



O DREAMLAND! LINDSAY ANDERSON'S DARK BRITISH CINEMA

If....

If....

Director: Lindsay Anderson
©: Paramount Pictures Corporation
Production Company: Memorial Enterprises
Executive Producer: Roy Baird
Producers: Michael Medwin, Lindsay Anderson
Production Accountant: Brian Brockwell
Production Manager: Gavrik Losey
Assistant to the Producer: Neville Thompson
Production Secretary: Zelda Barron *
Assistant Director: John Stoneman
2nd Assistant Director: Tim Van Rellim *
Assistants to the Director: Stephen Frears, Stuart Baird
Continuity: Valerie Booth
Casting Director: Miriam Brickman
Screenplay: David Sherwin
Based on the original script by: David Sherwin, John Howlett
Director of Photography: Miroslav Ondricek
Cameraman: Chris Menges
Camera Operator: Brian Harris
Camera Assistant: Michael Seresin
Electrics Supervisor: Roy Larner
Explosions: Pat Moore *
Editor: David Gladwell
Assistant Editors: Ian Rakoff, Michael Ellis
Production Designer: Jocelyn Herbert
Art Director: Brian Eatwell *
Construction Manager: Jack Carter
Wardrobe: Shura Cohen
Make-up: Betty Blattner
Music/Music Conductor: Marc Wilkinson
Sound Recording: Christian Wangler
Dubbing Mixer: Doug Turner
Effects Mixer: David Maiden *
Dubbing Editor: Alan Bell
Transportation: Jim Hughes
Fight Choreography: Peter Brayham *
Cast:
crusaders
Malcolm McDowell (*Mick Travers*)
David Wood (*Johnny*)
Richard Warwick (*Wallace*)
Christine Noonan (*the girl*)
Rupert Webster (*Bobby Phillips*)
whips
Robert Swann (*Rowntree*)
Hugh Thomas (*Denson*)
Michael Cadman (*Fortinbras*)
Peter Sproule (*Barnes*)
staff
Peter Jeffrey (*headmaster*)
Anthony Nicholls (*General Denson*)
Arthur Lowe (*Mr Kemp*)
Mona Washbourne (*matron*)
Mary MacLeod (*Mrs Kemp*)
Geoffrey Chater (*chaplain*)
Ben Aris (*John Thomas*)
Graham Crowden (*history master*)
Charles Lloyd Pack (*classics master*)
seniors
Guy Ross (*Stephans*)
Robin Askwith (*Keating*)
Richard Everett (*Pussy Graves*)
Philip Bagenal (*Peanuts*)
Nicholas Page (*Cox*)
Robert Yetzes (*Fisher*)
David Griffin (*Willens*)
Graham Sharman (*Van Eyssen*)
Richard Tombleson (*Baird*)

SPOILER WARNING The following notes give away some of the plot.

The first film in Lindsay Anderson and screenwriter David Sherwin's great state-of-the-nation trilogy builds tensely to violent rebellion, as schoolboy Mick Travis takes a stand against the brutality and repressive traditions that govern an English boarding school.

Fierce in its satirising of class-bound, outdated conventions in British society, it is also deeply poetic and fantastical. It captured the late-60s zeitgeist like few others, taking the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

A contemporary review

Lindsay Anderson thinks '*If....* is really a vision, something like the Writing on the Wall.' We should therefore look for something prophetic, cryptic, poetic, transforming. Anderson and his skilful screenwriter David Sherwin have certainly written something on the wall, but a good deal of rubbing out's been going on and, in some really crucial places, parts of the wall seem to be missing. No one in the cinema has ever done such an effective hatchet-job on the English Public School. In *If....* Anderson and Sherwin expose its horrors wittily and savagely: the brutality, the exploitation of slave labour, the tyranny of petty restrictions, the sexual confusion and hypocrisy, the interdependence of hierarchy and conformity. The boys are screened for bodily and spiritual health by a gauntlet of prefects and staff. 'Ringworm? Eye-disease? VD? Confirmation class? Next!' Nice jokes like this are frequent and accurate. More telling are the signs of community values: heaps of academic books and papers the boys have not been allowed to take into divine service, shed like shameful secrets, at the chapel door.

All this is well and carefully done. But there is more. The legacy of Kipling first of all. Anderson was born in India, of Scottish extraction. The legend of service with honour is for him a giant lie, since it is a life inevitably corrupted by the system of government it upholds. However benevolent it is, Anderson will have no time for paternalism. And Kipling would not recognise Mick, the hero of this new *If....*, as an Englishman at all. Anderson talks of him as 'someone who arrives at his own beliefs, and who stands up for them, even against the world. It's the kind of character that can only be played by someone who knows what it's all about.' But then there must be many a colonial administrator, honourable men, long gone, who would have recognised themselves in that description. So bitter is Anderson's vision that there is not one single member of the staff, no single senior prefect, who even remotely enjoys the comfort of a clear conscience.

The headmaster is a glib power-politician alerting the prefects to the challenge of the future and intending to introduce a course in business management; the chaplain, a crushing portrait of religious opportunism, jingoism and snobbery, in class cuffing heads and fondling breasts, in chapel congratulating God on preferring the middle classes; the housemaster a weak figurehead allowing his vicious and corrupt prefects to 'nip unruly elements in the bud', which they do, provoking armed revolt by the hero and his friends. For the latter, the revolutionaries, rebellion at school is an ascetic test, an emotional release, and a witness to their solidarity with the Third World.

John Garrie (*music master*) *
Tommy Godfrey (*school porter*) *
Ellis Dale (*salesman*) *

juniors

Richard Davis (*Machin*)
Brian Pettifer (*Biles*)
Michael Newport (*Brunning*)
Charles Sturridge (*Markland*)
Sean Bury (*Jute*)
Martin Beaumont (*Hunter*)
USA/UK 1968©
111 mins
35mm (21 and 28 May)
Digital (6, 16, and 24 May)

* Uncredited

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If....

Mon 6 May 17:50; Thu 16 May 20:30; Tue 21 May
18:10; Fri 24 May 12:10; Tue 28 May 20:45

BFI Library Event: Outing Anderson

Wed 8 May 20:00 BFI Reuben Library

In Celebration

Thu 9 May 20:25; Wed 22 May 18:00

O Lucky Man!

Sun 12 May 14:10; Sat 18 May 14:20; Mon 27 May
19:20

Britannia Hospital

Tue 14 May 20:35; Sat 25 May 18:00

This Sporting Life

Wed 15 May 17:50; Thu 23 May 12:00

The Whales of August

Thu 16 May 12:20; Sat 25 May 16:00; Fri 31 May
20:30

The Old Crowd

Thu 16 May 18:30

**Lindsay Anderson vs the Short Films Industry +
intro by Patrick Russell, Senior Curator of Non-
fiction, BFI National Archive**

Thu 23 May 18:20

Stand Up! Stand Up!

Thu 23 May 20:30

Never Apologize

Fri 24 May 17:50

In Collaboration: Anderson and Others

Sun 26 May 18:10

**Lindsay Anderson Experimenta Mixtape, curated
by Stephen Sutcliffe**

Thu 30 May 18:10

With thanks to

The Lindsay Anderson Archive at the University of
Stirling

O Lucky Lindsay Anderson!

4-week course from 7 May – 28 May, 2-4pm at City
Lit, Keeley St. exploring the work and influence of
visionary director, Lindsay Anderson, with course
tutor John Wischmeyer. To book online
[www.citylit.ac.uk/courses/o-lucky-lindsay-
anderson](http://www.citylit.ac.uk/courses/o-lucky-lindsay-
anderson) or call 020 3871 3111 and quote course
code **HF364**

The sides, in other words, are pretty neatly drawn up. All the more reason then why we must look very hard at the credentials of our new leader. He 'knows what it's all about'. What what's all about? It's not the Jews this time, or the vegetarians, but it is a sort of conspiracy theory nonetheless. The 'it' is 'them' and they're against 'us'. But of course they are, and the justice of what Anderson's saying and the sincerity and passion with which he says it are truly painful. What's more, the tenacity of his stand against them over the years is truly admirable. But it's a local justice, not an absolute one, and its applications must be constantly defined and made precise, otherwise all the passion and sincerity and tenacity in the world will only confuse his sympathisers and – more importantly – his work. 'It all', 'them' and 'us' are inadequate descriptions of the elements involved in the coming revolutionary struggle, and the film doesn't do enough to clarify them.

If there is going to be one then, by God we need to know what it's going to be about. But that's just the trouble. Is this a prophetic warning or a rallying cry? And are we part of the sheepish congregation whom Anderson's youthful cohorts will mow down as we run for cover, the soft bourgeois centre of England? We simply shudder at the thought. Or are we the gullible young, misled by that unholy alliance of jingoism and commercialism which he believes has hardly changed in a century? (In that case do we get mown down too? Though many a gilt-edged consol and many a flowered hat fall at the final onslaught, we see none of the fellow-pupils machine-gunned.) Or perhaps we're up on the roof behind the gatling? In that case, we want to know what kind of new society it is that we're fighting for. Since only Mick and his shattering gun – seemingly turned on us – is the final image, we shall have to look backwards into the film for a more rational outline of his platform.

Mick and his two friends, Johnny and Wallace, are loafing about the study, Mick talking about violence and revolution, Wallace complaining about his pimples, Johnny dreaming about sex. Later in the gym, in a heroic pastiche, they fence, and one of them is hurt. He is amazed to see real blood. Later still, surrounded by images of violence and oppression on the study walls, they mingle blood in a gesture of solidarity. Mick and Johnny escape into the town and to the bourgeois tokens of consumer sexuality – the nylons and the motorbikes. Violence it seems, surprisingly, is necessary. Mick and Johnny turn the motorbike into a tool of revolution: they steal it, and on this black charger ride to the rescue of the lady in the tower – in this case a waitress at a transport cafe. To the accompaniment of the Missa Luba, Mick and the girl recreate primitive society, make love on the floor of the cafe and afterwards circle in a slow and triumphant love dance on the bike. The regenerative links are forged. Nothing remains but the provocation that will spark the revolutionaries into the necessary brutal action...

Gavin Millar, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1968/9