



Press, Publicity
etc.

Prime Minister

You will recall that Tim Bell mentioned the very interesting research that they had been doing in depth in various parts of the country.

Attached is the first brief analysis of the main areas of questioning and discussion which took place. I think you will find it of interest.



Derek

Derek Howe

14th May 1981

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 63

(produced 10th May 1981)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest Gallup tracking study was conducted from 29th April until 5th May - during the final week of the local government election campaign, but before polling day. The survey found on the standard Gallup voting intention question no significant change in the level of support for the main parties (including the Social Democrats). The tendency for a slight upward trend in support for the Conservative Party and the downward trend in support for the Social Democrats (on unprompted question) our 'tracking' study has found in recent weeks has been confirmed in the latest survey. It is, however, too early to draw any conclusions with regard to a permanent improvement in the level of support for the Conservative Party. Support for Labour has remained fairly even over the last two surveys - it will be interesting to see whether Labour's successes in the local government elections have any impact on their standing in the polls. The interviewing for our next tracking study will have been conducted after the results of the local government elections were known.

In the week 18/23 March, 23% of the electorate claimed they would vote Conservative - our latest survey found 29% saying they would vote Conservative. Labour's support over the same period remaining constant - 31% 18/23 March and 31% 29 April/5 May. Support for the Social Democrats (the term was not mentioned in the question) has fallen from 17% (18/23 March) to 12% (29 April/5 May). Liberal support has remained constant - 15% 18/23 March and 15% 29 April/5 May.

When the idea of a Social Democratic Party was put to respondents our latest survey found 25% claiming they would still vote Conservative, 25% Labour, 21% Social Democratic and 10% Liberal.

When asked how they would vote if a Social Democratic/Liberal Candidate stood - 32% claimed they would vote for such a candidate, 24% claimed they would vote Labour and 21% Conservative.

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 was not mentioned in the question). (b) how the electorate said they would vote if a Social Democratic candidate stood and (c) how the electorate said they would vote if a Social Democratic/Liberal candidate stood.

VOTING INTENTION
(including don't knows)

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

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

VOTING INTENTION IS 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</u>
	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>2 Mar</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>6 Apr</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>Apr/</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>5</u>
Conservative	21	22	23	20	22	20	17	20	20	21	21	22	21
Labour	24	22	23	24	24	21	22	19	20	23	24	24	24
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Social Democratic Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Democratic/ Liberal alliance	33	36	34	35	36	37	38	37	35	37	34	33	32
Don't know/it depends	19	18	20	20	17	21	22	22	23	17	20	18	20

The table on the following page shows movements of support between the parties when the electorate was specifically asked how they would vote if a Social Democrat or a Liberal/Social Democratic candidate was standing.

MOVEMENT OF SUPPORT(Voting Intention when term
Social Democrat not mentioned)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOC. DEM</u>	<u>OTH</u>
<u>Voting Intention if</u> <u>Social Democratic</u> <u>Candidate</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	83	0	1	2	0
Labour	0	79	1	0	0
Social Democratic	7	8	17	95	8
Liberal	0	0	65	2	13
Other	0	0	0	0	40
Would not vote	1	2	1	0	0
Don't know	9	11	16	1	40

Voting Intention if
Liberal/Social Democratic
Candidate

Conservative	71	0	0	3	0
Labour	0	73	4	4	1
Social Democratic/ Liberal	14	12	76	85	40
Other	0	0	2	1	40
Would not vote	2	1	1	1	0
It depends	9	6	8	6	20
Don't know	4	7	7	4	0

The tables should be read that 83% of those who said they would vote Conservative when the term 'Social Democrat' was not mentioned would continue to vote Conservative when the term was mentioned - 7% said they would vote Social Democrat, 1% would not vote and 9% did not know how they would vote. Among Labour voters 79% remained loyal to Labour, 8% said they would vote Social Democrat, 2% claimed they would not vote and 11% did not know how they would vote. Among Liberal supporters, 65% remained loyal to the Liberals, 17% said they would vote Social Democrat, 1% Conservative, 1% Labour, 1% said they would not vote and 16% did not know how they would vote.

When the idea of a Liberal/Social Democratic Party was put to respondents 71% of previous Conservative supporters remained loyal to us, 14% said they would vote Social Democratic/Liberal, 2% would not vote, and 13% said either they would not vote or it would depend on what the parties said. Among Labour voters 73% remained loyal to Labour, 12% said they would vote Social Democratic/Liberal, 1% said they would not vote and 13% said either that it would depend on what the parties said or they did not know how they would vote.

Among Liberal supporters 76% said they would vote Social Democrat/Liberal, 4% Labour, 1% said they would not vote and 15% said it would depend on what the parties said or they would not vote.

2. Standard Voting Intention

The trend of support for the main parties from the standard Gallup voting intention question (excluding don't knows) is shown in the table on the following page and in the attached graphs. The latest

survey found a 2% Labour lead compared with 6% in the previous survey (conducted 22/27 April).

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	29.5	34.5	14.0	19.0	3.0	- 5.0**
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

* First Gallup Post-election survey

** Published Polls

3. Government Record

Our tracking study has found almost no change in the level of approval for the record of the Government over the last three weeks. Details are shown below and in the attached graphs.

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>			
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

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest study found no change in the popularity of Mrs Thatcher and almost no change in the popularity of Mr Foot. Mr Steel's popularity dropped sharply.

	<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

5. Published Polls

(a) M.O.R.I. (Radio 4 - Analysis 6th May 1981)

An M.O.R.I. poll conducted for the BBC Radio 4 programme Analysis found nearly two thirds of the electorate saying they would vote to leave the Common Market if a referendum took place now. Even among supporters of the SDP M.O.R.I. found 58% saying they would vote to leave the EEC, and only 39% would vote to stay in. Among Labour supporters 74% would vote to leave - 19% to stay in. Among Conservative supporters 37% would vote to leave and 55% to stay in.

The poll found that a large majority of the U.K. electorate thought that membership of the EEC has failed to increase Britain's influence in the world or to bring more jobs to the country. M.O.R.I. also found a strong feeling that Mrs Thatcher has not been tough enough in her negotiations with other member countries.

(b) System Three (Glasgow Herald 8th May 1981)

A System Three poll conducted in Scotland only and published in the Glasgow Herald on 8th May found 51% of the Scottish electorate saying they would vote Labour, 19% SNP, 15% Conservative, 11% Liberal and 4% for 'other' parties. These percentages exclude 20% of the electorate who did not know how they would vote.

When System Three mentioned the Social Democrats, 45% of the electorate claimed they would vote Labour, 18% SNP, 16% Social Democrat, 12% Conservative, 8% Liberal and 1% for 'other' parties. These percentages exclude 18% of the electorate who did not know how they would vote.

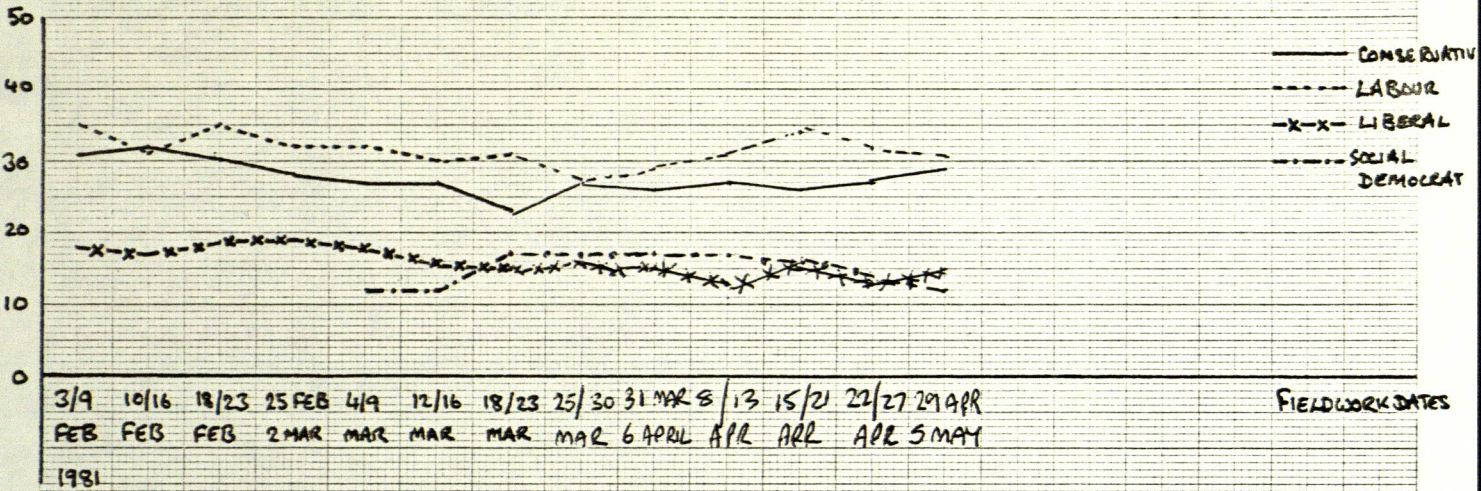
(c) Gallup (Sunday Telegraph 10th May 1981)

A Gallup poll published in the Sunday Telegraph on 10th May 1981 looked at the electorate's view of Mrs Thatcher. Details are given below.

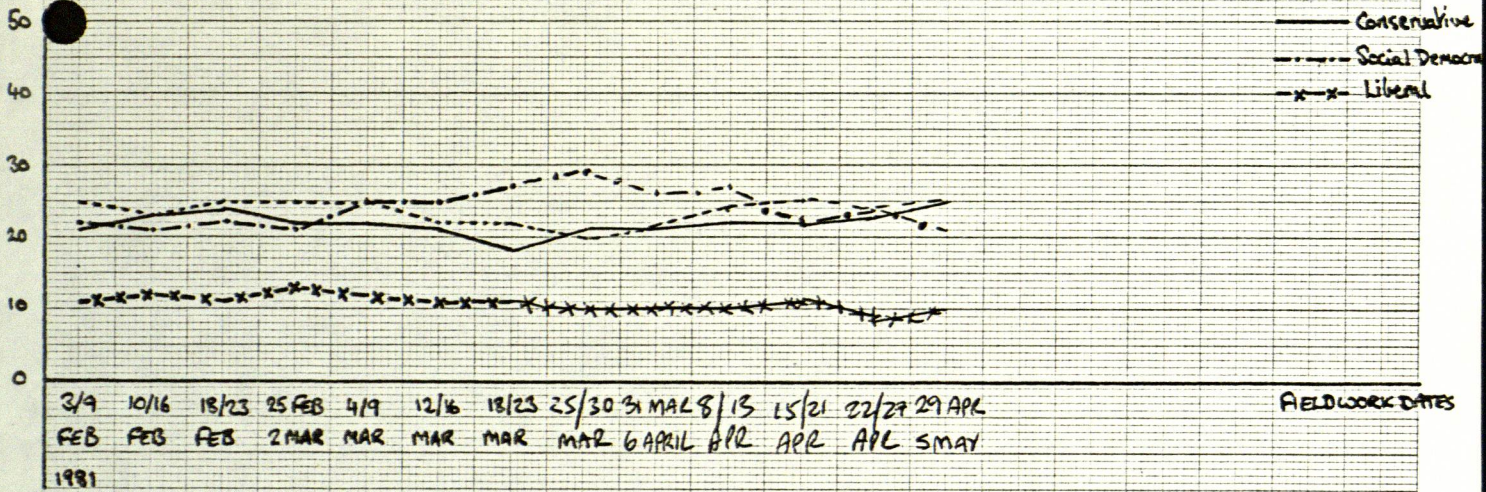
	<u>Today</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1979</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1977</u>
Has a strong personality	91	79	84
Speaks her mind	85	81	83
Tries hard in her job	81	93	91
Is a good speaker	80	75	81
Is not in touch with the working class/ordinary people	73	52	54
Divides the country	70	37	31
Thinks a lot of herself	67	54	59
Has destructive, not constructive ideas	57	25	23
Knows what she is talking about	55	75	70
Talks a lot but doesn't do much	53	39	47
Is a snob and talks down to people	50	37	40
Doesn't come over well	49	46	43
Is too critical of Russia	45	28	32
Knows about the problems of the cost of living	44	73	64
Has good or new ideas	41	58	55
Is catty/bitchy	34	29	32
Other reactions were:			
I prefer Mr Heath	41	47	40
It's time we had a woman in power	32	36	37
I don't like women leaders	21	29	28

BACKGROUND GRAPHS

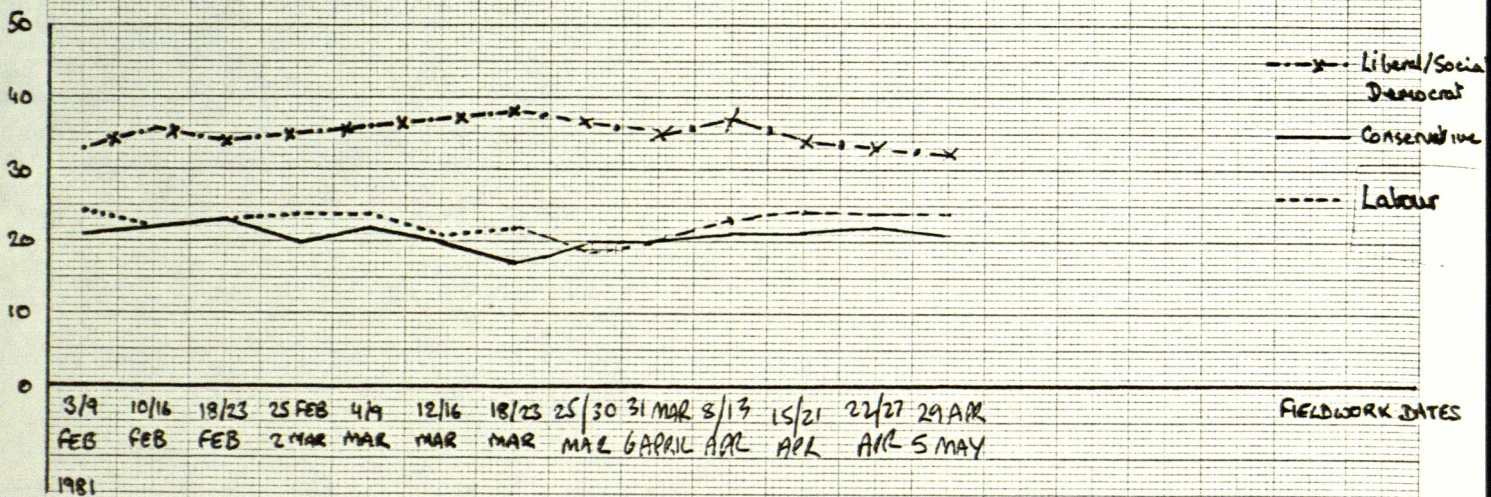
STANDARD VOTING INTENTIONS



VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

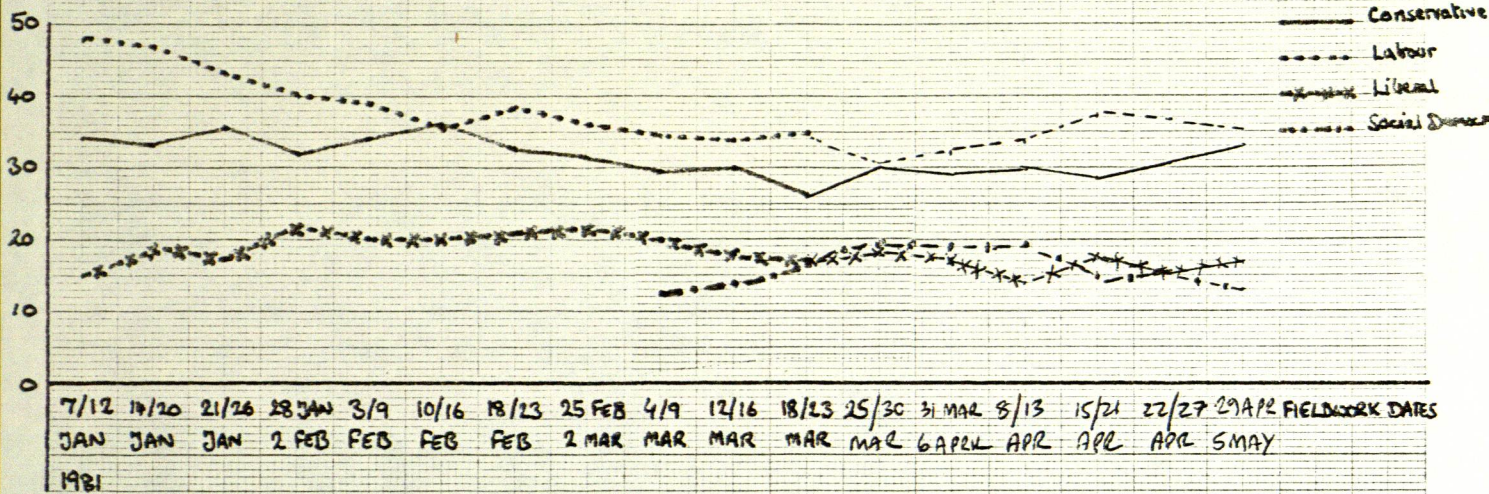


VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC / LIBERAL CANDIDATE

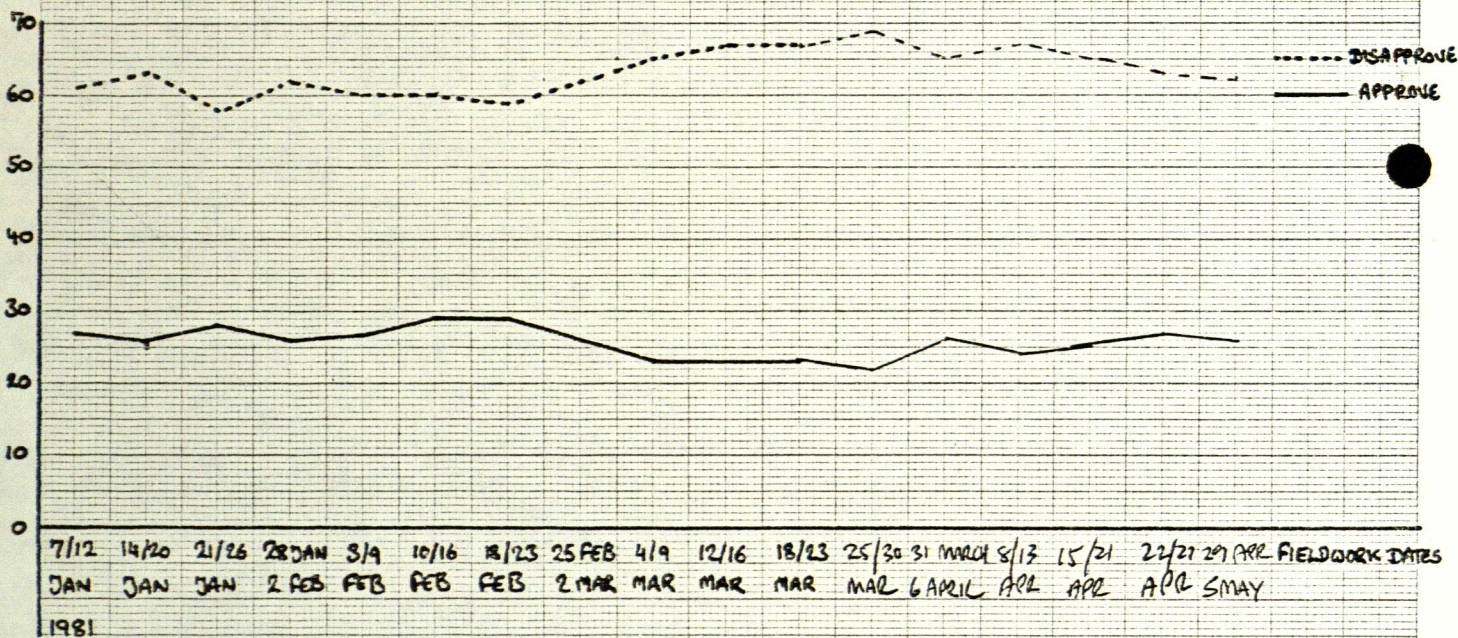


BACKGROUND GRAPHS

VOTING INTENTION (excluding don't knows)



GOVERNMENT RECORD



POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

