

Confidential

Public Opinion Background Note 13  
(Produced 27th April 1980)

1. Introduction

Our latest "tracking" study conducted between 16th and 21st April 1980 found Labour's lead having been cut to 2%, compared to 8½% in our previous tracking study (the same as the published Gallup figures in the Daily Telegraph).

2. Voting Intention

Recent trends in support for the main parties 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

\*First Gallup post-election survey.

It is still difficult to isolate any clear trend in our post-budget tracking studies.

3. Government Record

The latest tracking study found government popularity back at the level it reached immediately after the Budget - which was the highest level of popularity since November.

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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

\*First Gallup Post-Election Survey.

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Slight improvement in Mrs. Thatcher's popularity in latest tracking study - almost no change in popularity of Callaghan or Steel.

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>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not</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

5. Communication

In the week 16th/21st April we found 13% of the electorate claiming to have heard something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days. When asked for reasons 5% mentioned international affairs, 4% relations with Unions and 3% Olympic Games. On the less favourable side 23% of the electorate claimed to have heard something making them less favourably inclined to the Government in the previous seven days. Items mentioned included Olympic Games 6%, cost of living 5%, international affairs 4% and public spending cuts 3%.

6. Public Opinion in Scotland

The latest System Three poll in Scotland published in the Glasgow Herald found a small improvement in our position when compared to the previous System Three Poll published in February 1980. Full details are given below:-

Voting Intention in Scotland

	<u>April</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>Jan</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>1979</u> <u>General</u> <u>Election Result</u> <u>(Scotland)</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	29	23	24	31
Labour	46	51	51	42
SNP	14	16	17	17
Liberal	10	9	8	9
Others	1	-	-	1

7. Published Polls

(i) M.O.R.I. Poll on Public Reactions to Iran.

The Sunday Times (April 27th) included the report on a M.O.R.I. Poll conducted on Saturday (26th April) on Public Reactions to American action in Iran and British Government Policies on Sanctions. The key results they obtained are given below:-

Do you think that the American Government was or was not right to use military action to try and release the hostages?

Was right	53%
Was not right	42%
Don't Know	5%

Do you think that the British Government should or should not join the United States in applying economic sanctions against Iran?

Should	55%
Should not	38%
Don't Know	7%

How much confidence do you have in the ability of the United States to deal wisely with world problems?

Very great	10%
Considerable	26%
Little	28%
Very little/None	29%
Don't Know	7%

(ii) Public Attitudes After the First Year of Conservative Government

The Sunday Times on April 27th included a report on some re-interviews with a "panel" of voters M.O.R.I. developed for them in the May 1979 General Election. Details of the main findings are given below:-

The figures show how voters have moved since last year, measured as a percentage of each party's support last May

	<u>Stayed Loyal</u>	<u>Support Lost</u>	<u>Support Gained</u>	<u>Net Change</u>
Conservative	78	22	10	-12

Losses: 9 to Lab, 3 to Lib, 1 to other, 9 to undecided/would not vote.  
Gains: 5 from Lab, 3 from Lib, 2 from other.

Labour	90	10	14	+4
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Losses: 6 to Con, 1 to Lib, 3 to undecided/would not vote.  
Gains: 10 from Con, 3 from Lib, ½ from other, ½ from not voting.

Liberal	65	35	20	-15
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Losses: 15 to Con, 13 to Lab, 7 to would not vote.  
Gains: 12 from Con, 4 from Lab, 1 from other, 3 from not voting.

(iii) Public Attitudes to T.U.C. Day of Action

The Sun on Monday April 28th included the report of a Marplan Survey that included a question on reactions to the T.U.C.'s proposed "Day of Action". They found 17% of the electorate in favour of the strike and 83% against. Even among members of the Trade Unions they found only 27% in favour and 73% against.

15% of electors said they would take part in the strike and 85% that they would not. Among Trade Union members 30% said they would take part and 70% that they would not.

KB/SEN  
6.5.80