

SUMMARY OF OPINION POLLS 1985/86

Allan Macartney

The Opinion Polls appendix follows the by now standard format. Table 1 (System Three [Scotland], published in the *Glasgow Herald*) illustrates the movements of public opinion over the period mid-1985 to mid-1986, with the General Election result two years before that as a yardstick. Table 2 gives, by comparison, the MORI figures of voting intention published in *The Scotsman*. As before, the Conservative and Alliance result in June 1983 still appears as a peak to which they have not returned whereas for the SNP (marginally) and for Labour (more dramatically), their standing has been better in the opinion polls than in the preceding General Election.

Table 3 gives the views of the public on Scotland's constitutional future. For ease of comparison we have followed as far as possible the same method of presentation of the options, although minor variations in wording have occurred over the years.

One of the more intriguing issues for debate during the past year has been the apparent paradox of rising support for Independence coupled with a failure to translate that sentiment into an intention to vote for the only party which promises that outcome. Moreover, the result of the Regional Council elections did not exactly contribute to a solution of the problem: the Scottish National Party came second in terms of the popular vote but well behind Labour, whose showing was closer to its opinion poll rating. Political scientists can of course rationalise such discrepancies by referring to saliency and differential abstention but it does leave some interesting question marks over the development of Scottish politics in the near future, and these seem unlikely to be settled before the next General Election.

Acknowledgements

The Yearbook is again indebted to System Three (Scotland), MORI, the *Glasgow Herald* and *The Scotsman* for permission to publish the data in this section. We are grateful to Edinburgh University Audio-Visual Services for graphical presentation.

Technical Notes

As always, percentages have been rounded, while "don't knows", refusals and "won't votes" have been omitted. The dates given are those of completion of the fieldwork, rather than dates of eventual publication.

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TABLE 1: VOTING INTENTION (SYSTEM THREE POLLS)

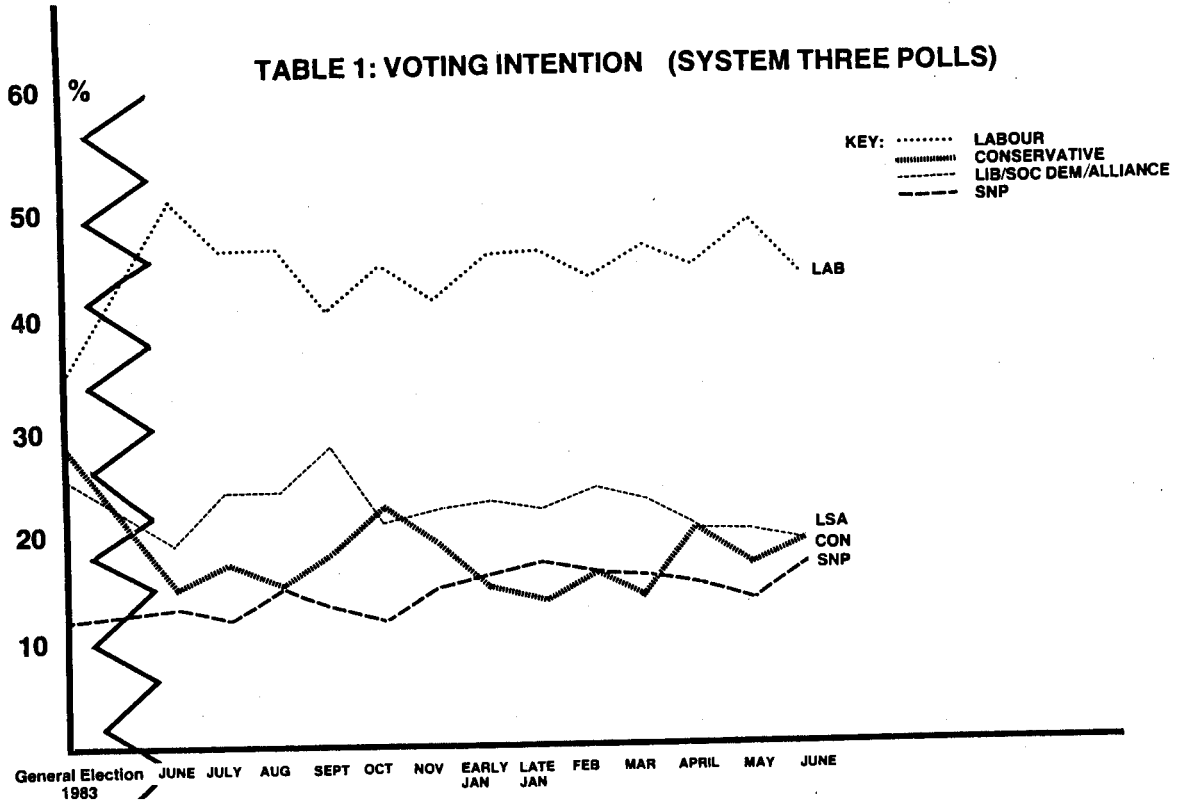


TABLE 2: VOTING INTENTION (MORI POLLS)

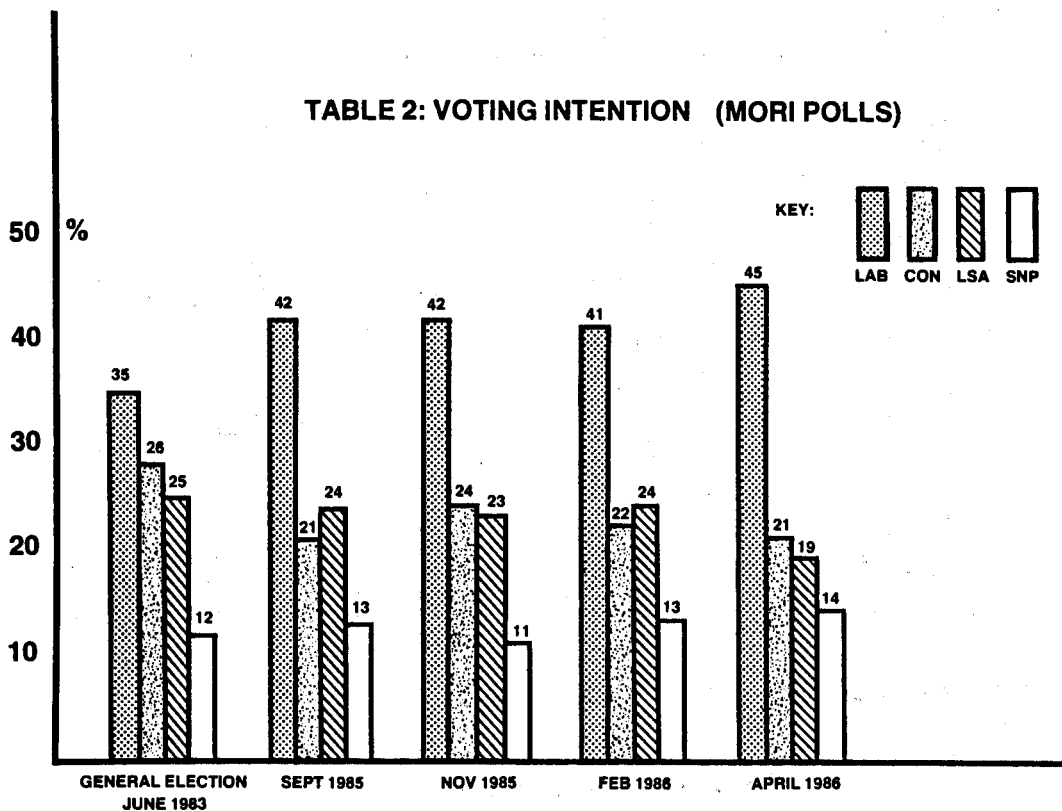


Table 3
Preferred Constitutional Options

