

19 May 1987

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS DIGEST

Star leads with preview of your manifesto saying "Maggie plans sale of the century". Inside it has Kinnock wooing the women - a reference to their manifesto for women yesterday. The Alliance manifesto is presented as A Robin Hood manifesto with their plan to tax the rich to help the poor. Mills, their columnist, describes Owen and Steel as Pinky and Perky and the Alliance as "absurd"

Sun leads with Kinnock predicting he will win by a landslide: an astonishing claim, it says. A Sun poll shows you heading for a 132-seat majority - Audience Selection shows 45/31/23. Inside a variety of stories - SDP/Libs plan to find 1m new jobs over 3 years; Kinnock wanting "A ministry for girls"; and Red Ken Livingstone planning to address a gays' conference in direct defiance of Kinnock.

Sun leaders say their readers are in favour of hanging murderer of Kimberley Hall. It goes on to quote a Buenos Aires newspaper as saying you have won a special place in the emotions not just of the British but of the rest of the world - stubbornness and national pride.

In a two-page feature inside on Bernie Grant Sun quotes him as saying a Tory election victory would provoke violent disturbances in inner cities.

Today leads with "Big chance for Davids" - it claims that a Marplan poll shows that almost half the electorate would vote for Alliance candidates if they thought they had a chance of winning in their constituency. Overall the poll shows you in the lead 41/33/24.

Today's inside treatment describes Alliance manifesto as a lucky dip and their leaders claiming they can afford it. Bryan Gould warns Labour supporters not to support the Alliance.

Today's leader describes the Alliance manifesto as a radical and attractive package. No longer can the Alliance be accused of having no policies.

Mirror's Joe Haines reports somewhat desperately a big leap in polls for Labour - it claims Labour is in front in 27 constituencies where it came a close second last time - Labour 40.9/Con 39.3/Alliance 18.4. In 20 marginals where Alliance came second Tories lead 43.7/Alliance 35.3/Labour 19. Channel 4 poll in Dudley West shows Con lead of 15% at last election cut to 4%.

Daily News puts "Labour is catching up" on its front page. Leader says the Alliance manifesto goes a long way to answer the criticism that this is a grouping without substantial policy.

Express puts on its front page "A Goliath task for Davids as they slump in the polls" and says a string of polls dampened their manifesto launch. Michael Heseltine says their defence policy would give Britain less security at higher cost. Another story says the teaching unions, by deciding to go on with strikes, dealt a body blow to Labour.

Express says the Falklands factor has re-emerged with Labour's plan, according to George Foulkes, to renegotiate Islands' sovereignty.

Express leader says the Alliance manifesto is cynical: having your fudge and eating it. The reason for the contradictions and confusions is obvious: the Alliance is no alliance, it is a cynical marriage of convenience. Britain should not vote for any party seeking power on such a flimsy and cynical prospectus.

Lord Chalfont, in Express, on the fact bending antics of Labour's sanctimonious elder statesman, Denis Healey.

Mail leads with "Telecom Tory in court today" - a reference to arrest of Keith Best on charges of criminal deception. On same page it previews your manifesto with "Power to the people will be the message from Maggie"-one of the most radical programmes of the Thatcher years. Inside it says Kinnock gets a boost from the polls. Alliance manifesto promises to fight for jobs.

Mail leader headed "Oh wouldn't it be luvverly" says there is something for everybody in the Alliance sales catalogue but most people may conclude that they offer too soft an option to be entrusted with the burden of government. Another leader adds that only Labour could pledge to set up a Ladies Department in Whitehall. There is something sweet and dottily old-fashioned about it.

Telegraph has curiously little about the election on its front page - Alliance setback in polls showing. Inside it devotes a page to the Alliance manifesto. Leader says the document has a strong scent of the 1970s about it. It will win votes from those who crave a return to the politics of lowest common denominator of

national consent.

Telegraph also prints the second in its series of interviews with party leaders - with Kinnock who says defeat does not appear on his agenda.

Guardian has Labour attacking the Alliance over talk of a pact with the Tories and says a poll shows Tory marginals under threat. It claims the Alliance is ignoring Labour to concentrate on the Tories. Leader finds the Alliance manifesto radical only up to a point. Its policies are compatible with the general drift of Labour thinking yet perhaps an Alliance vote is more an alternative to the Conservatives than to Labour.

The **Guardian's** election coverage is curiously lacklustre and its leader anything but full-hearted in support of the Alliance which suggests it is now firmly in the Labour camp.

Independent leads with Kinnock predicting a Labour landslide - on course for a victory that would trump that of 1945. Owen says Labour is "unelectable. You bided your time yesterday. Another front page story says your manifesto is expected to show that you will privatise water as early as possible.

Independent leader headed "Alliance rallying cry is weak" says the Alliance manifesto is a disappointment. It is what may fairly be described as a benevolent civil servant's reaction to Thatcherism. Too many of its proposals are underlain by the implied belief that nanny knows best. Voters often complain that the Alliance has no policies. It actually has hundreds. But it still lacks a theme which will make it clear to voters what it stands for.

Another **Independent** leader says that until our political leaders - and that includes you and Kohl - telling their electorates honestly and consistently what is required for their defence they will be vulnerable to both American and Soviet pressure to conclude arms agreements which may suit the superpowers but do not increase the security of Europe.

Peter Jenkins, in **Independent**, savages the Alliance manifesto. He says that it cannot be denied that, as measured by growth rates, Britain is no longer falling further behind. In this respect the spirit of the times may have moved somewhat against the Alliance. Its manifesto has something of the air of the 1970s about it. It is ironic that the Conservative party looks as if it is going to outflank both the parties of the left with its radicalism.

Times has Kinnock renewing warning against tactical voting and Alliance offering package to beat crime crisis. Steel may sue more papers over allegations about his private life. Leader says

Alliance partiers have never lacked theme tunes; what they have lacked is a theme. Their manifesto is only slowly leaving its Socialist influence behind.

Geoffrey Smith, in *Times*, says it was fitting for Alliance to hold the first press conference as it needs to make an impact in the campaign. Most are expecting it to make ground during it.

Robert Jackson, in *Times*, replies to the charge of authoritarianism against the Tories and draws a distinction between the assertion of power and the transfer of power to the centre.

FT leads with Alliance pledging wide reforms in manifesto. Alliance has decided on a two-prong action - first to say Labour can't win and second to attack the Tories as uncaring.

After devoting three pages to the Alliance manifesto, the FT's leader headed "Right down the middle" says the manifesto is serious, comprehensive and costed. With one important exception of constitutional reform it goes right down the middle between the two parties. Its proposals are good, bad and questionable but where it is good it is "very, very good" and best of all are its proposals on constitutional change. But it clearly doesn't expect the Alliance to win because it says the Alliance's proposals on proportional representation should not be ducked, even by the winner of the election.

Spectrum in the *Times* features Shirley Williams with headline "A hustler born to the hustings".

Times adds that RUC police officers understood to have been drafted in to assist in your protection. Cecil Franks, Conservative candidate in Barrow, makes serious financial allegations against his agent; police investigating.

OTHER ITEMS

INDUSTRY

Go-ahead given for £230m revamp at Rosyth Dockyard creating 1,000 jobs over next five years.

Spending in shops jumped by 3.8% to record level last month.

Robert Maxwell offers £1.2bn for US publishing company.

Unilever profits up 48% to £349m for first quarter.

UNIONS

Municipal and Boilermakers union launch campaign to try to recover £15bn a year which it claims women are being underpaid.

Moderate in CPSA preparing to demand a re-run of internal election to prevent it falling into hands of Militant supporters.

Postmen threaten autumn strike unless Post Office agrees their reduction in working week.

Tam Dalyell, in book to be published next week, claims union ban at GCHQ was a "crude attempt to put the frighteners" on staff leaking information on Falklands war.

MIDDLE EAST

President Reagan expresses anger over Iraqi attack on US warship and vows to keep the Gulf open/

EAST/WEST

Chancellor Kohl has rethink over missiles after poll setback and yesterday moved towards accepting the Soviet double-zero offer.

South Africa refuses to reconsider expulsions of British TV journalists Buerk and Sharp.

HEALTH

BMA increases campaign to cut junior doctors' working hours to 72 hours a week.

HOUSING

Times: Many estate agents report 5% increases in house prices in last 3 months.

BERNARD INGHAM