

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS DIGEST

Marplan gives you a 12% lead - 44/32/21 - as election goes off the boil a bit.

Kinnock confirms secondary picketing will be permitted under Labour's labour laws.

Conservative advert on "new moderate, militant-free Labour Party".

Report suggests that crime will increase in the 1990s to 1880 levels

Headteachers' leader attacks Tories' education policies.

Britain's trade £96m in credit; £ bounces back

Customs men return to work in two Channel ports - Dover and Ramsgate.

British diplomat kidnapped in Iran; strong protest by FCO. US forces Iranian jet to divert over Gulf.

Star explains "Now Kinnock nukes himself" - on the rack in the confusion of Labour defence policy caused by his suddenly pledging to decommission Polaris immediately; all this threatening to pull his presidential-style campaign apart at the seams.

Sun puts its political comment on Page 1 headed "When the red rose turns yellow" says Kinnock is a man of little experience in politics. A charitable view is that he thinks with his heart rather than with his head - or perhaps with the head of his CND wife. He sees things not as they are but as he imagines they should be. In a private individual, a world of fantasy might be harmless, but in a politician who seeks to control the nation it is a nightmarish prospect.

Sun news stories headed -"Uproar as no-nukes storm explodes in face of Neil. Polaris to go on day one. Brass hats will quit if Labour win." On the last point it says up to 50 senior armed forces officers will leave if they fail to persuade Kinnock to keep US bases. Also reported is a plan by the ILEA to make toddlers of 3 & 4 targets for homosexual propaganda.

Mirror leader says a helping hand from Reagan is not the best way for you to win an election. What Labour should be doing is emphasising that the first need is to get all-round disarmament on which you are dragging your feet. But Kinnock must also say that no Labour Government would ever sacrifice the defence of Britain to the fringe theories of neutralists, pacificists, CND and those who want us out of NATO.

In another story, Mirror says one in three Tory MPs, and six Ministers, acquired shares in British Gas. Two Labour MPs have them - Leadbitter and George Foulkes who bought and sold 500.

On its election pages, Mirror has Kinnock blasting back in defence and suggests there will be H-bombs for ever under you. Ted Heath tells Reagan to keep out of British politics.

Today: I will scrap Polaris the day we win - no chance of Russian invasion, says Kinnock. Prince Charles reported as joining the election fray with an impassioned plea for more jobs for the young and the regeneration of industry.

On Today's election pages your warning that our soldiers would be sitting ducks under Labour carried prominently. Kinnock ditches his plans for overhauling domestic rates.

Today leader says neither you nor Kinnock can be trusted to govern alone. A vote for the Alliance is not an empty protest but a positive act. It would give majority government for the first time in decades.

Daily News says Kinnock sticks to his guns in nuclear defence debate.

Express leads with "Maggie nukes Kinnock - Tory poll boost as defence row grows." Fierce backlash against Kinnock's non-nuclear policy. Inside it reports that divisions in the Labour Party were exposed yesterday by its keeping away three hard Left candidates from a Giles Radice press conference in Bradford.

Express leader says that while it is right defence should have become the key issue of the campaign it should not obscure the happier news about the economy - eg trade figures, rising productivity, falling unemployment, low inflation etc. Are the British people willing to jeopardise this hard-won, well-deserved breakthrough to prosperity?

Another Express leader says Neil the Squeal could perhaps have been Kinnock's nickname in view of his reaction to criticism. It is rum for someone like him to complain about personal attacks when he has accused you of "character deficiency", being "Reagan's poodle", and "bloody lethal".

Charles Moore, in "Express", says watching Kinnock fantasising on the David Frost show about resistance movements in occupied Britain makes one go cold at his terrifying frivoloty. He has made defence the most important issue by treating it as the most trivial.

Mail leads with the Labour Left's plans in the "Iceberg Manifesto". Published by Labour Briefing, it threatens to confront the bosses bosses and the banks, repeal the public order laws, withdraw all troops from Ulster, the Falklands and Germany, pull out of the Common Market and open our doors to immigrants.

Elsewhere, the Mail describes your 12 point lead as a breakthrough and says the trade surplus ends Labour's panic claim of crisis. Merlyn Rees has clashed with Labour's hierarchy by arguing against the abolition of independent schools.

Mail leader says the blowing up of defence in Kinnock's face seems to have been the signal for the Left to start revealing great plans for when they take control. And make no mistake about it, if Labour wins the hard and soft Left will be in a majority in Parliamentary Labour Party.

Paul Johnson, in Mail, says your election tours have become a farce because security prevents you from meeting the pople. But Kinnock doesn't want to meet them because his minders are afraid of his temper.

Telegraph leads with fury reputing over defence. Thatcher scorns policy of white flag. Defence correspondent, John Keegan, says muddle is too kind a word to describe the quality of Kinnock's defence outlook. The campaign has exposed Kinnock as childish in his refusal to face facts and in his desire that unpleasant things should go away.

Telegraph leader says the Alliance's progress is falling far short of hopes and expectations and is suffering the classic third-party squeeze. More and more, David Owen looks the man alone, in many ways an attractive and admirable figure but not the leader of a credible political grouping. His best achievement has been to underline his claim as the best leader the Conservative party will never have.

Guardian leads with "Thatcher derides termites of the Left" and says the Conservatives are pulling away from Labour, according to Marplan: the first poll to be completed since the onslaught on Labour's defence policies.

Guardian leader says there is an infectious confidence about the Labour campaign which carried Kinnock through yesterday's press conference in generally commanding style. But unless the Alliance can win votes and seats from the Conservatives the Tories will win.

Hugo Young, in Guardian, says he has deduced that Kinnock is still deeply confused about the concept of deterrence but knows that his original policy in its raw form is a vote loser and is prepared to say almost anything that will improve his chances of winning. But he doubts whether there is much more mileage in the issue for the Conservatives.

Guardian reprints Kenneth Baker's account, first published in the Mail, of Conservative plans for schools.

Independent leads with Kinnock spelling out unilateralist approach. Labour would decommission Polaris within a couple of weeks. Thatcher attacks Labour's hard left termites.

Independent leader says any feeling that Kinnock's unilateralism would be restrained by others, including Armed Services and Civil Service, is dangerously complacent. If Kinnock were going to abandon unilateralism because of its unpopularity he would have done so long ago. In any case it is extremely popular in the Labour Party.

Peter Jenkins, in Independent, says the salient feature of the first two weeks of the campaign is the solidity of the Conservative vote. The fundamentals of the economic and social condition of the country are proving far more decisive. For all Kinnock's efforts, Labour's vote today is lower than when Foot turned into his tailspin.

Times says defence strategy has paid off in the Marplan poll. Kinnock qualifies his stance over scrapping nuclear deterrent. Geoffrey Smith seems bored. He says the essential feature of this election is that nothing is happening. There is very little evidence that campaigning is having an effect on voting intention. The calm or apathy must be bad for Labour.

John Grigg, in *Times*, says the trade unions should not be in a position to dictate to the national government. Yet how could any Labour Prime Minister on his own defy them? Only the need to co-operate with a genuinely independent and moderate force could make a Kinnock-led Government anything but a menace to the country.

Times leader says that after yesterday's press conference it is clearer than ever that Kinnock's successes in his first week were crucially dependent on no one getting close enough to ask him about defence. In the end it will depend on whether the voters share Kinnock's relaxed view of the Soviet threat.

FT leads with "Labour checked in poll as defence remains central issue". The polls this week point to a clear firming of Tory support.

Malcolm Rutherford, in the *FT*, says defence has become an albatross around Kinnock's neck. But the Labour Party is not unchanged. Not only have you changed the country; you are changing the Labour Party. He finds it hard to believe that Alliance fortunes won't soon turn up and he expects a surge next week. But the Conservatives will win.

B Ingham
May 29, 1987