

# DIARIES

ALAN CLARK

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WEIDENFELD AND  
NICOLSON  
LONDON

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 f him'.

John Major,<sup>1</sup> whom I like more and more, said to me *sotto voce*,  
 'You're a military strategist. Oughtn't you to be sending your tanks  
 round the flank, rather than attacking head on?'

Saltwood

Wednesday, 31 January

I am skiving. Second day of 'flu'. But having been rather awful and  
 restlessly dry-hot yesterday (I took to my bed) I am now over it; and  
 sitting around in the Green Room eating sundry delicacies that Jane  
 sweetly prepares (*not in nouvelle cuisine portion size*).

Two 'crises' preoccupy the Department. Neither anything to do  
 with me whatever. Complacently I can spectate. The first is something  
 to do with a 'dirty tricks campaign'. These are always a bore. As  
 far as I'm concerned 'dirty tricks' are part and parcel of effective  
 government. But apparently Number 10 were misinformed by us –  
 or so they claim.

More serious, news is about to break concerning the trouser-leg  
 (sic) fractures in Warspite's cooling system. This could affect every  
 nuclear-powered submarine. The whatever-it-is Authority have  
 already given their advice that we should 'cease to operate' them until  
 the condition is 'rectified'.

The result would be over twenty submarines tied up in UK ports,  
 crews with nothing to do, local papers making inquiries, general  
 trouble.

TK, quite rightly in my view, is continuing to keep the newer  
 ones on station (although whether this is really his decision or was  
 forced on him by the Lady I simply don't know). I suspect the latter  
 because when, sadistically, I rattled him at a meeting, 'If – *if* there is  
 an accident, it's not just you who resigns; the Government falls,' he  
 didn't blench.

In a calm frame of mind I was eating chicken livers on toast when  
 the phone rang. Jane answered. It was Julian.

'Julian at seven p.m.?'

As always looking on the bright side, she suggested, 'Perhaps TK's  
 had an accident?'

<sup>1</sup>John Major, briefly Foreign Secretary, 1989, before becoming Chancellor of the  
 Exchequer following the resignation of Nigel Lawson.

Sunday, 28 January

... Percy Cradock<sup>1</sup>  
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