

Confidential

Public Opinion Background Note 14
(Produced 5th May 1980)

1. Introduction

Our latest Gallup "tracking" study conducted between 23rd and 28th April found a 5% Labour lead compared with 2% in our previous tracking study (conducted 23/28th April) and 8½% in the latest published Gallup figures.

2. Voting Intention

Trends in support for the main parties as found in our "tracking" study are shown below:-

	<u>Voting Intention</u>				
	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Lead</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
May 1979(GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June 1979*	42	43½	12	2½	-1½
<u>1980</u>					
11/17 March	37	49	11½	2	-12½**
20/24 March	38	45½	13½	2	- 7½
27/31 March	40	43	14	3	- 3
2/8 April	39	45	13	3	- 6
10/14 April	36½	45	15	3½	- 8½**
16/21 April	41	43	14½	1½	- 2
23/28 April	39	44	14	3	- 5

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published poll

The fluctuations in support for the parties shown in recent weeks make it almost impossible to perceive a clear trend in support - except to note the fairly consistent fall in Labour's support since early March.

3. Government Record

Our latest tracking study found a drop in government popularity - but not back to the low level reached in early March. As with voting intention, the standard government record questions do not show any particularly clear trends in recent weeks.

Continued.....

Government Record

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
13/18 June 1979*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
11/17 March	30	59	11
20/24 March	32	56	12
27/31 March	38	49	13
2/8 April	36	51	13
10/14 April	36	52	12
16/21 April	38	50	12
23/28 April	34	54	12

*First Post-Election Survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Slight fall in Mrs. Thatcher's popularity and in that of Mr. Steel - movement not significant and as with other questions, no clear trend is emerging.

Popularity of Political Leaders

	<u>Mrs. Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr. Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dissat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dissat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dissat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
11/17 March	38	59	6	53	35	12	60	19	21
20/24 March	40	56	5	51	34	15	60	18	22
27/31 March	41	49	7	53	35	12	60	18	22
2/8 April	40	51	6	56	31	12	55	19	26
10/14 April	41	54	5	55	33	12	60	19	21
16/21 April	43	51	7	52	34	14	59	17	25
23/28 April	40	54	6	52	33	14	57	18	25

5. Communication

In the week 23rd - 28th April we found 13% of the electorate claiming to have heard or seen something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days and 23% claiming to have heard or seen something making them less favourably inclined towards the Government. Reasons given by the more favourably inclined towards the Government included Iran/US hostages 4%, Olympics 2%, EEC Conference 2%, relations with Unions 2% and the Leader 2%. On the less favourably inclined side reasons included Olympics 6%, EEC Conference 4%, Iran/US hostages 4%, cost of living 4%. relations with Unions 2% and international affairs 2%.

6. Published Polls

A report on a repeat "wave" of the M.O.R.I. panel study published in the Sunday Times (4th May 1980) included a series of questions designed to test how public attitudes to our policies have changed since the election. Details are given below:-

The Policy Verdict

The panel were asked which party they thought had the best policies. The Results (in percentages):

	<u>May 1979</u>	<u>Now</u>
<u>Inflation/Prices</u>		
Conservative	44	34
Labour	39	38
<u>Taxation</u>		
Conservative	54	45
Labour	23	32
<u>Industrial Relations/Strikes</u>		
Conservative	39	41
Labour	41	39
<u>Unemployment</u>		
Conservative	42	25
Labour	36	43
<u>Common Market</u>		
Conservative	37	39
Labour	27	24
<u>Law and Order</u>		
Conservative	58	53
Labour	19	19

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