

Weekend box

CONFIDENTIAL

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 108

(produced 12th April 1982)

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1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 31st March to 5th April - a period which encompassed the start of the Falkland Islands crisis. The next tracking study, the results of which we should have by April 19th, will have been conducted after the British task force sailed. The 31st March to 5th April study found a slight fall in Social Democrat support after the upsurge we observed after their victory in the Glasgow Hillhead by-election. Social Democrat support fell from 27½% (24/29 March) to 26% in the latest study. The combined level of Liberal/Social Democrat support fell from 38½% to 36%. Support for the Social Democrats remains well above the nadir reached just before the Hillhead by-election - 21% (17/22 March).

Support for the Conservative Party increased from 32% (24/29 March) to 34% in the latest study - this puts us equal with the highest level of support in any tracking study since early June 1981. Labour support continued to fall - the fall of **one percentage** point in the latest study (down from 28% to 27%) is not statistically significant. The downward trend in support is clear from mid-February when 34% (10/15 Feb) claimed they would vote Labour. Liberal support dropped a statistically insignificant one percentage point from 11% (24/29 March) to 10% in the latest study. This is their lowest level of support since before June 1981.

Details are shown on the following page.

## VOTING INTENTION --

(unprompted question, excluding don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL &amp; SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>							
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0	13.8
13/16 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0	13.0
<u>1981</u>							
3/8 June	31.0	40.0	14.0	12.5	2.5	-9.0	26.5
9/15 June	29.5	37.5	18.0	12.5	2.5	-8.0**	30.5
16/22 June	32.0	37.0	15.5	13.0	2.5	-5.0	28.5
24/30 June	29.0	40.0	17.0	12.0	2.0	-11.0	29.0
1/6 July	30.5	39.5	14.0	13.0	3.0	-9.0	27.0
8/13 July	30.0	40.5	14.5	12.0	3.0	-10.5**	26.5
15/20 July	29.0	36.0	16.0	17.0	2.0	-7.0	33.0
22/27 July	26.0	38.0	13.0	21.0	2.0	-12.0	34.0
29 July/3 Aug	25.5	40.0	11.5	20.5	2.5	-14.5	32.0
5/10 Aug	27.0	36.0	15.0	19.0	4.0	-9.0	33.0
12/17 Aug	28.0	38.5	13.0	19.0	1.5	-10.5**	32.0
19/24 Aug	29.0	34.0	17.0	18.0	2.0	-5.0	35.0
26/31 Aug	26.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	2.0	-15.0	31.0
1/7 Sept	25.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	-16.0	31.0
9/14 Sept	32.0	36.5	11.5	17.5	2.5	-4.5**	29.0
16/21 Sept	25.0	36.5	16.0	19.0	3.5	-11.5	35.0
23/28 Sept	24.5	33.5	16.5	24.0	1.5	-9.0	40.5
30 Sept/5 Oct	26.0	38.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-12.0	33.0
7/12 Oct	27.0	31.0	12.5	26.5	3.0	-4.0	39.0
14/19 Oct	28.5	34.0	12.5	22.0	3.0	-5.5	34.5
21/25 Oct	29.5	28.0	13.5	26.5	2.5	+1.5**	40.0
28 Oct/2 Nov	26.5	29.0	13.0	29.5	2.5	-2.5	42.5
4/9 Nov	26.5	28.5	14.5	28.5	2.0	-2.0	43.0
11/16 Nov	26.5	29.0	15.0	27.0	2.5	-2.5**	42.0
18/23 Nov	25.5	26.0	14.0	32.0	2.5	-0.5	46.0
25/30 Nov	25.0	26.5	15.5	30.0	3.0	-1.5	45.5
2/7 Dec	26.0	21.0	13.5	38.0	1.5	+5.0	51.5
9/14 Dec	23.0	23.5	14.5	36.0	3.0	-0.5**	50.5
<u>1982</u>							
6/11 Jan	25.5	30.0	17.0	25.0	2.5	-4.5	42.0
13/18 Jan	27.5	29.5	13.0	26.5	3.5	-2.5**	39.5
20/25 Jan	30.0	27.0	14.0	26.5	2.5	+3.0	40.5
27 Jan/1 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	24.0	3.0	0.0	39.0
3/8 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	26.0	1.0	0.0	41.0
10/15 Feb	27.5	34.0	14.5	21.5	2.5	-6.5**	35.0
17/22 Feb	26.5	33.5	14.0	22.0	4.0	-7.0	36.0
24 Feb/1 March	31.0	32.5	11.0	22.5	3.0	-1.5	33.5
3/8 March	30.0	33.5	11.5	21.0+	4.0	-3.5	32.5
11/15 March	31.5	33.0	11.5	21.5+	2.5	-1.5**	33.0
17/22 March	34.0	30.0	11.0	21.0+	4.0	+4.0	32.0
24/29 March	32.0	28.0	11.0	27.5+	1.5	+4.0	38.5
31 March/5 April	34.0	27.0	10.0	26.0 +	3.0	+7.0	36.0

\*First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published Polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the 'Alliance'

2. Government Record

The 31st March - 5th April 'tracking' study found a continuation in the slight upsurge in government popularity we have been finding since early March. The study found 31% approving of the record of the Government to date, 57% disapproving and 12% with no view. This compares with 24% approving, 59% disapproving and 12% with no view in the survey completed immediately before the Budget. Details of the trend are shown below:-

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<u>1981</u>			
1/7 September	23	65	13
9/14 September	26	63	11
16/21 September	21	67	11
23/28 September	21	66	13
30 Sept/ 5 Oct	21	70	10
7/12 October	20	68	12
14/19 October	24	65	12
21/26 October	24	62	13
28 October/ 2 November	23	66	10
4/9 November	27	64	9
11/16 November	23	66	11
18/23 November	22	66	12
25/30 November	22	65	14
2/7 December	20	69	11
9/14 December	18	70	12
<u>1982</u>			
6/11 January	23	65	12
13/18 January	24	65	12
20/25 January	26	62	13
27 Jan/1 Feb	25	62	13
3/8 Feb	26	63	11
10/15 Feb	24	66	10
17/22 Feb	22	66	13
24 Feb/ 1 March	23	63	13
3/8 March	24	65	11
11/15 March	29	59	12
17/22 March	28	60	13
24/29 March	29	58	13
31 March/ 5 April	31	57	12

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest study found a further slight improvement in Mrs Thatcher's popularity - up from 35% satisfied with her record as Prime Minister (34/29 March) to 37% satisfied (31st March/5 April). Mrs Thatcher's popularity has improved considerably since this year's nadir (29% satisfied) reached in mid-February.

The latest study found a slight, but not statistically significant, improvement in Mr Foot's popularity and a similar fall in Mr Steel's popularity.

Details of the trend with regard to the popularity of the three main leaders are shown in the table below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Don't</u>
	sat.	sat.	Know	Not	Not	Know	Not	Not	Know
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1981</u>									
1/7 September	28	67	5	29	52	19	63	18	19
9/14 September	32	62	6	28	54	18	56	21	23
16/21 September	27	68	5	28	52	20	64	16	20
23/28 September	28	67	5	25	57	18	64	17	19
30 Sept/ 5 Oct	27	68	6	31	49	20	60	20	20
7/12 Oct	26	68	6	28	50	22	62	19	18
14/19 Oct	31	62	7	31	50	20	64	15	21
21/26 Oct	33	62	5	27	54	19	64	20	16
28 Oct/ 2 Nov	29	65	6	25	59	16	64	19	17
4/9 Nov	32	64	3	24	62	14	68	16	16
11/16 Nov	28	66	6	16	67	17	64	17	19
18/23 Nov	29	66	5	18	68	15	69	15	16
25/30 Nov	29	65	5	18	68	15	67	15	18
2/7 Dec	29	66	5	18	68	14	64	18	18
9/14 Dec	25	70	5	19	67	14	63	18	19
<u>1982</u>									
5/11 January	30	65	5	20	65	14	62	20	18
13/18 January	32	65	4	18	67	16	59	22	19
20/25 January	32	64	4	17	68	15	59	22	19
27 Jan/1 Feb	33	62	5	19	64	17	60	18	22
3/8 Feb	31	65	4	20	63	17	61	20	19
10/15 Feb	29	66	5	19	66	15	59	23	17
17/22 Feb	29	65	5	20	64	16	58	20	21
24 Feb/1st March	32	63	5	21	64	15	55	23	22
3/8 March	30	66	4	20	64	16	58	24	18
11/15 March	34	62	4	21	65	14	58	22	10
17/22 March	33	62	5	22	64	14	59	21	20
24/29 March	35	59	6	19	65	15	61	20	19
31 March/ 5 April	37	58	5	20	65	15	60	22	18

4. Published Polls(a) ORC (Thames News 5th April 1982)1. Introduction

Thames News on Monday 5th April included a report on an ORC survey on attitudes in Greater London. The research, which was conducted between 27th and 31st March 1982, was designed to form part of Thames TV's coverage of the lead-up to the 1982 Borough Council Elections.

Five weeks before the election ORC found among those electors who claimed to be certain to vote and named a party that 39% would vote Labour, 35% Conservative and 26% Alliance. The survey included a range of questions on public attitudes and the main findings are considered below:-

2. Awareness of London Borough Elections

Five weeks before the Borough Council elections ORC found 64% who did not have any idea when the Borough Council elections would take place. Only 28% knew they would take place in May 1982, but a further 6% thought they would take place 'quite soon', but were not sure precisely when. Details of the analysis of this question for the main socio-economic and political groups is shown below:-

(a) Class

	<u>AB</u> %	<u>C1</u> %	<u>C2</u> %	<u>DE</u> %	<u>Electorate Total</u> %
May 1982	38	30	22	25	28
Quite soon, not sure when	6	7	7	7	6
Other times	1	2	3	2	2
Don't know	55	62	68	66	64

Awareness of the Borough Council elections drops as we go down the social scale - 55% did not know when they will take place in the AB group, 62% in the C1 group, 68% in the C2 group and 66% in the DE group.

(b) Sex

	<u>Male</u> %	<u>Female</u> %
May 1982	29	27
Quite soon, not sure when	7	6
Other times	3	1
Don't know	61	66

Women are slightly more likely than men not to be aware that the Borough Council elections will be taking place in May.

(c) Age

	<u>18-24</u> %	<u>25-44</u> %	<u>45-64</u> %	<u>65+</u> %
May 1982	10	25	33	37
Quite soon, not sure when	7	6	7	5
Other times	3	2	2	2
Don't know	81	67	57	56

Awareness of the Borough Council elections is lowest in the 18-24 age group - 81% did not have any idea when they would take place. Among the 25-44 age group 67% were in the same position, 57% of the 45-64 age group and 56% of the 65+ age group.

(d) Voting Intention

	<u>Conservative</u>		<u>Labour</u>		<u>Liberal/SDP</u>	
	<u>All</u> %	<u>Certain to Vote</u> %	<u>All</u> %	<u>Certain to vote</u> %	<u>All</u> %	<u>Certain to vote</u> %
May 1982	33	42	25	32	30	42
Quite soon, not sure	4	5	6	7	8	12
Other times	2	2	3	2	3	3
Don't know	62	51	66	59	58	43

Respondents who claim to be certain to vote are more likely to be aware of when the elections will take place. Conservative and Liberal/SDP supporters are more likely to be aware of when the Borough Council elections will take place than are Labour supporters.

3. Effect of Borough Council Elections on Respondents

14% of respondents thought it would make 'a great deal' of difference to them and their families who wins the Borough Council elections, 13% 'quite a lot of difference', 16% 'some difference', 21% 'not very much difference', 15% 'very little difference, and 16% 'no difference'.

4. Most Important Issues

ORC asked respondents what they regarded as the two most important issues for the area of London in which they live. 42% mentioned unemployment and jobs, 31% education, 30% rates, 24% housing, 16% old people's homes etc, 14% London Transport fares, 12% street cleaning and dustbins, 5% standard of bus and underground service and 4% local recreation facilities.

5. SDP/Liberal Alliance Chances in London

56% of respondents thought the SDP/Liberal Alliance stands a chance in London, 25% that it does not stand much of a chance and 19% did not have a view.

6. Effect of Ken Livingstone on Labour's Chances

17% thought the effect of Ken Livingstone's record would be to improve Labour's chances in London, 51% damage their chances, 18% make no difference and 14% did not have a view.

7. Effect of Conservative Government's Record - Conservative Prospects in London

17% thought the effect of the Conservative Government's record would improve our chances in London, 51% damage our prospects, 23% make no difference and 9% did not have a view.

(b) ORC (News at Ten 5th April 1982)

News at Ten on 5th April 1982 included the results of an ORC survey on attitudes to the Falkland Islands dispute conducted on 5th April 1982.

ORC asked respondents 'Do you think the British Government does or does not have an obligation to support the Falkland Islanders?' 88% thought the British Government does have an obligation, 6% has no obligation and 6% did not have an view.

ORC put to respondents a range of options with regard to the Falkland Islands and asked them to select one. They found:-

	%
Use naval and military forced against the Argentinian forces occupying the Falkland Islands	41
Use diplomatic pressure to persuade Argentina to leave	40
Encourage countries like America to operate an economic blockade	6
Use military force against Argentina itself	5
Accept the situation	5
Other (None of these/ don't know)	5

When ORC put the idea 'would you agree with the British Navy being ordered to sink Argentinian ships if this were necessary to regain the Falkland Islands' - 70% agreed with the idea of sinking Argentinian ships, 25% disagreed and 5% did not have a view. When ORC asked respondents 'do you think the Government would be right to put the lives of British Armed Forces at risk if this were the only way of regaining the Falkland Islands' - they found 69% thought they would be right in putting the lives of the Armed Forces at risk, 26% this would not be right and 5% did not have a view.

(c) N.O.P. (Daily Mail 6th April 1982)

The Daily Mail on Tuesday 6th April 1982 included the results of an NOP survey on attitudes to the Falklands Islands dispute conducted on 5th April.

NOP found that 69% of respondents believed it was 'very important' and 14% 'fairly important' that we regain the Falkland Islands. More than half of the respondents said that once we have got them back we should hold onto them.

When NOP offered respondents a straight choice between using force or relying on diplomatic pressure to regain the Falklands, 53% favoured force and 46% diplomacy. They found 17% of Conservative voters claiming they might switch their support if Britain failed to end the Argentinian occupation.

NOP found only 36% of respondents thinking we should negotiate a peaceful transfer of the Falklands to Argentina at some future date - 56% wanted them to be held indefinitely once we get them back.

(d) Marplan (Guardian 8th April 1982)

The Guardian on April 8th included the results of a Marplan survey on attitudes to the Social Democrats conducted on April 5th.

Marplan found 34% claiming they would vote Conservative, 32% Labour, 30% SDP/Liberal/Alliance and 4% for 'other' parties.

Marplan asked respondents 'Between now and the next Election, do you think it is possible that you will seriously consider the SDP/Liberal Alliance or not?' 34% said they would, 56% they would not and 10% did not have a view.

The idea of a coalition after the next Election was put to respondents when Marplan asked 'If there were no overall majority at the next Election, the Social Democrats and Liberal Party may consider forming a coalition with another party. Would you prefer:-'

	%
SDP/Liberal Coalition with Conservative	31
SDP/Liberal Coalition with Labour	33
Neither	26
Don't know	10

On the question of who should lead the SDP, Marplan found 31% favoured Roy Jenkins, 26% Shirley Williams, 20% David Owen, 1% William Rodgers - the remainder of respondents did not have a view.

Marplan put to respondents a range of policies and asked whether they thought the SDP was in favour of them or against them, and whether they themselves are in favour or against particular policies. They found:-

	<u>SDP seen</u> as favouring %	<u>Respondents</u> favour %
Continued membership of the EEC (%)	60	53
Legislation to restrict power of unions (%)	48	60
Britain giving up nuclear weapons whatever the others do (%)	26	35
Cancelling Trident (%)	54	57
Compulsory incomes policy (%)	28	37
Elimination of private education (%)	18	21
Elimination of private health (%)	18	22
Spending more on public services even if taxes rise (%)	65	66
Changing electoral system to PR (%)	63	63

(e) NOP (Observer 11th April 1982)

The Observer on 11th April 1982 included details of a NOP poll conducted on 2/5 April on attitudes to the papal visit. They found only one in five respondents in Britain would like to see the Pope as leader of a Unified Roman Catholic and Anglican Church.



They also found:-

- on the question of the Papal visit, NOP found 44% approved, 45% had no feelings but only 10% said they disapproved.
- most people (51%) thought the visit would make no difference to relations between Catholics and non-Catholics. One in four thought it would bring them closer, one in seven that it would drive them apart.
- Church reunification was approved by 43% but 35% thought it was a bad idea.
- NOP found British Catholic churchgoers were out of line with some of their Church's teachings. 82% thought marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics should be made easier, 63% believed abortion should be allowed in certain circumstances, 58% disapproved of the ban on artificial methods of birth control and the same proportion thought Catholics should be allowed to marry people who have been divorced. 58% supported the ban on the ordination of women and 48% thought priests should not marry.

(f) ORC (Weekend World 11th April 1982)

An ORC poll conducted on Thursday 8th April looked at attitudes to the Falkland Islands disputes - i.e. after the despatch of the Naval task force. The results were included in Weekend World on 11th April 1982.

ORC found 79% of respondents supporting government policy on the Falkland Islands, 11% neither supported or opposed our policy and 10% opposed.

On the question of risking the lives of the Falkland Islanders - 31% thought the risk was acceptable, 58% not acceptable and 11% did not have a view. When asked about the risk to the lives of members of the British Armed Forces - 57% thought lives should not be risked, 36% risk was acceptable and 7% did not have a view.

On the question of a blockade, 75% of respondents supported the idea of a blockade lasting at least six months, 18% opposed and 7% did not have a view.

When ORC asked 'If the Islanders were prepared to accept Argentine rule rather than see their lives put at risk' they found 18% thought Britain should nevertheless use military action, 58% Britain should negotiate, 19% Britain should abandon claims and 5% did not have a view.

In terms of voting intention ORC found 37% claiming they would vote Conservative, 35% Labour and 28% SDP/Liberal Alliance.