

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 144

(produced 19th December 1982)

1. Introduction

The results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are the same as those published in the Daily Telegraph on 17th December 1982. The survey was conducted from 8th to 13th December and Gallup interviewed 928 electors throughout Great Britain. Compared with the results of previous published Gallup surveys the latest study found our lead over Labour continuing to decline. The trend of support for the parties in published polls is shown below:-

	<u>Published Gallup Polls</u>			
	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Sept</u>
	<u>1982</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1982</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	41	42	40½	44
Labour	34½	34½	29	30½
Liberal	9	8	12	8½
SDP	13	13½	15	14½
Others	2½	2	3½	2½

Conservative support has dropped slightly since September and Labour support has tended to drift upwards. Alliance support was 23% in September compared with 22% in December. Conservative support in our unpublished polls has fallen since late November and Labour and Alliance support has tended to drift upwards.

Details of the trend in support for the main parties since the start of the year in our unpublished 'tracking' studies is shown overleaf:-

VOTING INTENTION(unprompted question, excluding
don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTH</u>	<u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab	<u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>							
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+ 7.0	13.3
13/16 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	- 9.0	13.0
<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
7/12 April	31.5	29.0	11.0	26.0+	2.5	+ 2.5**	37.0
13/19 April	31.0	30.0	10.0	26.0+	3.0	+ 1.0	36.0
21/26 April	31.5	33.0	10.5	24.5+	0.5	- 1.5	35.0
28 April/3 May	37.0	30.5	11.0	20.0+	1.5	+ 6.5	31.0
5/10 May	41.5	28.0	9.5	19.5+	1.5	+ 13.5**	29.0
12/17 May	42.0	31.0	10.0	16.0+	1.0	+ 11.5	26.0
19/24 May	45.0	27.0	11.0	15.0+	2.0	+ 19.0	26.0
26/31 May	45.5	27.0	9.5	16.0+	2.0	+ 18.5	25.5
2/7 June	48.5	23.5	11.5	14.5+	2.0	+ 25.0	26.0
9/14 June	45.0	25.0	10.0	18.5+	1.5	+ 20.0**	28.5
16/21 June	49.0	24.0	10.0	15.5+	2.0	+ 25.0	25.5
23/28 June	45.5	29.0	10.0	13.0+	2.5	+ 16.5	23.0
30 June/5 July	45.0	25.5	12.5	15.0+	2.0	+ 19.5	27.5
7/12 July	46.5	27.5	7.5	16.5+	2.0	+ 19.0**	24.0
14/19 July	44.0	27.5	8.5	18.0+	2.0	+ 16.5	26.5
21/26 July	39.0	30.5	10.0	17.5+	3.0	+ 8.5	27.5
28 July/2 Aug	43.5	30.0	8.5	16.0+	2.0	+ 13.5	24.5
4/9 Aug	46.0	28.0	9.0	13.5+	3.5	+18.0	22.5
11/16 Aug	44.5	26.5	10.5	17.0+	1.5	+18.0**	27.5
18/23 Aug	45.5	27.0	9.0	16.5+	2.0	+18.5	25.5
25/30 Aug	40.0	32.0	11.5	15.0+	1.5	+ 8.0	26.5
1/6 Sept	43.5	28.5	8.0	17.0+	3.0	+15.0	25.0
8/13 Sept	44.0	30.5	8.5	14.5+	2.5	+13.5**	23.0
15/21 Sept	42.0	33.0	8.0	15.0+	2.0	+ 9.0	23.0
22/27 Sept	43.0	29.5	12.5	13.0+	2.0	+13.5	25.5
29 Sept/4 Oct	40.0	31.5	13.5	13.0+	2.0	+ 8.5	26.5
6/11 Oct	42.5	32.0	10.5	13.0+	2.0	+10.5	23.5
13/18 Oct	43.0	31.0	9.0	13.5+	3.5	+12.0	22.5
20/25 Oct	40.5	29.0	12.0	15.0+	3.5	+11.5**	27.0
27 Oct/1 Nov	48.0	31.0	8.5	11.0+	1.5	+17.0	19.5
3/10 Nov	44.0	33.0	9.0	12.0+	2.0	+11.0	21.0
10/15 Nov	42.0	35.0	8.0	13.0+	2.0	+7.0**	21.0
17/22 Nov	41.5	33.0	9.0	14.0+	2.5	+8.5	23.0
24/29 Nov	46.5	32.0	7.5	11.5+	2.5	+14.5	19.0
1/6 Dec	43.0	35.0	9.0	11.0+	2.0	+8.0	20.0
8/13 Dec	41.0	34.5	9.0	13.0+	2.5	+6.5**	22.0

* First Gallup Post-Election Survey, ** Published Polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

2. Government Record

The latest study found 50% claiming to disapprove of our record in government, 37% approving and 13% did not have a view. This compares with the situation at the start of the year when 23% approved of the government record, 65% disapproved and 12% did not have a view.

Details of the trend from the standard government record question is 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>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
7/12 April	32	56	12
13/19 April	34	54	12
21/26 April	34	55	11
28 April/3 May	40	47	13
5/10 May	42	46	12
12/17 May	43	42	15
19/24 May	46	44	10
26/31 May	50	38	12
2/7 June	49	39	12
9/14 June	48	40	12
16/21 June	51	36	13
23/28 June	47	41	12
30 June/5 July	47	39	14
7/12 July	47	41	12
14/19 July	44	43	13
21/26 July	43	45	12
28 July/2 Aug	43	43	15
4/9 Aug	42	45	12
11/16 Aug	42	44	14
18/23 Aug	43	43	14
25/30 Aug	37	52	11
1/6 Sept	41	45	14
8/13 Sept	40	48	13
15/21 Sept	38	49	13
22/27 Sept	38	50	12
29 Sept/4 Oct	36	51	13
6/11 Oct	40	47	13
13/18 Oct	38	48	14
20/25 Oct	40	49	11
27/Oct/1 Nov	42	45	13
3/10 Nov	41	45	15
10/15 Nov	39	48	13
17/22 Nov	39	47	13
24/29 Nov	44	44	13
1/6 Dec	42	47	11
8/13 Dec	37	50	13

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest study found almost no change in Mrs Thatcher's popularity when compared with the results of our previous unpublished 'tracking' study, a slight fall in Mr Foot's popularity and a slight fall in Mr Steel's popularity.

Details of the trend of approval/disapproval for Mr Jenkins as leader of the Social Democrats is shown below:-

Mr Jenkins is/is not proving a Good Leader
of the Social Democrats

	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Sept</u>
	<u>1982</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1982</u>
	%	%	%	%
Is	34	37	35	37
Is Not	34	33	34	32
Don't Know	32	30	31	31.

Details of the trend of approval for Mrs Thatcher, Mr Foot and Mr Steel from our published studies are shown in the table overleaf:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL
LEADERS

	<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>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1982</u>									
6/11 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/1 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
7/12 April	35	60	5	23	61	16	63	18	19
13/19 April	36	60	5	28	59	14	63	18	19
21/26 April	37	59	4	26	60	14	66	17	17
28 April/3 May	41	53	6	24	65	12	62	20	18
5/10 May	44	51	6	18	71	11	64	20	17
12/17 May	48	47	5	17	71	12	65	18	17
19/24 May	47	48	5	18	72	10	63	18	19
26/31 May	50	43	7	16	75	10	64	18	19
2/7 June	53	42	5	15	74	5	61	21	18
9/14 June	51	44	5	14	75	11	62	21	18
16/21 June	55	40	5	17	74	9	58	20	20
23/28 June	52	42	5	14	75	10	62	19	20
30 June/5 July	53	41	6	14	77	9	64	18	18
7/12 July	52	43	5	16	72	12	61	20	19
14/19 July	49	46	5	14	75	11	60	18	21
21/26 July	47	47	6	15	74	11	59	21	20
28 July/2 Aug	48	46	6	14	75	11	62	18	20
4/9 Aug	48	47	5	12	73	12	60	20	20
11/16 Aug	49	47	4	15	74	11	62	19	19
18/23 Aug	49	46	5	13	74	13	58	21	21
25/30 Aug	44	50	4	18	72	10	61	19	20
1/ Sept	49	45	6	14	74	12	59	20	21
8/13 Sept	48	47	5	16	74	10	59	21	20
15/21 Sept	46	49	6	14	73	12	62	19	19
22/27 Sept	46	50	4	16	74	11	64	20	16
29 Sept/4 Oct	44	51	5	27	60	13	64	19	17
6/11 Oct	46	48	6	25	62	13	62	22	17
13/18 Oct	45	50	5	23	66	11	56	25	19
20/25 Oct	46	50	4	20	69	12	60	22	18
27 Oct/1 Nov	48	48	4	20	66	14	57	24	18
3/10 Nov	48	48	5	23	65	11	58	24	18
10/15 Nov	44	52	5	22	67	12	59	22	19
17/22 Nov	44	51	5	25	63	11	59	20	20
24/29 Nov	48	47	5	18	68	14	57	22	20
1/6 Dec	45	51	5	23	67	10	62	18	19
8/13 Dec	44	53	4	20	69	10	60	23	17

4. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 17th December 1982)

In addition to the standard 'tracking' questions Gallup asked respondents for their views in a range of issues facing the Government.

Gallup asked respondents which party they thought had the best policies to deal with a range of issues. They found:-

	<u>Best Policies</u>				
	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Alliance</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Inflation and Prices (%)	49	25	6	0	20
Unemployment (%)	25	44	9	0	22
Britain's Defence (%)	49	21	8	0	22
Common Market (%)	37	27	8	0	29
Strikes and Industrial disputes (%)	43	32	8	0	17
National Health Service (%)	25	47	8	0	20
Education and Schools (%)	32	38	10	0	20
Law and Order (%)	43	21	6	0	25

Gallup found the Conservatives to be ahead on five of the eight issues with Labour ahead on three.

(b) System Three (Glasgow Herald 17th December 1982)

The Glasgow Herald on 17th December included details of a System Three poll conducted in Scotland from November 19th to 29th. The survey found:-

	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>General Election</u>
	<u>1982</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>May 1979</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	28	26	31
Labour	45	46	42
SDP/Liberal	15	16	9*
SNP	11	12	17

* Liberal only