

2 June 1983

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS DIGEST

Election

- Foot "go/no go", Alliance upsurge, Healey's Falkland attack and Chancellor's "£20 a week" costing of Labour programme dominate the coverage.
- Express front pages Foot under notice from Union bosses to quit if Labour loses and on centre page says "Spot the Trots" listing 70 Labour extremist candidates and their opinion writer urges "No retreat from Europe".
- Sun headlines Steel band rocks Foot and spreads itself with geriatric pix of Foot asking "Do you seriously want this old man to run Britain?".
- Mail comment taunts Foot with his "I'll have to ask the wife" response to questions but Paul Johnston finds much to admire in David Owen except for his Party.
- Mirror focuses on "the waste of a nation" and the missing homes - Council homes that is.
- Sun audience selection telephone poll finds Conservative 44%. Labour 29%, Alliance 25% - Alliance up 4, Labour down 3, Tories down 1. Alliance optimism continues to run.
- Mori poll published yesterday shows 12% potential support for Ecology Party and Porrit gets some air time from BBC.
- Labour defector Michael Barnes founder member of SDP to rejoin Labour.
- "Electoral ready reckoner" computer programme produced by Chris Monckton goes on sale to the public.
- Times diary notices recall of David Boddy to help out on PM's tour.
- MARPLAN poll for Birmingham Mail gives Conservatives 4% lead in West Bromwich East, a key West Midlands marginal.
- Healey's attack on "Maggie glories in slaughter" while lending Argentine millions to buy weapons get wide coverage and Kinnock's call for Belgrano inquiry attracts attention.

Defence

- Tony Bevan in the Times probes the Foot/Healey disagreement on defence policy.
- 300 Newbury locals march in protest against Greenham Common women.
- More arrests (200) at Upper Heyford but protesters fail to achieve effective blockade.
- NATO urged to spend more on conventional forces by Chairman of NATO Military Committee.
- Guardian picks up report by John Cartwright SDP and Julian Critchley for debate by NATO Parliamentarians which casts doubt on "joint decision" arrangements.
- Harold Jackson in the Guardian says Mrs T and other Euro leaders put pressure on Reagan at Williamsburg to have early Summit meeting with Andropov.

Media

- Sir Robin Day confesses himself "deeply depressed" by his handling of Panorama interview with PM doubting whether people in Bootle would be impressed by 'wrangling over statistics"
- Times leader thinks "administrative secrecy" is enshrined in Questions of Procedure for Ministers and Estocode. The suggestion made is for a Select Committee on Official Information.
- Still no FT today due to dispute with machine minders.

Employment/Pay/Industry

- Labour braced for tomorrow's unemployment statistics showing 100,000 drop in crude total which support government claims of economic upturn.
- British Airports Authority, high on Conservative privatisation list, reveal £8m drop in operating profits.
- Foot says cost of unemployment £15,000m a year rising to £17,000m and claims the figures came from the Treasury.
- A father whose son was killed on Youth Opportunities Scheme to sue Tebbit and MSC for incompetence and failure to make proper safety checks.
- Railwaymen offered 3½% or 4½% if they accept deal quickly.

Health

- Mail draws attention to NOP poll for BUPA showing only 1 in 5 want totally State Health Service with no private medicine.

Education

- Keith Joseph plays down school vouchers option.
- Guardian says education in a crisis.

Economy

- Irish banks refuse to handle Britain's new £1 coin - it is too bulky for them!
- Times leader considers pension fund politics saying investment for political rather than profit motives is bad news for pensioners.

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