

Conservative Research Department

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KB/sgc

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Derek Howe
10 Downing Street
London SW1

19th May 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Derek,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 64

The results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are the same as those published by Gallup in the Daily Telegraph on 14th May. They show a continuation of the trend we found in our unpublished tracking studies of a fall in support for the Social Democrats. Given the low level of Social Democrat activity over recent weeks this finding is not surprising but we will clearly need to keep careful track of the level of support for them if their level of activity builds up again.

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Heath

D. K. Britto

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 64

(produced 16th May 1981)

1. Introduction

The results of our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are the same as the results of the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on 14th May. The published poll showed a sharp fall in support for the Social Democrats in response to Gallup's standard voting intention question which does not mention the name of any of the parties. The published polls show a fall in support for the Social Democrats from 19% (poll conducted 8/13 April) to 11% in the latest survey (poll conducted 6/11 May). Our unpublished 'tracking' studies conducted in the period between the two published polls show a downward trend in Social Democrat support - 15% 15/21 April, 15½% 22/27 April, 13½% 29 April/5 May. The findings from the Gallup study are in line with the results of a Marplan poll published in the Guardian on May 12th (conducted April 23/26) which also found a sharp drop in support for the Social Democrats - 22% March 5/7, 18% March 26/28 and 10% April 23/26. It must of course be remembered that these latest surveys have been conducted at a time when the Social Democrats have not been receiving much press and television coverage.

The tables below and the attached graphs show the trend in support for the main parties from early February for:-

- (a) the standard voting intention question (the term Social Democrat is not mentioned in the question)
- (b) how the electorate said they would vote if a Social Democratic candidate was standing
- (c) how the electorate said they would vote if a candidate for a Social Democratic/Liberal alliance stood.

It should be noted that the published figures on voting intention considered above exclude don't knows (the figures are re-calculated) the tables below do not.

VOTING INTENTION
(including don't knows)

	<u>3/9</u>	<u>10/16</u>	<u>18/23</u>	<u>25 Feb</u>	<u>4/9</u>	<u>12/16</u>	<u>18/23</u>	<u>25/30</u>	<u>31 Mar</u>	<u>8/13</u>	<u>15/21</u>	<u>22/27</u>	<u>29 Apr</u>	<u>6/11</u>
	Feb	Feb	Feb	2 Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	6 Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	5 May	May
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	31	32	30	28	27	27	23	27	26	27	26	27	29	29
Labour	35	31	35	32	32	30	31	27	29	31	34	32	31	32
Liberal	18	17	19	19	18	16	15	16	15	13	16	13	15	16
Others	7	8	8	9	3	4	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3
Social Democratic Party	-	-	-	-	12	12	17	17	17	17	16	14	12	10
Don't know/ it depends	9	12	9	12	8	11	12	12	10	16	9	12	11	9

VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

	<u>3/9</u>	<u>10/16</u>	<u>18/23</u>	<u>25 Feb</u>	<u>4/9</u>	<u>12/16</u>	<u>18/23</u>	<u>25/30</u>	<u>31 Mar</u>	<u>8/13</u>	<u>15/21</u>	<u>22/27</u>	<u>29 Apr</u>	<u>6/11</u>
	Feb	Feb	Feb	2 Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	6 Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	5 May	May
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	23	24	22	22	21	18	21	21	22	22	23	25	23
Labour	25	23	25	25	25	22	22	20	21	24	25	24	25	24
Liberal	11	12	11	13	12	11	11	10	10	10	11	9	10	11
Others	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	3
Social Demo- cratic Party	22	21	22	21	25	25	27	29	26	27	22	24	21	21
Social Demo- cratic/Liberal alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/ it depends	19	16	17	14	16	17	20	20	20	17	19	18	15	18

VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/LIBERAL CANDIDATE

	<u>3/9</u>	<u>10/16</u>	<u>18/23</u>	<u>25 Feb</u>	<u>4/9</u>	<u>12/16</u>	<u>18/23</u>	<u>25/30</u>	<u>31 Mar</u>	<u>8/13</u>	<u>15/21</u>	<u>22/27</u>	<u>29 Apr</u>	<u>6/11</u>
	Feb	Feb	Feb	2 Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	6 Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	5 May	May
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	22	23	20	22	20	27	20	20	21	21	22	21	22
Labour	24	22	23	24	24	21	22	19	20	23	24	24	24	22
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2
Social Demo- cratic Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Demo- cratic/Liberal alliance	33	36	34	35	36	37	38	37	35	37	34	33	32	32
Don't know/ it depends	19	18	20	20	17	21	22	22	23	17	20	18	20	22

Although unprompted mention of the Social Democrats showed a sharp drop in the latest study, this apparent fall in support for them was not fully confirmed by answers to questions in which the term Social Democrat was specifically mentioned. When Gallup asked respondents how they would vote if a Social Democratic candidate stood 27% claimed they would vote Social Democrat in the week 8/13 April and 21% in the week 6/11 May. When Gallup asked how respondents would vote if a candidate from a Social Democratic/Liberal alliance stood, 37% claimed they would vote for such a candidate in the survey conducted 8/13 April and 32% in the survey conducted 6/11 May.

2. Standard Voting Intention

The trend of support for the main parties taken from the standard Gallup voting intention question (excluding don't knows) is shown in the table below and in the attached graphs. The latest survey (published in the Daily Telegraph on 14th May) found a 3½% Labour lead compared with 4½% in the previous published survey.

VOTING INTENTION

	<u>CON</u> %	<u>LAB</u> %	<u>LIB</u> %	<u>SOCIAL DEMOCRAT</u> %	<u>OTHER</u> %	<u>LEAD</u> %
<u>1979</u>						
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	2.5	-1.5
<u>1981</u>						
7/12 Jan	34.0	48.0	15.0	-	3.0	-14.0
14/20 Jan	33.0	46.5	18.5	-	2.0	-13.5**
21/26 Jan	35.5	43.0	17.0	-	4.5	- 7.5**
28 Jan/2 Feb	32.0	40.0	21.5	-	6.5	- 8.0
3/9 Feb	34.0	39.0	20.0	-	7.0	- 5.0
10/16 Feb	36.0	35.5	20.0	-	8.5	+ 0.5**
18/23 Feb	32.5	38.5	21.0	-	8.0	- 6.0
25 Feb/ 2 March	31.5	36.0	21.5	-	11.0	- 4.5
4/9 March	29.5	34.5	20.0	12.5	3.5	- 5.0
12/16 March	30.0	34.0	18.0	14.0	4.0	- 4.0
18/23 March	26.0	35.0	17.0	17.0	5.0	- 9.0
25/30 March	30.0	30.5	18.0	19.0	2.5	- 0.5**
31 March/6 April	29.0	32.0	17.0	19.0	3.0	- 3.0
8/13 April	30.0	34.5	14.0	19.0	2.5	- 4.5**
15/21 April	28.5	37.5	17.5	15.0	1.5	- 9.0
22/27 April	30.5	36.5	15.0	15.5	2.5	- 6.0
29 April/ 5 May	33.0	35.0	17.0	13.5	1.5	-2.0
6/11 May	32.0	35.5	18.0	11.0	3.5	-3.5**

* First Gallup Post-election survey

** Published polls

3. Government Record

Our latest 'tracking' study found a slight improvement in the popularity of the Government. Details are shown on the following page and in the attached graphs.

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GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
1979			
13/18 June	34	41	25
1981			
7/12 Jan	27	61	12
14/20 Jan	26	63	11
21/26 Jan	28	58	14
28 Jan /2 Feb	26	62	12
3/9 Feb	27	60	13
10/16 Feb	29	60	11
18/23 Feb	29	59	12
25 Feb/ 2 March	26	62	12
4/9 March	23	65	12
12/16 March	23	67	9
25/30 March	22	69	9
31 March/ 6 April	26	65	9
8/13 April	24	67	9
15/21 April	25	65	10
22/27 April	27	63	10
29 April/5 May	26	62	12
6/11 May	29	60	11

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest 'tracking' study found almost no change in the popularity of Mrs Thatcher or Mr Steel but a sharp improvement in Mr Foot's popularity.

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dis- sat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
1981									
7/12 Jan	33	61	6	24	39	36	56	21	23
14/20 Jan	31	63	5	26	42	32	63	19	18
21/26 Jan	34	61	5	23	43	34	57	19	21
28 Jan /2 Feb	32	63	6	21	46	33	62	17	21
3/9 Feb	35	60	6	24	49	27	60	19	21
10/16 Feb	34	60	6	22	49	30	64	16	20
18/23 Feb	33	62	5	20	52	28	58	18	24
25 Feb/2 March	32	62	6	23	50	27	57	22	20
4/9 March	28	66	6	25	52	23	62	18	20
12/16 March	30	64	6	23	52	26	63	15	22
18/23 March	28	67	5	24	55	24	63	18	19
25/30 March	30	66	4	20	55	25	61	19	19
31 March/6 April	31	63	6	24	55	22	64	17	19
8/13 April	30	65	5	21	54	24	60	20	20
15/21 April	31	64	6	24	54	22	62	17	21
22/27 April	34	60	6	21	58	20	66	17	18
29 April/5 May	34	59	7	20	58	22	60	19	21
6/11 May	35	60	5	26	52	23	63	17	21

5. Published Polls(a) Marplan (Guardian 12th May 1981)

A Marplan survey conducted between April 23rd and April 26th and published in the Guardian on 12th May 1981 confirms the fall in support for the Social Democrats we found in our latest Gallup 'tracking' study. The Labour lead of 19% over the Conservatives found by Marplan is not confirmed by our Gallup 'tracking' study which found a 3½% Labour lead. Details of the record of Marplan polls in 1981 with regard to voting intention are shown below:-

Marplan - Voting Intention

	<u>March</u> 5 - 7	<u>March</u> 26 - 28	<u>April</u> 23 - 26
	%	%	%
Conservative	25	26	29
Labour	41	46	48
Liberal	10	8	11
Social Democrat	22	18	10
Other	2	2	2

(b) M.O.R.I. (Evening Standard 11th May 1981)

An M.O.R.I. survey conducted in Greater London on April 31st and May 1st was published in the Evening Standard on 11th May. The survey looked at attitudes to the police and the causes of the Brixton riots. M.O.R.I. asked 'Do you think the Metropolitan Police should be controlled by the G.L.C. or the Home Secretary?' 17% thought the G.L.C. should control the Metropolitan Police, (11% Conservatives, 25% of Labour supporters and 17% of Blacks/Asians), 62% thought the Home Secretary should control the Metropolitan Police (77% of Conservatives, 53% of Labour supporters and 39% of Blacks/Asians) and 21% did not have a view (12% of Conservatives, 22% of Labour supporters and 44% of Blacks/Asians).

M.O.R.I. also asked respondents what they thought were the main causes of the recent riots in Brixton. They found:-

Main Causes of Recent Riots in Brixton

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Blacks/Asians</u> %
Unemployment	40	49
Blacks' behaviour	22	11
Racialism	18	17
Bad housing	15	12
Police behaviour	13	33
Education	5	1
Too many police	3	7
Too few police	2	8

When asked whether they thought the police were too tough during riots, too soft or they handled the situation about right -

12% thought it was 'too tough' (32% of Blacks/Asians took this view).
28% 'too soft' (11% of Blacks/Asians took this view) and 44%
'about right' (29% of Blacks/Asians took this view).

(c) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 15th May 1981)

A Gallup survey published in the Daily Telegraph on 15th May 1981 and conducted between 6th and 11th May 1981 looked at attitudes to the coloured population in Great Britain. Gallup found:-

Q. Do you think any of these are very serious social problems in Britain today?

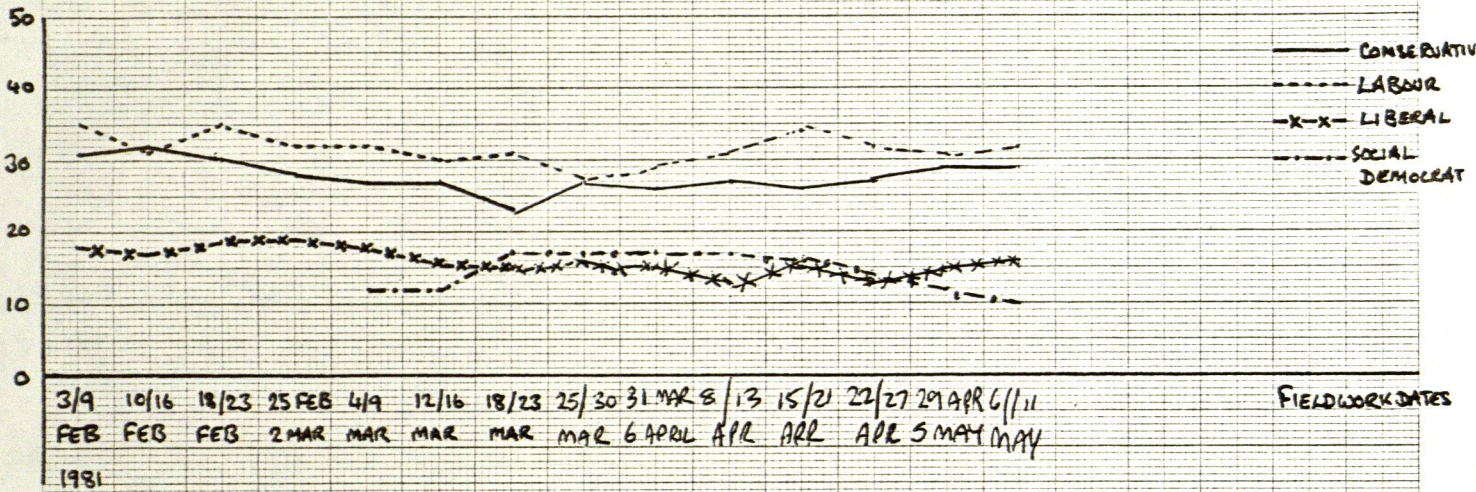
	<u>May</u> 1981 %	<u>Feb/Mar</u> 1981 %	<u>March</u> 1965 %
Crimes of violence	83	84	70
Juvenile crime	71	77	58
Drug taking	63	67	56
Bad housing	58	63	66
Immigrants, coloured persons	57	46	55
Gang warfare	52	53	NA
Rape	48	65	NA
Organised large scale crimes	47	52	52
Pornography	38	45	NA
Drunkenness	36	47	28
Heavy smoking	28	41	27
Gambling	25	34	31
Prostitution	20	29	29
Homosexuality	17	22	26
None of these	1	1	3

Q. Which of these four phrases best describes how you would feel about coloured people?

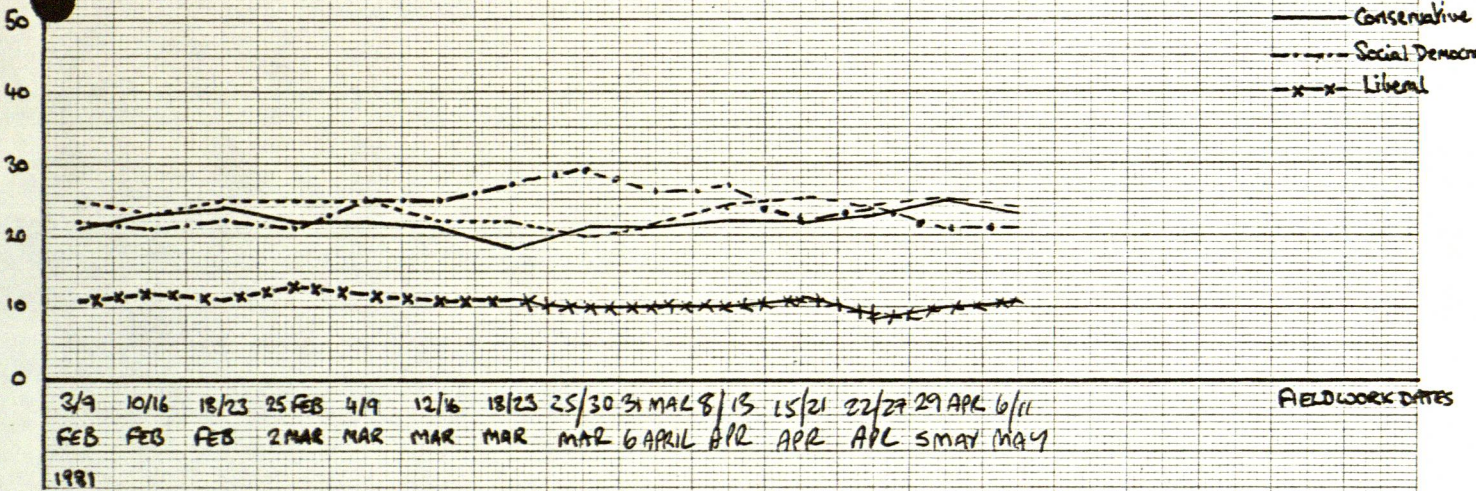
	<u>May 1981</u>				<u>November 1964</u>			
	Pleased Mind	Not Mind	Rather Not	Strongly Dislike	Pleased Mind	Not Mind	Rather Not	Strongly Dislike
a) as neighbours (%)	2	57	28	10	5	44	26	17
b) as friends (%)	10	68	13	5	5	40	21	12
c) as schoolfellows (%)								
to your children	6	72	11	4	4	50	16	11
d) as fellow workers (%)	6	76	10	4	4	57	16	13
e) as your principal or employer (%)	3	60	16	13	2	33	22	28
f) as your son-in-law (%)	3	32	25	33	2	13	27	44
g) as your daughter- in-law (%)	3	34	24	33	2	14	26	44

BACKGROUND GRAPHS

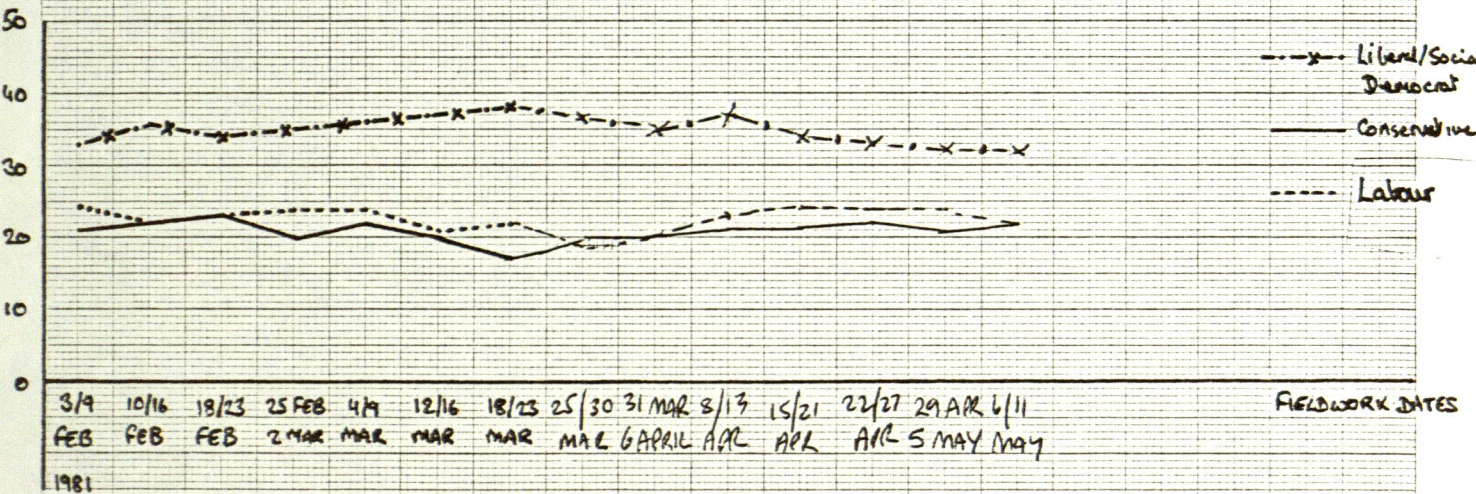
STANDARD VOTING INTENTIONS



VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

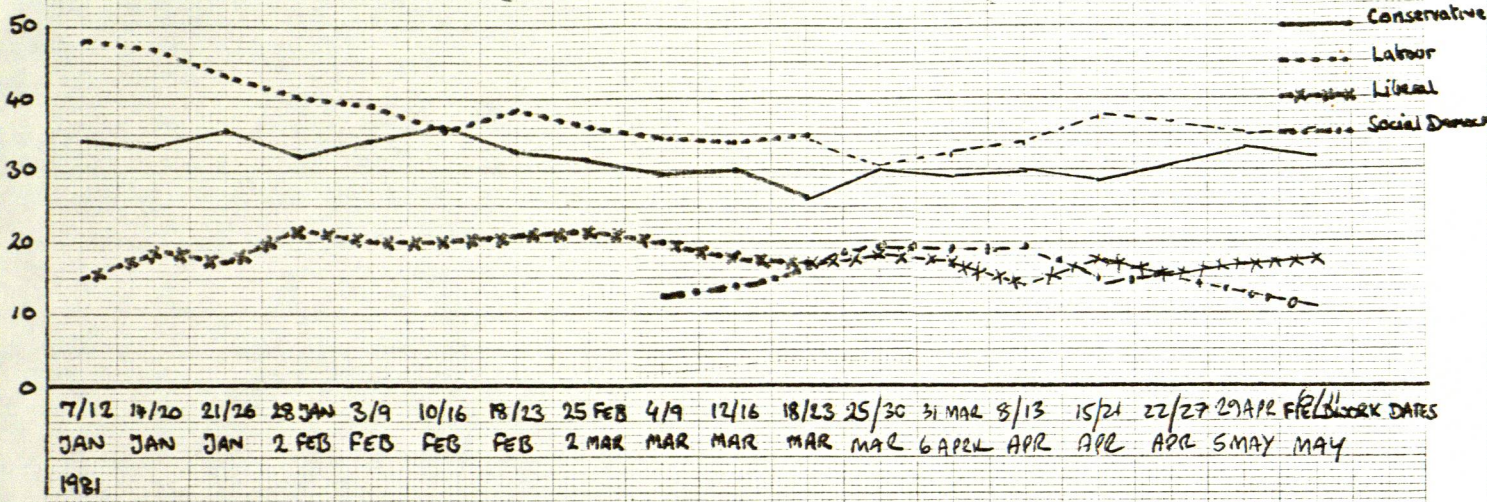


VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC / LIBERAL CANDIDATE



BACKGROUND GRAPHS

VOTING INTENTION (excluding don't knows)



GOVERNMENT RECORD



POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

