

THE 1994 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS IN SCOTLAND: CAMPAIGNS AND STRATEGIES

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INTRODUCTION

The European election of 1994 was the most recent test of national opinion for Scotland's political parties. The elections attracted a record number of candidates, at fifty-six, through the intervention of minor party candidates such as the Natural Law Party and Scottish Militant Labour, to add to candidates from the Conservatives, Scottish Labour Party, Scottish Liberal Democrats (SLD), Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Green Party.

One of the biggest influences on European election campaigns has been their place in an electoral cycle dominated by Westminster elections and domestic political concerns. In 1994, the contest fell in the mid-term period of the government, a fact that was always going to make it a difficult election for the Conservatives, and that would influence the campaigns and strategies of the political parties. One of the best ways to illustrate the significance of timing is to look back to the first European election in 1979. It occurred at an opportune time for the Conservatives, as it followed Labour's general election defeat and the decline of the SNP, and enabled the Conservatives to win 5 of Scotland's 8 European constituencies - a very different performance to that in 1989 and 1994. Since 1979, the timing of European elections has tended to favour the opposition parties, and it enabled Labour to replace Conservative MEPs from 1984 to 1989.

European elections are best understood as 'second-order' elections. The general election, with its role in electing or confirming a government in office, is the best example of a 'first-order' election. Conversely a 'second-

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order' election is characterised by the fact that the elections do not affect governmental arrangements and are subject to tactical voting and abstentions. Hence turnouts are low, anti-government voting is common, and there are increased opportunities for third parties to gain support (Reif 1985). European elections have particular features which determine their 'second-order' status. Voter awareness and appreciation of the European Parliament and its members is limited, popular awareness of the issues involved in the elections is minimal, and national political concerns tend to dominate (Lodge 1984). Whilst European elections in Britain certainly conform to the 'second-order' type, they do have 'first order' consequences. The Conservative's failure in 1989 had repercussions for the Thatcher administration, whilst the 1994 elections were closely tied to John Major's tenure at Number 10.

The combined effects of 'second-order' status and the mid-term timing of European elections has encouraged opposition parties to view the elections as surrogate national elections, using national, rather than European, political issues to mobilise electoral support. Lack of understanding and concern for the European Union amongst voters may have made this development inevitable, but parties have increasingly sought to define the elections and campaigns in their own terms to capture the election for their own domestic agenda. This was the successful Labour strategy in the 1989 election, which it designated as a referendum on Thatcherism, and was a vital part of its approach in 1994.

Labour was not the only party to benefit from 'second-order' effects in 1989. The Greens were able to combine disenchantment with the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats with widespread environmental concern to gain 14% in the UK. This advance was checked in Scotland by the success of the SNP, which held the Greens to only 7%. The SNP performance in 1989 was striking, and demonstrated the party's ability to take advantage of 'second-order' effects at European elections. The SNP's 26% was its highest since the general election of October 1974, and 12% above its general election performance in 1987.

Before examining the 1994 European election campaigns of the main parties in Scotland, it is necessary to place the campaigns and the results in a wider political context. This requires some discussion of the European, British and Scottish contexts in which the election occurred.

THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The European political environment of 1994 was clearly very different to that which prevailed in 1989. The last European elections occurred at a time of great Euro-optimism, associated with the Single European Act and the 1992 programme to create a single market. These developments furnished the European Community with a very positive image across Western Europe and widespread support for European integration in most member states. The public mood of 1989 was markedly different to that of the 1994 European elections. The context of these elections was influenced by the development of Euro-pessimism around the time of the Maastricht Treaty negotiations in 1990-1991, with subsequent uncertainty amongst member states and national publics over the nature of the integration process itself. This was evident in the Danish and French referenda in 1992 and conflicts within the European Community system over German reunification, Economic and Monetary Union, enlargement and the social chapter.

Of course, it was not merely conflicts within the European Community that generated a mood of Euro-pessimism amongst national electorates. The economic recession in Europe, dissatisfaction with national governments and policies, the rise of extreme nationalism, and the economic and social effects of German reunification and immigration from Eastern Europe were all negative factors that darkened the public mood for greater European union. The path of European integration has never been a smooth one, with the Community's efforts challenged in the past by the resurgence of national government power (Taylor 1973) and by international economic problems (Haas 1975). Such factors have continued to exist as problems capable of throwing European integration off balance - most notably through conflicts over the allocation of powers between national governments and the European Union during the Maastricht debates, and over the crisis of the European Monetary System in 1992-3.

THE BRITISH CONTEXT

The changed environment in which European integration was pursued in the 1990s was very evident in Britain. The negative mood amongst the public was exacerbated by the British government's dissatisfaction with the Maastricht Treaty and the divisions within the Conservative Party on a number of European issues. Though it is domestic rather than European issues which are most salient in European elections, the interplay between national and European political agendas has a significant impact upon the

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election campaigns of the political parties. The pressures within the Conservative Party over Europe were the most obvious example of this impact, contributing to a prolonged leadership crisis, expectations of cabinet reshuffles and considerable backbench dissidence. It also brought the formation of the UK Independence Party to campaign for British secession from the European Union, though it didn't field any candidates in Scotland.

The 1989 European elections had featured a Conservative government in some disarray over Europe (Burgess and Lee 1990), and 1994 was to be little different. The Conservative Party's internal problems with European union were clearly manifest in the changing government position on Europe, with the government's attitudes to changes in qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers providing a recent example. Britain attempted to play tough in order to satisfy Conservative Euro-sceptics and impress Conservative voters, but was forced to back down on the issue, thus effectively undermining the government's efforts to demonstrate its leadership abilities in European affairs.

The question of the continuing role of John Major as Conservative leader was a key issue during the campaign, with the result of the European elections seen to offer a good guide to Major's survival. Each opinion poll and European results forecast was analysed with the leadership question in mind, and the Tories' low ratings in the polls often led to renewed speculation in the media and at Westminster. At times there appeared to be a shadow leadership contest developing between Kenneth Clark, Michael Heseltine and Michael Portillo, which was enmeshed in the Conservatives' internal conflict over Europe. The main respite from this conflict came with the death of the Labour leader, John Smith. This dominated the media for about a week, and formal election campaigning was suspended. It also led the media to focus on the contest for the Labour leadership and diverted its attention from the Conservatives.

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The six month period leading up to the European elections was one of relative stability in Scottish politics. The opinion poll ratings of the main parties in Scotland were fairly static, with the SNP showing slight upward movement and the Conservatives some downward movement which left them with a record low of 13%. This was to prove a fairly good indication of electoral prospects in the European elections. Indeed, the results of the regional elections in May offered a useful pointer to the June poll, with the

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SNP doing well with 27%, Labour holding steady at 41%, the Liberal Democrats gaining 12% and the Conservatives declining to 14%, with the loss of almost half of their seats. (See the article by Denver and Bochel elsewhere in this issues of **Scottish Affairs**.)

The state of the parties in Scotland in 1994 and the distribution of party support in individual Euro-constituencies tended to blunt expectations of change at the European elections. Most of the Euro-constituencies were safe seats. The exceptions were North-East Scotland, which was a three-way marginal in 1989 between the Conservatives, Labour and SNP; South of Scotland, which was a Conservative-Labour contest; and also possibly the Highlands and Islands, which Winnie Ewing has held since 1979 despite the fact that the constituency is dominated by the Liberal Democrats at general elections.

The background to the European elections needs to be explained through a mixture of Scottish and UK factors, which were often closely interrelated. Scottish influences on the election included economic issues such as the threat to Rosyth Naval Base; the opposition parties' success in the Strathclyde Regional Council referendum on water privatisation; and the relative performance of the parties in the Regional elections detailed above. General UK factors were also influential. Apart from general dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the economy, the issues of VAT on fuel and national insurance increases were important. These latter type of issues were frequently used by the opposition parties during the campaign in their efforts to cast the election as a referendum on the government. The Conservatives responded by discussing European, rather than domestic, issues, in an attempt to fight a campaign predominantly concerned with Europe and Britain's role in Europe. This was certainly the thrust of the Conservative European manifesto though it was never going to be very successful given the domestic concerns of the electorate. One opinion poll in **The Scotsman** (7 June 1994) indicated that 52% of those interviewed would cast their vote on Scottish issues and 24% on British issues. This left only 19% influenced by the European agenda, mostly drawn from the small Conservative and Liberal Democrat electorates.

THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

There was considerable debate on European issues in Scotland during the election campaign, with a televised inter-party debate sponsored by **The Herald** and the European Movement on 3rd June, somewhat similar to that in

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the Usher Hall in 1992 on Scottish self-government (sponsored by **The Scotsman**); a special edition of BBC Scotland's **Axiom** programme on Europe; and a discussion on European Union on STV chaired by Donald MacCormick. What was abundantly clear from these debates is that they almost exclusively involved Scotland's political elites and revealed very little about party or public attitudes to Europe. They tended to force the Conservatives onto the defensive over their approach to Europe - whether over Maastricht, EU social policy or the qualified majority voting row over enlargement - and also highlighted the traditional conflict between the SNP and Labour.

A series of opinion polls by ICM for **The Scotsman** was able to shed some light on public attitudes to European Union. These were contrasted with polls taken at the time of the European Council in Edinburgh in December 1992 and revealed a very mixed picture. There was an increase in support for European integration, though such support remained a minority amongst those interviewed. Support for a single currency stood at 39%, an increase of 12% on 1992, whilst opposition had dropped to 49%. The poll also indicated 83% support for the adoption of a referendum on a single currency, and a desire for national parliaments to gain more power with the European Union at the expense of European institutions (**The Scotsman**, 8th June 1994). The polls say something about public attitudes to European issues, but these were largely unimportant given the salience of domestic issues amongst the electorate.

THE PARTY CAMPAIGNS

The Conservatives

The Conservative election campaign in 1989 was widely acknowledged as a disaster. It concentrated on negative European themes that came across as xenophobia, and stressed the traditional notion that the Conservative Government was the best representatives of British national interests in Brussels. Scottish Conservatives were particularly aware of the impact of the party's campaign in 1989 and sought to model their approach in 1994 on a more positive agenda linked to the Prime Minister's strategy of placing Britain at 'the heart of Europe' and stressing the benefits of the Maastricht Treaty (**The Herald**, 8 November 1993). This involved some attempts by the Scottish party to distance itself from the Euro-sceptics and the insular attitudes of some in the party in the South. However, by the time the European elections came along, Scottish Conservatives had moved to adopt a

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more Euro-sceptic position with Ian Lang criticising other parties for supporting further European integration, and keen to defend British sovereignty against the threat of Brussels (**The Scotsman**, 24 May 1994).

If the Conservative performance in the 1992 general election had been repeated in the European elections, it would have regained the North-East Scotland constituency, which it had held until 1989. The prospects for Conservative success may have looked promising at the general election, but they had dissipated considerably by the time of the European elections. By 1994 the party in Scotland and the UK was suffering serious unpopularity that threatened to weaken its electoral support. Scottish opinion polls gave the party only 15% in January 1994, which subsequently fell to 13%, whilst UK polls hovered around 26% to 30% (**The Guardian**, 12 January 1994).

The Conservatives' goal in the 1994 European election was to achieve electoral stability. Conservatives had viewed 1994 as a year for bottoming-out, as the government's mid-term cycle would be at its lowest. The party was seeking to rally its core support and generate some evidence that its free-fall in support since the 1992 general election was at an end. This goal was damaged in Scotland by the Regional election results and low opinion poll ratings. Because the slump in Conservative support was largely a result of UK policies on tax, national insurance and the handling of the economy, there was little prospect of Tories in Scotland retaining the level of support they enjoyed in 1992, especially after the government mishandled the Strathclyde water referendum. The Scottish party was therefore engaged in holding onto its core vote, much the same preoccupation as the UK party. Clearly, there was little prospect of the Tories overtaking Labour or the SNP. The worst scenario would have placed the Scottish Conservatives in fourth place, behind the Liberal Democrats. Escaping this scenario by getting out the core vote was therefore essential.

The Conservative campaign in Scotland took a strong European and also British focus. The party manifesto was subtitled 'A Strong Britain in a Strong Europe', with no reference to Scotland. The only mention of Scotland was in an introduction by Ian Lang, the Secretary of State, and a brief section critical of the SNP (and Plaid Cymru) which made it appear that it had been added in order to put a kilt on the UK manifesto. The fact that Scotland was ignored in the party manifesto is partly explained by the generality of the manifesto itself and the substantial attention paid to explicitly European questions such as the single market, EU enlargement and the Common Agricultural Policy (Scottish Conservatives 1994). Coverage of these issues was highly questionable as voters were more concerned with domestic politics rather

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than the exotica of the EFTA and Central European countries seeking membership of the European Union. In addition, the manifesto made no mention of fishing and the Common Fisheries Policy, not something which would endear Conservative candidates to voters in North-East Scotland and the Highlands and Islands.

The Conservatives emphasis on UK and European factors was somewhat surprising given the attention paid to the issue of Scotland in Europe by Ian Lang in 1990-2. The Scottish Secretary had presided over a series of speeches detailing Scotland's role in a 'Europe of the regions', referring to Scotland Europa, the creation of a Committee of the Regions by the Maastricht Treaty and the role of the Scottish Office in promoting Scotland in the European Union. These issues were overlooked during the campaign as Scottish Conservatives concentrated on general questions related to Britain's role in Europe. Scottish Tories echoed the UK theme of choosing between a Europe governed by the Left or Right, and sought to use this to motivate disgruntled Tory voters to turn out to support the government. The fact that most voters were unaware of and probably unconcerned with the electoral balance within the European Parliament was overlooked.

Labour

The Labour Party was in the best position in the 1994 European elections. Despite the Conservative election success in 1992, and SNP penetration of the Labour electorate, it managed to maintain its level of support in Scotland and benefit from the low-standing of the Government, polling 47% in January (**The Herald**, 18 January 1994). Though Labour may have appeared vulnerable because it was defending 7 of the 8 Scottish seats, it was really only facing challenges in the South of Scotland and in North-East Scotland, and the latter was the only real contest because of the Conservatives' mid-term weakness. The remaining constituencies ranged from relatively safe Lothian to completely safe Glasgow. Where challenges did develop, they were localised rather than constituency-wide and limited to one party - the role of Scottish Militant Labour in Pollok was a good example.

Labour's campaign was boosted by its successful conference in Dundee in March. The party altered its name to stress the Scottish dimension and attempted to cast itself as 'the national party of Scotland'. The party also made frequent attacks on the SNP, suggesting something of the European campaign to come. The expected conflicts over the Scottish dimension and the selection of women candidates came to very little so that the party faced the Regional and European elections in good heart.

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Labour's electoral goal in the European election was to hold its 7 seats. There was little prospect of Labour taking the Highlands and Islands, but some prospect that the SNP would mount a strong challenge in highly marginal North-East Scotland. Therefore Labour's Scottish campaign was really being fought out in one seat, and one that it was surprised to win in 1989. Labour efforts to target North-East Scotland were hampered by the party's uneven distribution of support and organisational resources in the constituency - at the 1992 general election 75% of Labour support in the North-East had come from Aberdeen and Dundee. While the party was able to run a high-profile media campaign using a large number of the UK leadership, it was organisationally thin on the ground outside these two cities. Labour sought to overcome this through ensuring a strong role for its defending candidate in the North-East in press conferences and the manifesto launch.

The Scottish campaign was largely taken up with domestic economic and political issues. Labour sought to appear a 'strong opposition' to the Conservatives in order to dispel SNP attacks on Labour's inability to protect Scotland from government policies. Labour was keen to avoid its MEPs being cast as the 'silent seven' - a throwback to the SNP's typification of Labour MPs as the 'feeble fifty' after the 1987 general election. Similar to the other opposition parties, Labour made much of the domestic issues of water privatisation, VAT on fuel, tax rises and the general competence of the government (Scottish Labour Party 1994). Labour was also able to use the government's negative image on Europe to its advantage just as it had in 1989.

The impact of the death of John Smith on the election campaign is difficult to assess. Labour's campaign seemed to continue relatively smoothly, though some local campaigning may have been undermined by Smith's death. However, given the media-driven nature of the campaign, the lower level of constituency campaigning was not a great problem in most areas.

The Scottish National Party

For the SNP every election is, to some extent, the 'independence election'. This had certainly been the case in 1989, when the party attempted to stress its central political goal in European terms by campaigning for independence in Europe. This was the logical endpoint of previous European elections campaigns in 1979 and 1984 which had asserted the need and efficacy of greater Scottish representation in European institutions. The 1994 campaign marked a rather different approach by the SNP. The political linkage between European union and self-government was played down in favour of domestic

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socio-economic themes. The representational arguments of Scotland in Europe played second fiddle to the increase in VAT on fuel, the rise in national insurance contributions and the persistence of poverty and social problems in Scotland (**The Herald**, 15 October 1993). These themes were used to demonstrate the cost for every taxpayer of remaining in the Union with England, in contrast to the benefits of independent membership in the European Union. The SNP approached the European election with a generalised political appeal that cast the party as the 'power for change' in Scotland. The strength of this appeal was that it was all-encompassing and enabled the SNP to cast the election as a referendum on VAT, a rejection of water privatisation, opposition to local government reform, or a vote for independence in Europe. This strategy was intended to mobilise broad support against the Conservatives and also indict Labour for its perceived failings in opposing government legislation.

The European elections were a central aspect of the SNP's bid to restore its credibility after the general election in 1992. Then the party had succeeded in increasing its share of the vote but made no gain in parliamentary representation. This result was particularly damaging because of the over-optimistic style of the SNP campaign in 1992, with a thirty-eight seat forecast delivering only three MPs. The sequence of regional and European elections in 1994 were viewed as an opportunity to restore the party's image as a credible electoral force - a strategy which required electoral gains to be successful.

At the European elections the SNP was more cautious in both its goals and forecasts of success. Though the party was reticent to reveal its targeting strategy it was obvious that SNP efforts would be concentrated on the Highlands and Islands and the North-East of Scotland where it had the best chances of success. In other areas a good second place was uppermost in the party's mind, to bolster support in local constituencies. This was the case in Strathclyde East, which contains areas of SNP strength in 1992 such as Kilmarnock and Loudon, East Kilbride and Cumbernauld, and also Strathclyde West. The extent of activist support on the ground in the Strathclyde constituencies made them key areas of competition between the SNP and Labour, particularly as Strathclyde East included the Monklands East constituency which would hold a by-election in late June.

The North-East of Scotland constituency was the primary goal in 1994; in fact it would not be unrealistic to say that taking this seat was the SNP's sole criterion for success. The party's deputy leader, Allan Macartney, had contested the seat in 1989 and came very close to taking it. Macartney had

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also been a candidate in the Kincardine and Deeside constituency at the 1991 by-election and 1992 general election which had raised his profile in the North-East. The SNP nationally was targeting resources on the North-East, with a central press officer allocated to the seat and contemplation of using one of the SNP Party Political Broadcasts to focus on the constituency and its candidate, something that was largely achieved through featuring Macartney and the North-East extensively in the SNP's European broadcasts (23 May and 6 June 1994). In addition, the party was involved in directing activists to the constituency on certain occasions, and aided the targeting of particular areas within the seat during the campaign.

The Liberal Democrats

The performance of the Liberal Democrats in 1989 is best forgotten. The party succumbed to post-merger conflicts and its electorate stayed at home or switched its allegiance to another party. It polled only 4% in Scotland in 1989 compared to 19% at the 1987 general election. Whereas in previous elections the party had held hopes of gaining the Highlands and Islands, these hopes had disappeared in 1989 and not resurfaced in 1994 despite the party's strong role in the constituencies that make up the Highlands and Islands in the 1992 general election. Similar to Labour, the SLD was aware that its success on 9th June was going to come South of the border rather than in Scotland.

The Liberal Democrat leadership in the UK was aware that the party's strong support for European integration was an electoral weakness in 1994. The European campaigns co-ordinator recommended that the party tone down its enthusiasm for a federal Europe in a context of growing Euro-scepticism, in order to close the distance between the party and the electorate on European issues and limit the ability of the government to damage the party through criticising its commitment to a single currency and a federal Europe (**The Guardian**, 24 December 1994). In Scotland, the adoption of a less enthusiastic position over European integration was evident in the party's manifesto. Traditional Liberal Democrat support for European federalism (Butt Philip 1993) was suspiciously absent from the Scottish manifesto, with little mention of European integration itself. In place of the 'F' word were references to the party's support for subsidiarity and regional decentralisation, and opposition to the creation of a European super-state (SLD 1994).

The SLD played down its Euro-enthusiasm - something which previously made it distinctive amongst the parties - in favour of campaigning on domestic political issues. The party ran strongly on the issues of nursery

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provision, maternity leave and the social chapter - which combined European and domestic political agendas. It also echoed some of the themes of the other opposition parties over VAT on fuel, national insurance and water privatisation.

The SLD had three aims in the 1994 European elections. First, to signal an effective recovery from the disaster in 1989. Second, to try to wrest the Highlands and Islands seat from the SNP. Third, to replace the Conservatives in third place in Scotland. The SLD's prospects of recovering from 1989 were high, as its support had risen at the general election and Regional election. The fact that the Greens had declined and the Liberal Democrats were much more strongly positioned than in 1989 made recovery likely. The second goal was always going to be difficult. Though the Highlands and Islands has been an area of strong Liberal Democrat support at each general election since 1983, the party has never been able to convert this into European success. The challenge to Mrs Ewing in 1994 was made more difficult by the SNP's strong opinion poll showing compared to the SLD and by the Liberal Democrats' distant showing in the constituency in the 1989 European election.

The goal of taking over third place in Scotland was originally adopted as an objective for the Regional elections at the SLD conference in March. Since it was achieved in the Regional results in terms of seats, it was seen as a realistic goal for the European campaign. The SLD looked to gain from the unpopularity of the Conservatives in Scotland by picking up a couple of second places and gain third place in Scotland overall. This goal also proved to be unrealistic. The SLD was unable to turn its successes at the Regional elections into support in the European elections. Indeed, there seems to be little evidence that the Regional success fed into the European campaign at all.

The Greens

The Green Party dramatically arrived on the UK political scene in the European elections in 1989. Since then, the party has struggled to sustain 1% in the opinion polls in Scotland and in the UK as a whole. The Scottish Green party contested all eight Euro-constituencies but was always facing an uphill task given the party's overall decline, the recovery of the Liberal Democrats and the success of the SNP. The low level of support for the Greens was one reason for their low profile in the election campaign and the party struggled to gain media coverage. The party's poor performance at the Regional elections did nothing to help this problem, and it did complain of unfair

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media coverage, but there was no evident mood of opinion in favour of environmental issues to aid the Green party in 1994. The Green political agenda had waned since 1989 and competing parties had altered their political positions on the environment to attract the Green vote (Robinson 1992).

The Green Party campaigned on the need for sustainable growth and renewable energy supplies, and was highly critical of the undemocratic and centralised nature of the European Union, but it was unable to make any serious impact on the campaign. The rapid decline of the Greens since 1989 has returned them to the status of a fringe party.

CONCLUSION

The relative stability of the Scottish Euro-constituencies tended to make the 1994 contest rather uneventful. Because of the decline of the Conservatives in the opinion polls and Regional elections and persistent Liberal Democrat weakness, there was really only one serious electoral contest in 1994 - that between Labour and the SNP for North-East Scotland. The anti-government tide of voting was largely evident elsewhere. The rolling-back of the Conservatives across Southern England and the Midlands, and the rise of the Liberal Democrats in the South-West of England, were the real stories of the 1994 European elections.

The context of the European elections in 1994 had similarities and differences to the 1989 experience. In terms of similarities, both election campaigns were mid-term tests of support for the government, with the Conservatives electorally weak and Labour seeking to use its victory as evidence of its electability at the next general election. Both campaigns were fought out as referenda on the performance of the government, and featured extensive third-party voting that benefited the SNP. One of the most significant differences in the two campaigns was that the SNP was able to concentrate its resources on the European campaign to target the North-East Scotland constituency. There was no by-election to divide SNP efforts on polling day as was the case in 1989 with the Glasgow Central contest.

It is rather difficult to judge the mood of the Scottish electorate using the European election results. After all, only one seat changed hands and it was no great surprise. The SNP's victory in North-East Scotland was dramatic because of its magnitude, but it was a seat the SNP should perhaps have won in 1989. Had the SNP won Glasgow or Strathclyde East then it would be

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possible to conclude that the SNP was on a roll across Scotland. However, it seems to be the case that the SNP gained support in traditional areas of strength, largely at the expense of the Conservatives. In the central belt SNP support also increased, but there remained a large and perhaps insurmountable gap between it and Labour.

However, both the SNP and Labour can look back on the European campaign with a degree of satisfaction. The SNP managed to achieve its main objective by winning the North-East of Scotland, and its overall level of support probably exceeded expectations. The umbrella strategy of turning the European election into a campaign over a range of domestic issues was clearly successful - especially in contrast to the 1989 campaign centred around the theme of independence in Europe.

Labour can look back on a campaign in which it succeeded in maintaining its share of the vote in Scotland despite losing a seat to the SNP. However, the real test for Labour was in England. There, Labour's ability to take seats from the Conservatives in areas vital to success at the general election was the key to the European election campaign. Of course, Labour's strong performance across Britain in 1989 did not lead to electoral success in 1992. However, if Labour had stumbled badly in 1994, either in Scotland or England, then it would have opened the way to the charge that it could not succeed at the next general election. Labour overcame this problem with a strong showing in Scotland, and across Britain, that enabled it to appear in a strong position to replace the Conservatives at the next general election.

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