



# Morning Star

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For peace & socialism

Incorporating the Daily Worker



## Tin foil hat Tories

SOLOMON HUGHES looks at bizarre tales being concocted about pinko Labour: **P8**



Laibach in North Korea was a surprise hit of the year

**CULTURE: P11**

## Secret goal of '90s Tory rail sell-off plan revealed:

# 'Break BR up and smash the unions'

EXCLUSIVE

by Conrad Landin  
Industrial Reporter

JOHN MAJOR'S government considered "smashing the unions" as a "priority" objective of privatising British Rail, newly declassified documents reveal.

Cabinet Office files from the early 1990s, which are being released today to the National Archives, also show that the government was aware that breaking up the national railway network could endanger public safety.

The documents lay bare a rift between then transport secretary Malcolm Rifkind and prime minister Mr Major over the shape that the new privatised railway should take.

Mr Rifkind favoured prioritising the sell-off of British Rail's Intercity sector as a "vertically integrated" business covering both track and trains.

But Mr Major preferred a "line of route" approach, splitting the railway up into privatised regions akin to those that existed prior to nationalisation in 1948.

In a briefing for Mr Major on December 12 1991, political adviser Jonathan Hill asked whether Mr Rifkind's model would "really smash the power of the unions."

In the same document, Mr Hill had already set out the need to ensure that privatisation "breaks BR up and smashes the unions."

This form of words appears in a list of "priorities" that the adviser said Mr Major "made clear" at a summit on rail privatisation at Chequers, the prime minister's official country residence.

On being told of the new revelations, rail union leaders said the papers confirmed what they had suspected all along.

"After 25 years in which Britain's privatised railways have been

turned into a money-raking racket, the truth is now out at last," RMT general secretary Mick Cash said.

"Privatisation was simply about busting the unions and exploiting the travelling public in the name of Tory ideology and grotesque corporate greed.

"With nearly three-quarters of the British people now supporting a return to public ownership of our railways and with Chris Grayling, Theresa May and their shambolic minority government on the ropes, it's no longer a question of if, it's simply a question of when."

Other "priorities" listed by Mr Hill include ensuring that privatisation is "popular with passengers" and "is simple to explain and understand."

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is popular with passengers;  
is simple to explain and understand;  
addresses people's everyday concerns and deals with the areas of greatest dissatisfaction (eg Network South East);  
delivers greater accountability;  
makes it clear who is responsible for what;  
links on local pride and sense of identity;  
breaks BR up and smashes the unions;  
increases competition and allows for new entrants;  
will not allow our opponents to play the "safety" card;  
maximises opportunities for innovation and provides an incentive to get the best return on assets;  
wins the support of rail enthusiasts and commentators;  
is against those criteria that I believe we should judge what



Ivan Beavis, Star icon, dies at 69

▶▶NEWS: P5



Kabul suicide attack kills 35

▶▶WORLD: P7



Cook worried he could face cut

▶▶CRICKET: P15



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## OPINION

# Laibach and think of North Korea



ON THE ROAD WITH  
**ATTILA THE  
STOCKBROKER**

I'VE seen, and taken part in, some wonderful events in the last 12 months but for me there is only one Gig Of The Year.

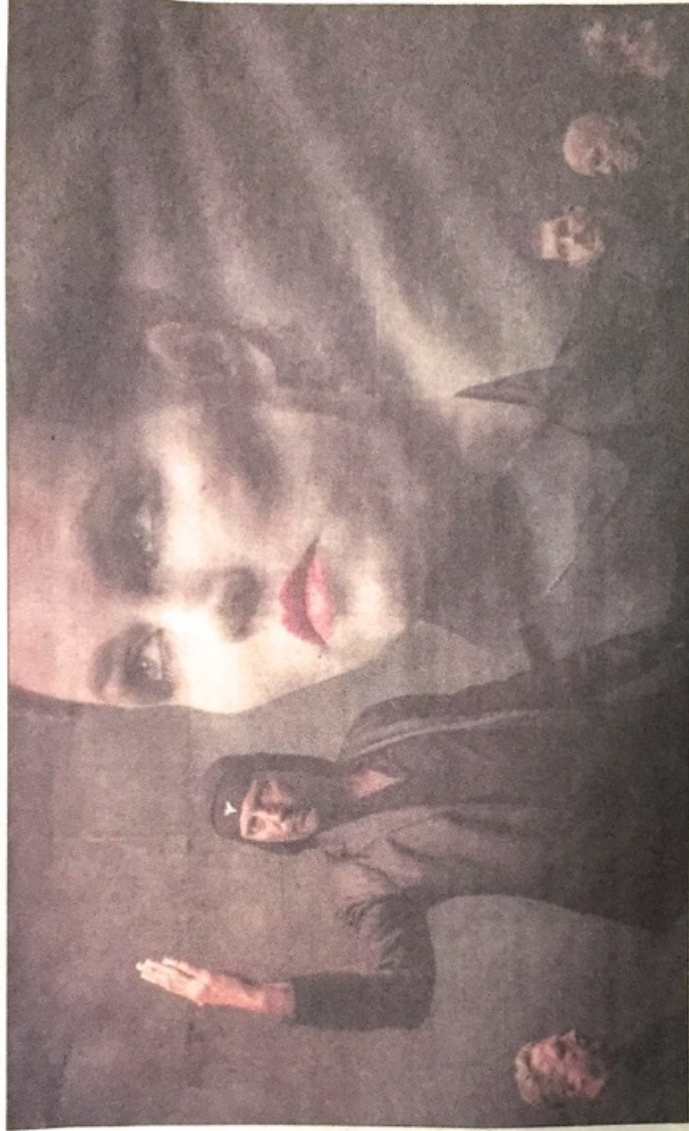
It's not just Gig of the Year, it's Film of the Year and Surreal Cultural Event/Collision of the Year too and it happened in Pyongyang four months ago. Best of all, you can watch it on BBC iPlayer until January 6.

And, comrades, in the spirit of both Laibach and North Korea, I will go as far as to declare NOT watching it to be a counterrevolutionary act. Storyville: When Rock Arrived In North Korea (Storyville, BBC4) is absolutely wonderful.

Last August, the gloriously stentorian Slovenian rock-classical-art-satirical "totalitarian" collective Laibach were invited to play a concert in North Korea as part of that country's Liberation Day cultural programme celebrating 70 years since Japanese imperialist rule was ended. It was billed as the first time that foreign rock performers had ever gigged there.

It wasn't and I have to declare an interest here. In 1989, while at the Political Song Festival in East Berlin, I was invited to Pyongyang to participate in the World Festival of Youth and Students held later that year. I was touring Canada then so couldn't go but I persuaded them to book my mate Steve Drewett, singer of Harlow punks Newtown Neurotics, instead.

He went and had a wonderful, if strange, time. So he was there first.



Sorry, Laibach. But that's another story.

Having been intensely familiar with their work for the 30 odd years since I met them in London in about 1984, it was immediately obvious to me that Laibach and North Korea were the most appropriate pairing in history. To paraphrase Crowded House, everywhere they go, they always take a bit of North Korea with them anyway.

A Laibach show is a multimedia onslaught, where classic mass control methods become entertainment. In their own words: "All art is subject to manipulation except that which uses the language of the same manip-

ulation." Heaven knows how film director Morten Traaavik managed to wrangle the invitation. "I am setting up maybe the blindest of blind dates," he said.

And what a collision it was — North Korean censors trying to understand the double-bluff of having their own methods thrown back at them, Laibach struggling with the fact that they did understand it sometimes and banned bits of the show. Band members and roadies wrestling with the task of putting together a 2017 multimedia show using 1970s — sometimes 1950s — technology.

Part of the band's programme involved sections of The Sound of

Music — deconstructing innocent pop tunes and turning them into roaring mass rally epics is a Laibach speciality — and there's a hilarious moment where a suspicious censor demands to be read the lyrics. And someone goes for a walk when they shouldn't, obviously.

The best bit of all is the concert itself, where invited guests experience the full force of Laibach for the first time and the reactions are wonderful. If you're fascinated by North Korea or love Laibach you may have watched this already. To the rest of you, I cannot recommend it enough. Satire distilled to its purest form. A brilliant film.