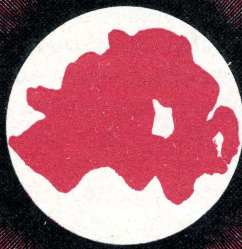


FORTNIGHT

An Independent Review for Northern Ireland

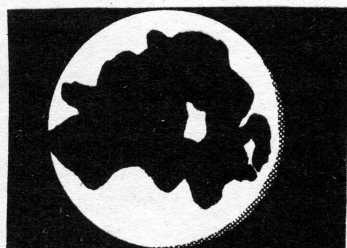
OPINION POLL RESULTS



FORTNIGHT

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**Editorial: 15 James Street South,
Belfast BT2 7GA**

Telephone: Belfast 20167

**Subscriptions ;
65 Marlborough Park South,
Belfast 9**

Editors:
TOM HADDEN,
MARTYN TURNER

Subscription Manager:
VIVIEN MAGOWAN

Production Manager:
NOEL KENNEDY

TIME FOR A CHANGE—TIME FOR A COALITION

The results of the latest Fortnight/Sunday Times Poll are quite encouraging. The overall response to the White Paper proposals is favourable. To gain the full support of the Protestant community some changes might have to be made. But there was no indication of active opposition.

On the other hand the response to the voting questions show that sectarian patterns of voting behaviour have not changed enough to outweigh the traditional support for the Unionist Party. The centre parties are not yet strong enough to be able to prevent a loyalist coalition on traditional lines from dominating the new Assembly.

If, as we believe, it is time for a change in leadership in Northern Ireland, the implication from these findings is clear. There is a need for an electoral coalition or pact among those parties which can offer a change of leadership. This does not mean a reversion to one party rule by the centre or the SDLP. Both are committed to accepting a system of power-sharing. But there is a world of difference in practice between being offered a share of power by a dominating Unionist group, and being in a position to offer to share power with those same Unionists from a position of strength. If Alliance, NI Labour and the SDLP wish to get into this position they must get together and fight the election on a common platform.

There is one final encouraging feature of the poll, the greater strength of the centre parties on second and lower preferences. But perhaps the most striking aspect of this exercise in PR voting was the fact that almost half the voters questioned were not making use of the second and lower choices at all. If a coalition is to get off the ground it must be based on a carefully drawn up plan of action to ensure that all its supporters use and are permitted to use their preferences to the most advantage.

The next issue of Fortnight will appear on Thursday 7th June; we apologise to our readers for the delay in the publication date of this issue due to co-ordination of the publication of our poll with the Sunday Times.

FORTNIGHT POLL

The results of this exclusive Fortnight/Sunday Times Poll show a clear shift to the centre parties and almost total support for making the White Paper proposals work, and for integrated education. The poll was carried out for us by Carrick James Market Research of London on a sample of 950 voters in six constituencies throughout Northern Ireland. More detailed analyses of the poll will be published in our next issue.

The details of the poll

The sample of 950 voters was drawn from six constituencies throughout Northern Ireland: two in Belfast, two in the eastern counties of Antrim and Down, and two in the western counties of Armagh, Londonderry, Tyrone and Fermanagh. A total of 160 persons, carefully allocated by class, age, sex and religion, was interviewed in each constituency during the first two weeks of May. The full details of the sample make-up are set out below. Polling was carried out by local interviewers both in the country and in the towns, and sampling points were carefully selected to give full weight to those living in largely Protestant, largely Catholic and mixed areas. Volunteer interviewers went into the most troubled areas of Belfast.

Reactions to the White Paper

Each respondent was asked to give his reaction to the White Paper both as a whole and in respect of individual proposals in it. Overall, as shown in Table

3, more than half the people (56%) wanted to make the proposals work or give them a try, and a further 28% wanted to have them changed a little and then made to work. Only one in ten wanted to see the proposals fail, and of those only half would be prepared to resort to strikes or violence. The only major difference between the two communities on this question was that far more Protestants (36%) wanted to see changes than Catholics (14%).

On individual items in the White Paper there was general agreement in favour of power-sharing and having elections by proportional representation. 58% were in favour or strongly in favour of power-sharing, and only 12% against it, or strongly against it; 55% were in favour or strongly in favour of PR and only 16% against it or strongly against it. There was scarcely any difference between the communities on these items. There was also general agreement between Protestants and Catholics on the prospect of having a permanent secretary of state like Mr. Whitelaw with wide powers; 31% were in favour or strongly in favour, 36% were willing to accept or did not mind, but 28% more were against it or strongly against it. Almost everyone (74%) was in favour of legislation for human rights, and only 3% against it.

The item which showed most difference between the two communities was naturally the question of a conference with the Republic. On this 70% of

Catholics were strongly in favour or in favour, compared with only 16% of Protestants. More than half the Protestants (56%) were against it or strongly against it. More Protestants (35%) than Catholics (15%) were also against the abolition of the Governor, but on this the largest number (37%) did not seem to mind either way, with only 27% overall in favour.

Political personalities and voting

The main details on the questions on political personalities are set out in Table 4. Brian Faulkner is still the most popular overall, but draws his support almost entirely from the Protestants, even on the second question asking which other politicians on the list the voters agreed with. But Bob Cooper of the Alliance Party is now the second most popular politician, ahead of John Hume, Ian Paisley and William Craig - even on first choices; if agreement from others is added in, in which both Bob Cooper and Oliver Napier of Alliance, David Bleakley of N I Labour and Ian Paisley did particularly well, the order would change considerably. The most noticeable feature of this question was the sectarian division in support of figures like Faulkner, Hume, Paisley, Fitt and Craig while Cooper, Bleakley and Napier get support from both communities. Apart from these no other names got substantial support, though respondents were asked to add to the list if they wished.

On voting the details are again set out in the Tables. The full implications of the second and third and fourth preferences have still to be worked out: the operation is complex even for a computer. But it is

TABLE 1 VOTING INTENTIONS (All Areas Combined)

	First choice			Second choice		
	All	Prot.	R.C.	All	Prot.	R.C.
Vanguard	9%	14%	1%	3%	5%	—
DUP	10%	16%	—	7%	11%	—
Official						
Unionists	28%	44%	—	7%	10%	1%
Independent						
Unionists	1%	2%	—	6%	9%	—
Alliance	19%	16%	27%	10%	11%	9%
N.I. Labour	6%	6%	8%	9%	7%	12%
SDLP	14%	1%	40%	4%	1%	11%
Nationalist ect	3%	—	7%	2%	—	5%
Official						
Republican	3%	—	6%	2%	—	5%
Provisional						
Republican	3%	—	8%	1%	—	4%

TABLE 2 VOTING INTENTIONS (Selected Constituencies)

	Belfast South	Belfast West	Antrim North	Down North	Derry	F/mana & Tyrone
vanguard	12%	6%	10%	6%	6%	13%
DUP	8%	7%	13%	9%	13%	12%
Official						
Unionist	40%	15%	26%	53%	18%	21%
Independent						
Unionist	1%	2%	—	2%	1%	—
Alliance	24%	17%	25%	19%	20%	13%
N.I. Labour	6%	10%	5%	9%	4%	5%
SDLP	3%	20%	14%	2%	26%	23%
Nationalist	—	4%	—	—	9%	4%
Official						
Republican	4%	9%	—	—	2%	—
Provisional						
Republican	1%	8%	—	—	—	7%
Don't know	2%	1%	7%	—	—	—

clear that a large number of second preferences is going to both Alliance and N.I. Labour. If these are taken into account Alliance could win rather more than the one in five seats indicated by the first preferences, and the centre parties as a whole might be in a position to decide which other parties align with to make a majority.

Border Poll

The question on the Border Poll revealed one striking fact, that many more

Catholics than had been thought voted in the poll. As all but one percent voted in favour of the link with the British this means that a substantial number of Catholics must have voted in favour, as Brian Faulkner claimed after the poll. As a follow up to this we asked the voters to give their order of preference for several possible constitutional positions, as set out in Table 4. Overall Regional Government within the UK came out on top, both for first and second preferences, closely

followed by total integration with Britain.

Education

One final question of some significance was asked, on the attitude of voters to integrated education. The replies confirm that the vast majority of people would like to see this happen: 62% were in favour or strongly in favour, and only 13% against or strongly against. There was very little difference between the communities on this. In fact a more detailed study of the returns showed that the only people strongly against the idea were the supporters of Ian Paisley and of the Provisional IRA. This finding at least should help to destroy the idea that the IRA are a non-sectarian force.

TABLE 3 ATTITUDE TO WHITE PAPER

Q. Which attitude to the White Paper would you support?

	All	Prot.	R.C.
Try to make them work	17%	13%	23%
Give them a try	39%	37%	41%
Try to get them changed a bit and then make them work	28%	36%	14%
Don't mind whether they succeed or fail	10%	9%	11%
Try to make them fail	5%	5%	5%
Try to make them fail by supporting strikes/violence	3%	2%	4%

TABLE 5 Q. Did you vote in the Border Poll?

BORDER POLL	All	Prot.	R.C.
Yes	66%	87%	27%
No	33%	13%	72%

Q. If you had been given more choice what would your preferences have been from the following?

	ALL		PROD.		R.C.	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Regional Government within UK	35%	30%	45%	41%	17%	10%
Integration with Britain	28%	28%	39%	39%	9%	8%
'New Ireland'	14%	7%	2%	2%	36%	15%
Integration with Republic	4%	6%	-	1%	12%	15%
Independent Dominion of Ulster	4%	4%	6%	5%	1%	2%
Condominium - joint rule by Britain and Republic	3%	8%	-	1%	7%	20%
Don't Know	11%	17%	7%	10%	18%	28%

TABLE 4 POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

Q. Which of these most closely represents your views of what should be done in Northern Ireland?

Q. Which others do you agree with?

	All	Prot.	R.C.	All	Prot.	R.C.
Faulkner	29%	44%	1%	11%	16%	2%
Bob Cooper	14%	12%	18%	18%	18%	16%
Hume	11%	1%	29%	11%	1%	29%
Paisley	11%	16%	1%	16%	25%	1%
Craig	9%	14%	-	10%	15%	-
Bleakley	7%	5%	10%	17%	16%	17%
Fitt	6%	-	17%	14%	2%	35%
Napier	6%	4%	8%	22%	22%	20%
McManus	4%	-	12%	4%	-	11%
Hull	1%	1%	-	7%	10%	1%
Mills S	1%	2%	-	12%	17%	3%
McAteer	1%	-	4%	9%	-	24%

TABLE 6 INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Q. How would you feel about your children, or children you know, going to a school attended by pupils and taught by teachers some of whom were Catholic and some Protestant?

	All	Prot.	R.C.
Strongly in favour	31%	28%	34%
In favour	31%	31%	30%
Don't mind/willing to accept	24%	25%	21%
Against	10%	10%	10%
Strongly against	3%	3%	3%

	Belfast	E Cties	Wst Cties
Prot.	182	251	155
R.C.	102	60	161
All	285	311	316

Class	ABC 1	C2	DE	Sex	M	F
	36%	30%	35%		50%	50%
	23%	32%	45%		43%	57%