

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 94  
(produced 12th December 1981)

Box

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study in the period 2nd to 7th December 1981. The survey found a very sharp increase in support for the Social Democrats - up from 30% in the survey conducted 25/30 November to 38% in this latest study. Support for Labour fell from 26½% (25/30 November) to 21% in this latest study. Liberal support fell slightly from 15½% (25/30 November) to 13½%. The combined level of support for the Liberals and Social Democrats increased from 45½% (25/30 Nov) to 51½%. The combined level of support for the Liberals and Social Democrats has increased from 39% (7/12 Oct) to 51½% in our latest study. Labour support has fallen from 31% (7/12 Oct) to 21% in the period 2/7 December.

The sharp increase in support for the Social Democrats found in our latest study needs to be treated with a degree of caution as the changes mark such a significant change in trend that we need to wait a further survey before drawing any firm conclusions. It should be noted that the results of the next 'tracking' study will be the same as the Gallup figures due to be published in the Daily Telegraph on 1 th December.

The table below and the attached graph shows details of the trend in support for the main parties since early June.

VOTING INTENTION

(unprompted question)  
(excluding don't knows)

first Gallup post-election survey)  
Published Polls

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL +</u> <u>SOCIAL 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
9/1 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 Nov	26.0	21.0	13.5	38.0	1.5	+5.0	51.5

In addition to the standard voting intention question considered above Gallup asked 'If an election were to take place tomorrow and the following candidates were standing in your constituency, how would you vote?'. They found:-

	<u>25/30 Nov</u> 1981 %	<u>2/7 Dec</u> 1981 %
Conservative	25½	25
Labour	25½	20
Social Democrat/Liberal	49	53
Some other party	0	2

This question found a movement of support that closely paralleled the changes we found from our unprompted voting intention questions.

## 2. Government Record

Our latest survey found a slight fall in the level of approval for the Government - the survey found 20% approving of our record to date, 69% disapproved and 11% did not have a view. Details are shown below:

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't know</u> %
<u>1979</u> 13/18 June	34	41	25
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 Oct	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

### 3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Gallup's latest 'tracking' study found no change in the popularity of Mrs Thatcher or Mr Foot - 29% claimed to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister and only 18% with Mr Foot as Leader of the Opposition. Mr Steel's popularity fell slightly - 64% of the electorate now believe he is a good leader of the Liberals. Details 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	Know	%	Not	Know	%	Not	Know
198		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
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	14	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

### 4. Published Polls

#### (a) MORI (Evening Standard 10th December 1981)

An MORI survey conducted between November 27th and December 1st was published in the Evening Standard on 10th December 1981. In terms of voting intention (based on an unprompted voting intention question) MORI found:-

	<u>Aug</u> 1981	<u>Sept</u> 1981	<u>Oct</u> 1981	<u>Nov</u> 1981
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	30	27	27	27
Labour	39	38	31	27
Alliance (Lib + SDP)	29	33	40	44
Other	2	2	2	2
<hr/>				
Labour lead	+9	+5	-	-
Alliance lead	-	-	+9	+17

In the period from August to November MORI found that the Conservative share of support had fallen by 3 percentage points whilst Labour support was down 12 percentage points.

MORI in their latest study also asked voters what they think the likeliest result of the next General Election will be and also what result they would like to see. They found:-

	<u>Most Likely</u> %	<u>Would like to see</u> %
Overall Conservative majority	11	17
Overall Labour majority	16	20
Overall Alliance majority	37	39
No overall majority	21	12
Don't know	15	12

MORI found only one Conservative supporter in three and just under half of Labour's supporters expecting their parties to form the next Government on their own. They also found approximately 60% of Conservative voters in 1979 being still loyal and 55% of Labour voters being still loyal to Labour. The remainder have switched - perhaps temporarily - to the Alliance.

(b) Systems Three (Glasgow Herald 3rd December 1981)

A Systems Three poll published in the Glasgow Herald on 3rd December 1981 and conducted during the period November 20th to December 2nd looked at support for the various political parties in Scotland. They asked 'If there were a General Election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?'. System Three then showed a list of parties. They found:-

	<u>Nov/Dec</u> 1981	<u>Sept</u> 1981	<u>Jan</u> 1981	<u>General</u> Election
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	15	15	19	31
Labour	40	52	47	42
Liberal/SDP	27	16	-	-
SNP	17	17	18	17

Support for the Conservatives has remained unchanged since September, according to Systems Three we remain the fourth party. Labour support has dropped 12 percentage points and Liberal/SDP support is up 11 percentage points. Support for the SNP remains unchanged.

(c) Opinion Research Centre (London Programme 11th December 1981)

London Weekend Television's programme 'London Programme' on 11th December included details of the findings of a survey conducted for them in Bermondsey on 8th December by ORC. They found the Social Democrats would be in a strong position to capture the seat if Mr Tatchell were endorsed. If Bob Mellish were to stand in an immediate election, ORC found Labour would get 61% of the vote and the SDP/Liberals only 15%.

(d) MORI (Scotsman 11th December 1981)

An MORI survey published in the Scotsman on 11th December and conducted in Scotland found 36% claiming they would vote Labour, 34% Alliance 17% Conservative and 13% SNP.

GALLUP PROMPTED VOTING INTENTION

— CONSERVATIVE  
 - - - LABOUR  
 ..... SDP/LIB ALLIANCE

50  
40  
30  
20  
10  
0

2/7 DEC  
 25/30 NOV  
 18/23 NOV  
 11/16 NOV  
 4/9 NOV  
 28 OCT/2 NOV  
 21/25 OCT  
 14/19 OCT  
 7/12 OCT  
 30 SEPT/5 OCT  
 23/28 SEPT  
 16/21 SEPT  
 9/14 SEPT  
 1/7 SEPT  
 26/31 AUG  
 19/24 AUG  
 12/17 AUG  
 5/10 AUG  
 29 JULY/3 AUG  
 22/27 JULY  
 15/20 JULY  
 8/13 JULY  
 1/6 JULY  
 24/30 JUNE  
 16/22 JUNE  
 9/15 JUNE  
 3/8 JUNE

