

21 April 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

George Schultz in Moscow (to 25 April)
Pay Review Body Reports published
General Election expenses
Ridley launches 'Environment Week'

STATISTICS

BOE: Provisional estimate of monetary aggregates (Mar)
CLSB: London and Scottish banks monthly statement (Mar)
CSO: Cyclical indicators for the UK Economy (Mar)

PUBLICATIONS

DTI: Queen's Award for Export and Technology

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Home Office; Northern Ireland; Prime Minister
Business: Local Government Finance Bill: Progress on Remaining Stages (4th allocated day)

Adjournment Debate: Hampton Court Palace (Mr T Jessel)

Select Committees: COMMITTEES ON PRIVATE BILLS
Hampshire (Lyndhurst Bypass) (Lords)
South Yorkshire Light Rail Transit

Lords: Starred Questions
Regional Development Grants (Termination) Bill: Third Reading .
Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill: Third Reading
Immigration Bill: Third Reading

UQ to ask HMG whether they are satisfied about the security of the investment they have made with taxpayers' money in the Airbus 320, 330 and 340

MINISTERS - See attached

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PRESS DIGEST

Labour takes 1% lead, according to Gallup. 41.5/40.5/18.5. Support for community charge down to 26%. Labour leads Conservatives by 13% in local elections.

Big row over Algeria's allowing hijackers to go free unpunished. Sun leads with "They got away with murder" - you are furious and so is USA.

Express says Kuwait has vowed to track down gunmen; Times alleges Kuwait connived at deal which let them go.

Claims that SAS were ready to disable gunmen with gas at Lanarca, but orders were never given; Star says SAS claim they could have ended the hijack 12 days ago.

Other reports that Scotland Yard worked with PLO to bring to end to hijack.

Iran fires missile at US-operated oil field in Kuwait apparently in revenge for Kuwaiti assistance to US Navy in Gulf flare-up.

Ron Brown suspended from House for 20 days; Labour Party moves to suspend Whip for 3 months.

Kinnock uses STUC to attack Left for foolish behaviour.

Labour drops economic plan after outcry from Left.

Norman Tebbit, in speech to South Africa Club, accused many critics of South Africa of "stinking hypocrisy"; South Africa needs frank friends; Archbishop Tutu shocked.

50 Labour MPs sign motion condemning Tebbit's speech.

Guardian says you have accepted need to split DHSS and will do so in January, with extra Cabinet Minister.

A record 9million people now own shares in Britain.

P&O ferries announce they are back in business as 11-week strike crumbles. More than half strikers have accepted new terms.

Directors' pay soared 11.9% last year; middle management by 9.9% - BIM.

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Record 92% of payphones are now working, according to Telecom reports. But less than 80% of first class mail arrives on time.

Rover accounted for 7 out of 10 British-made cars sold abroad in first three months of this year.

Council for Higher Education and Industry comes out in favour of student loans as part of Government commitment to expand higher education.

Nicholas Ridley, according to Express, will today offer concessions on unified business rate.

Plans for up to 30,000 inner city houses in East London announced.

Private firm launches a national lottery to raise £50million for NHS.

Nurses pay rise of around 12.5% trailed; FT says 15%.

Mail says top salaried may have their pay frozen because they did well out of Budget.

New Cola drink to be launched, containing as much caffeine as 5 cups of coffee; fears that it will make children addicts.

France given 14 days by EC to stop blocking cheaper air fares which Harry Goodman wants to introduce.

Security guard, 56, shot dead by bank robbers in Tottenham Court Road.

Brigadier dismissed from the Army for Sergeant Bilko-like activities - producing goods for sale on the side while running an army workshop in West Germany. Criticism of the failure to court marshal him.

Guardian prints further examples of social security cases suffering substantial losses.

BBC TV investigator Roger Cook claims to have uncovered a Brazilian racket in stolen babies - sold from their hospital cots to European couples for up to £15,000.

Express confronts ex-SS General, accused by Jeff Rooker MP of ordering 80 British prisoners of war to be shot near Dunkirk.

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HIJACK

Star leader headed "Getting away with murder" says the fact is that 8 men who held dozens of passengers hostage in the most appalling fear and privation and murdered two of them have been allowed to get away with it. This can only encourage others.

Sun leader says it is not possible to play the honest brother and to remain neutral between murderers and the murdered. Hijacking will end only when would-be hijackers are convinced they are never going to win.

Today leader says Algeria emerges with no credit whatsoever. From now on it will be the bolt hole for all the violent riff-raff of the world. The action of the hijackers cries out for retribution.

Express comments Kuwait Government seems to have acted with great honour and courage. But hijackers successfully defied civilised world and its values for 16 days and got away with it. The message that has gone out is that hijacking is a reasonable gamble.

Mail leads with "Freed to hijack once more", you demand no hiding place for 8 Arab terrorists; leader says hijackers have got away with murder. Anger soon took over from relief for the hijackers. The Thatcher Government is seeking, along with the Kuwaitis and others, to pounce on this pack of Arab cutthroats before they can kill and torture again.

Telegraph leads with "They will strike again" fear as hijackers go free. Gang allowed to fade into desert sand. Thatcher to seek pact on terror. Max Hastings says terrorism has not achieved a major victory this week but it has certainly escaped a defeat. In the future more and more nations will have to face the fact that direct military action against terrorists is an essential element in society's defences.

Guardian - Hijackers go free after Algerian deal - leader says this was the nastiest hijacking. The Group of 7 have the clout to improve effective sanctions on recalcitrant nations.

Times leads with hostage deal giving gunmen safe passage angers Britain and US; authoritative Kuwaiti source says Emir of Kuwait had knowingly and willingly agreed to the arrangements for the hijackers' freedom in return for release of passengers and crew; two Scotland Yard experts on siege tactics and hostage negotiations have been working in Kuwait.

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Times - Strong hints from Whitehall that international action against Algeria will be considered; while you were relieved that hostages were safe, it could not be forgotten that a vicious act of terrorism had taken place with cold-blooded murder of 2 people.

Times leader says the world should be profoundly worried that hijackers were freed and that the world's travellers remain more at risk than ever: the most powerful Western states should take it upon themselves to act on behalf of civilisation as a whole as hijacking is too serious a matter to be left to the Middle East states which lack the will or means to protect international law and order.

Independent - Rumours throughout Arab world speak of quiet deal between Kuwait and the hijackers but Kuwait strongly denies it. David Mellor warns that government is considering taking action against Algeria. Leader says Algeria had a duty to put the hijackers on trial. Instead their action will make further hijackings more likely.

LABOUR PARTY

Today says Ron Brown represents only the tip of an iceberg of anarchy in the Parliamentary Labour Party. There are far too many Labour MPs who regard their election to Parliament as a licence to behave like shop stewards on the picket line. Britain needs a credible opposition but Kinnock cannot hope to present Labour as such until he has purged the party of the likes of Brown.

Independent - leader says Ron Brown, and a few loutish Labour backbenchers like him, do enormous damage to Labour's cause. it is therefore not surprising that other members of his party would like to see him lynched. Kinnock should use the occasion to reaffirm Labour's essential commitment to Parliamentary action. Those who do not want to participate should be sent to fight their class war under another banner.

NHS

Times - Cabinet expected to agree 12% pay rise for nurses today and to fund whole of increases; health unions reject 4.8% offer for ambulance crews.

Times - Consultant says some babies should be left to die.

Independent - National Forum for Coronary Disease Prevention - formed by 30 organisations including TUC, BMA and RCN - calls for co-ordinated Government action for prevention of heart disease.

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Independent - Birmingham GPs warn of crisis in community medicine because of cuts in hospital services.

Independent - Labour says tens of thousands of people are likely to have eaten lamb contaminated by Chernobyl because of the Government's delay and incompetence.

COMMUNITY CHARGE

Times - Nicholas Ridley prepared to accept 5 year transitional period for business rate and maximum increase for small businesses, 5% lower than that paid by bigger firms; cash will be deducted from social security if claimants default on community charge payments, says Michael Howard.

Max Beloff in the Times looks at the constitutional role of the Lords, warning its members against exceeding that role. He adds that the view of those who believe the Lords is constitutionally entitled to change Community Charge Bill to "banding" is a false one.

Independent - Michael Howard warns of jail for refusal to pay poll tax, or deduction of benefits at source for poorer people.

FT - Following meeting with CBI, Nicholas Ridley agrees that a ceiling should be set on the annual rate increase on individual business properties.

FT - Sam Brittan sets effect of community charge in wider economic context and argues that it will encourage wasteful low density occupation of properties, make housing more attractive relative to other investments and push up house prices. By so doing, it will limit labour mobility and cause inflationary bottlenecks to appear in the economic upturn.

Telegraph leader says the charge is proving to be the biggest thorn in the Government's side. It would be wise to give the Lords their heads on the issue.

INNER CITIES

Times - leader says Church of England leaders would be more embarrassed than comforted to be told that its new initiative for inner cities fits in well with the policy of the Government as there is a current delusion in the Church that on to its shoulders has fallen the mantle of the official Opposition.

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INDUSTRY

Times - GMB to boycott £1.4 billion training programme for long-term unemployed and TUC general council expected to vote for its total boycott.

Independent - Government is planning to pave the way for full-scale privatisation of the coal industry with the sale of individual pits which are threatened with closure. But no action is expected before the electricity privatisation.

Independent - Poor pay and high cost of housing in South East are blamed for large numbers of vacancies in Civil Service.

Times carries a four page focus on some of the firms which have received Queen's Awards for export and technology.

FT - Plan to build world's largest cruise ship at Harland & Wolff may not qualify for subsidies from shipbuilding intervention fund. EC's sixth directive does not apply to cruise ships where European shipyards dominate Japanese.

FT - British Coal to shed 2,000 jobs among regional managers and office staff.

DEFENCE

Times - Select Committee told that more than £400 million had been spent on developing a missile not wanted by RAF in first place.

LAW & ORDER

Independent - Chief Inspector of Prisons report says violence, petty crime and drug abuse are flourishing inside Britain's overcrowded prisons.

Independent - Survey by Newspaper editors and National Council for Civil Liberties shows Crown courts are making widespread use of reporting restrictions and secrecy orders.

Lord Donaldson says Official Secrets Act undermines rule of law.

EDUCATION

Rhodes Boyson article in Mail on review of National Union of Students under heading "Stop this student propaganda scandal".

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MEDIA

FT - Daily Mirror to start printing in full colour next month.

FT - Government has ruled out using VHF for new TV channel.

ARTS

Times - Arts Council accused of ignoring needs of North after announcement of a 5% overall grant increase to regional arts associations.

SOVIET UNION

Times - Moscow summit could be overshadowed by Gorbachev having to fight his toughest power battle yet over domestic policies.

EAST-WEST

Independent - Despite flourish of Soviet goodwill, Americans pessimistic of a breakthrough on START before the Moscow summit.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

DEN: Mr Parkinson addresses ESSO's centenary dinner, Banqueting House, London

DOE: Mr Ridley attends launch of Civic Trust's Environment week in Battersea, London

HMT: Mr Major addresses the Institute of Directors policy executive committee

MAFF: Mr MacGregor visits Apple and Pear Development Council, Westminster Hall, London

MOD: Mr Younger meets Spanish Defence Minister in London

SO: Mr Rifkind addresses Dinner of Institute of Civil Engineers, Hilton Hotel, London

DEM: Mr Cope visits the West Midlands

DEM: Mr Lee attends "Buzz" meeting on Industrial Training, London

DEN: Mr Morrison opens the World Energy business members annual open day, London

DHSS: Mr Newton addresses Hospital Caterers Association annual dinner

DOE: Mr Waldegrave visits Watermint Quay and Sovereign Mews in Hackney, London

DOE: Mr Howard addresses Placemakers lunch, London

DOE: Mr Trippier visits Wolverhampton (inner cities)

DOE: Mrs Roe addresses Federation of Environmental Traders lunch in London

DOE: Mr Moynihan takes part in national squad bowls match at Stoke Mandeville

DTI: Mr Clark receives courtesy call from USSR Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade, Mr Paulou

DTp: Mr Bottomley visits the Mobility International Showrooms, Thatcham, Berkshire

DTp: Mr Mitchell addresses the Institute for International Research, Channel Tunnel conference, London

HO: Mr Patten visits Manchester EOC; later attends launch of Liverpool Crime Prevention Seminar

MAFF: Mr Gummer attends Woodard Chapter conference, Whitelaw College, Putney

SO: Mr Lang opens Scottish Money Show and addresses Business Success conference, Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

MAFF: Mr MacGregor appears on Question Time, BBC TV

MAFF: Mr Gummer interviewed on Radio 4, The Food Programme, on organic food

TV AND RADIO

"Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

"Business Daily": C4 (12.30)

"The Parliament Programme": C4 (14.00)

"From Raj to Rajiv": BBC Radio 4. Forty years of Indian Independence

"This Week": Thames (20.30). Afghanistan - Russia's Bleeding Wound

"Nature": BBC 2 (20.30). Taking stock two years after Chernobyl

"40 Minutes": BBC 2 (21.30). Women in Black - coping with widowhood

"Question Time": BBC 1 (22.05)

"The City Programme": Thames (22.35)

"The World Tonight": BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "The Financial World Tonight" and "Today in Parliament"

"Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.45)
