged, but the press also play a part.

ELECTION (Cont'd)

- Lawrence Norcross, retiring ILEA headmaster, says the Conservative plan for education promises to be one of the more radical items in the manifesto and welcomes some of the measures.
- Telegraph interview with Steel - the first in the series with party leaders - says there is a greater social conscience among the electors than the Government is allowing for.
- Guardian: Parties unite to condemn dirty tricks. Inside it reports shift to right threatens Labour in Midlands.
- FT: Tory and Labour campaigns aim to squeeze out Alliance; Tories to press Labour over defence; Labour proposes national centre for silicon chip production; marginals form main election battlegrounds.
- Independent: Liberals to sue two newspapers over Steel 'smears'; Alliance government would privatise state's remaining 49% in BT to help pay for programme.
- Peter Jenkins in Independent says the mood of the country may still be that Mrs Thatcher is necessary, like her or not.
- Times: David Steel attacks "smears, lies and slanders" and is to take legal action over allegations. Norman Tebbit says election should be fought on policies and not smears. Bryan Gould says people not swayed by irrelevant personal attacks. ITN apologises for repeating some of allegations.
- Times: Conservatives to intensify campaign in seats where Labour is running close second.
- Times: Senior Conservatives attack Observer over claims of CND smear campaign in 1983 General Election.
- Oliver Letwin feature in Times where hard Left and the True Blue vie for deprived Hackney,
- Times: Owen clear favourite for Alliance leadership in MORI poll.
- Times leader discusses the NHS saying it is free only at a price. Few comparable countries have adopted it. Eritons not noticeably healthier and would probably change system if they had their time again. Issues between parties is which one would be better at running the economy and thus paying for the NHS.
- T.T. Utley in the Times looks at Neil Kinnock with headline "Kinnock's world of fantasy". He says Kinnock's dilemma remains insoluble, not realising that your authority is the one thing which commends you most to the British people, he attacks you for authoritarianism.

POLICY

- Star says comprehensive education system will be "axed" if you win.
- Sun says you will declare war on crime-ridden council estates and tower blocks when you launch your manifesto tomorrow, with radical housing proposals.
- Sun feature on the two faces of Labour identified the "smoked salmon Socialists" - ie the affluent among Labour leaders.
- Independent: Giles Radice has accused Government of suppressing four reports which disclose the poor state of Britain's schools.
- Labour would increase conventional arms spending by £11,250m.
- Times: Chancellor loses battle with you over new tax deal for women which he wanted in Manifesto.
- Times: Conservative Manifesto expected to announce rapid breakup of ILEA. Each borough to have right to run own schools.
- Times: NALGO leaked report says Government's policy of privatising local services is supported by members of public sector unions and Labour councils despite Labour Party opposition.
- Times: Denis Healey underlines that Labour Government would set no time limit for discussions with US about removal of its nuclear weapons from Britain.
- Times: Labour Government would spend £145m a year on helping pensioners with winter fuel bills.
- Times: TUC to reconsider its support to Government's new JTS which has provoked growing opposition from Labour movements.

INDUSTRY

- British Coal to impose a 2-year pay deal on NUM after its acceptance by UDM.
- FT: Engineering companies hit back at MSC criticisms but they do not spend enough on training.
- FT: British company forms joint venture with Japanese to manufacture video recorders in Cumbernauld.

TRANSPORT

- Independent: Mother of one of the victims of the sailing ship, Marques. will issue writs accusing the Department of Transport of negligence.

HEALTH

- Times: British scientists find compound that appears to delay ageing process in human cells.

LAW AND ORDER

- Sun readers back hanging for child killers.

PETER WRIGHT

- Times: Government expected to decide this week whether to try to stop publication of Peter Wright's book "Spycatcher" in US.

DEFENCE

- FT editorial on Euromissile deal which will provoke a major review of NATO. Nor surprising that some in West Germany reluctant to take Mr Gorbachev at his word.
- FT: France to bolster nuclear force, Chirac tells Soviet hosts.
- FT feature on European defence industry - security concerns forcing a more collaborative mood as Europeans realise they must get better value for money.
- Times: Assessment by military experts of air threat against Britain doubts whether Warsaw Pact could achieve its likely aims in initial phase of a war with conventional attacks on UK.

GERMANY

- FT: Setback for Kohl in West German state elections.

CENTRAL AMERICA

- FT: Central American peace plan discussed between President of Costa Rica and British officials.

SRI LANKA

- FT: India holds talks with Sri Lanka on Tamils.

HONG KONG

- FT: Sensitive negotiations begin today on the funding of Britain's defence of Hong Kong.

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