

Conservative Research Department

32 Smith Square Westminster SW1P 3HH Telephone 01-222 9511

KB/sgc

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Derek Howe
10 Downing Street
London SW1

CONFIDENTIAL

12th May 1981

Dear Derek,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 63

The results from our latest 'tracking' study which are summarised in this note show a slight fall in support for the Social Democrats. We will be monitoring very carefully any further changes, in the level of support for the Social Democrats.

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Wente

D. K. Britto

Enc.

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Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Derek Howe
10 Downing Street
London SW1

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CONFIDENTIAL

8th May 1981

Dear Derek,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 62

I enclose a copy of the results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study. The interviewing for this survey was completed well before local government polling day.

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Howarth
D.K. Britto

Enc.

Public Opinion Background Note 62

(produced 3rd May 1981)

1. Introduction

Our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted in the week 22/27 April - in the middle of the local government election campaign in England and Wales. Gallup found on their standard voting intention question no significant change in the level of support for the Conservative and Labour parties but a slight (but at present not statistically significant) fall in support for the Liberals and the Social Democrats.

In the week 3/9 February 31% claimed they would vote Conservative - our latest survey found 27% saying they would vote Conservative. In the week 3/9 February 35% claimed they would vote Labour - 32% 22/27 April. 18% of the electorate claimed they would vote Liberal in the week 3/9 February - our latest survey (22/27 April) showed this had fallen to 13%. Unfortunately we do not have a separate figure for the level of Social Democratic support in the week 3/9 February but by 4/9 March 12% of the electorate spontaneously claimed they would vote for them - in the week 22/27 April 14% said they would vote Social Democratic.

When the Social Democratic Party was mentioned to the electorate 24% of them claimed they would support them in the week 22/27 April - 22% 15/21 April, 27 8/13 April, 26% 31st March/6 April and 29% 25/30 March. For full details please see table below.

When the idea of a Social Democratic/Liberal alliance was put to respondents - 33% claimed they would vote for such an alliance (22/27 April) - this compares with a peak level of support for such an alliance of 38% in the week 18/23 March.

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

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

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

N.B. This note normally excludes don't knows (Figures are recalculated). It should be noted that this table includes don't knows as a separate category.

*Social Democratic Party under standard voting intention is based on those respondents claiming they would vote Social Democratic at a General Election. No mention was made of the term in the voting intention question.

2. Standard Voting Intention

The trend in support for the main parties in the standard Gallup voting intention question (excluding don't knows) is shown in the table below and the attached graphs. Labour now (22/27 April) lead us by 6% compared with 9% in the week 15/21 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

* First Gallup Post-election survey

** Published Polls.

3. Government Record

Slight but probably not statistically significant improvement in popularity of Government in latest survey. Details are 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>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

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Slight improvement in popularity of Mrs Thatcher in our latest survey
- Mr Steel's popularity has also improved.

	<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

5. Published Polls(a) N.O.P. (Free Weekender 1st May 1981)

An N.O.P. poll conducted in the area of the Greater London Council was published in the 'Free Weekender' on 1st May 1981. It found among those who claimed they would certainly vote in the G.L.C. elections that 52% said they would vote Labour, 36% Conservative 8% Liberal and 3% Social Democratic. N.O.P. found:-

Q. If the GLC election was tomorrow, how would you vote? Which candidate would you be most likely to support? Among those naming a party - 75% of the total - the results were:-

	<u>All (%)</u>	<u>Certain to Vote</u>
Labour	50	52
Conservative	34	36
Liberal (only)	9	8
SDP (only)	5	3
Lib and SDP		
Alliance	1	-
Other	1	1
Labour lead over Conservative	15	16

N.O.P. also asked what the electorate in London regarded as the main issues. They found:-

Q. Which one of these issues is the most important for you and your family?

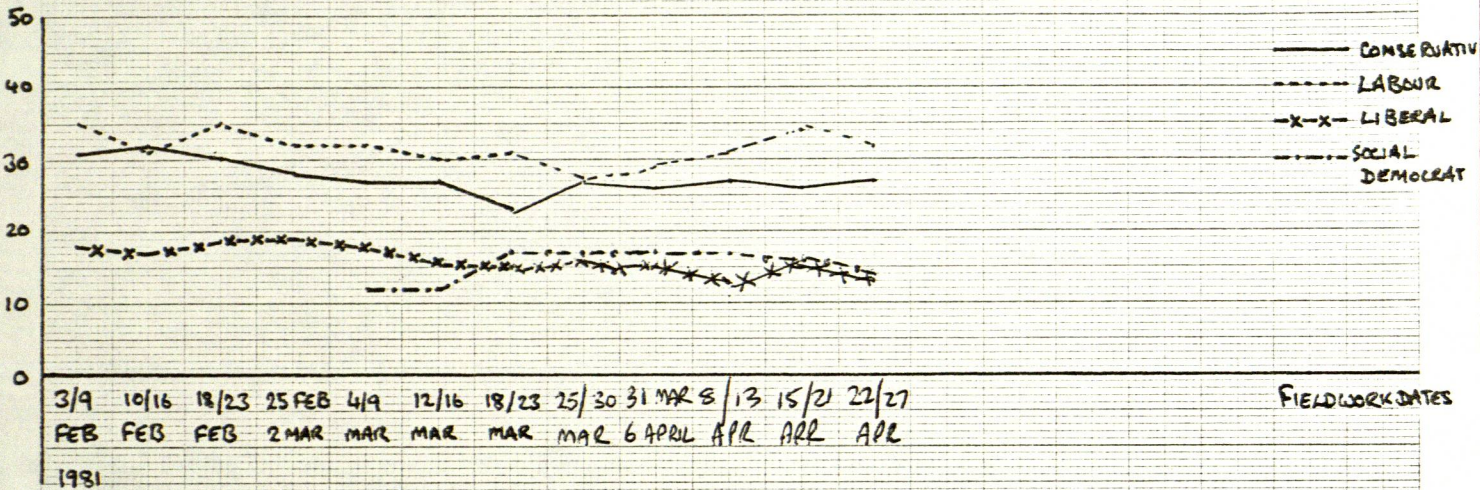
	<u>All Electors</u> %	<u>Labour</u> %	<u>Conservative</u> %	<u>Liberal</u> %
Rates rises	29	27	37	24
Unemployment in London	26	36	16	33
Law and Order	22	11	34	26
Housing	16	19	11	11
London Transport & service	4	5	1	2
Roads and traffic	1	1	1	4
Inner City redevelopment	1	-	1	-
Don't know	1	-	1	-

(b) O.R.C. (The London Programme 1st May 1981)

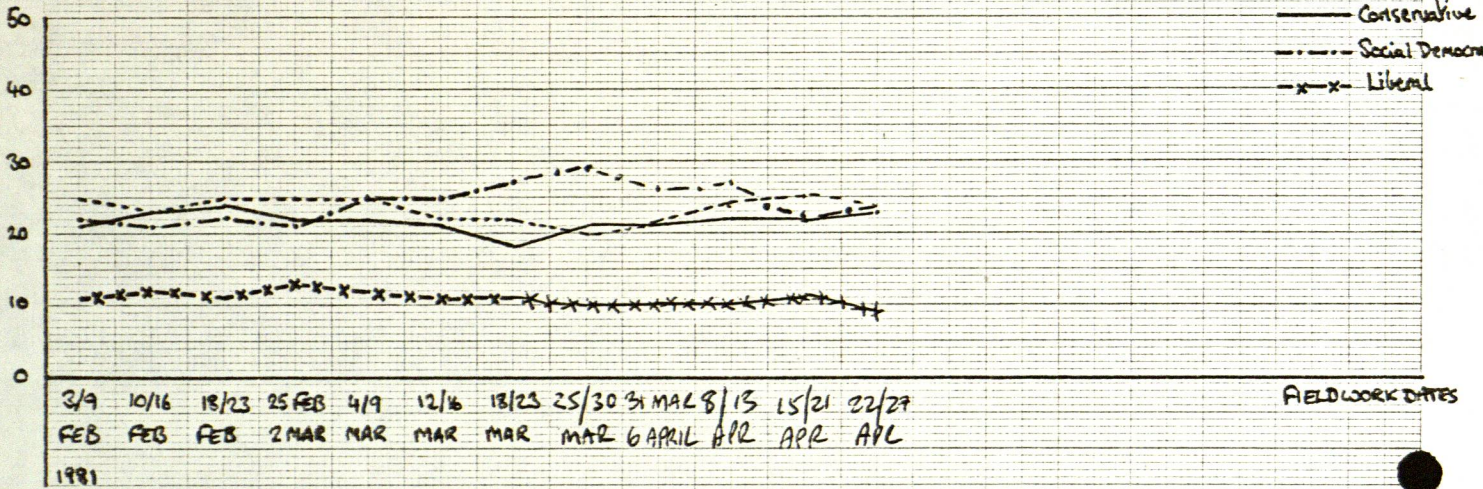
An O.R.C. poll conducted in London found amongst those claiming they would certainly vote that 31% would vote Conservative, 51% Labour 10% Liberal and 8% for 'other' parties.

BACKGROUND GRAPHS

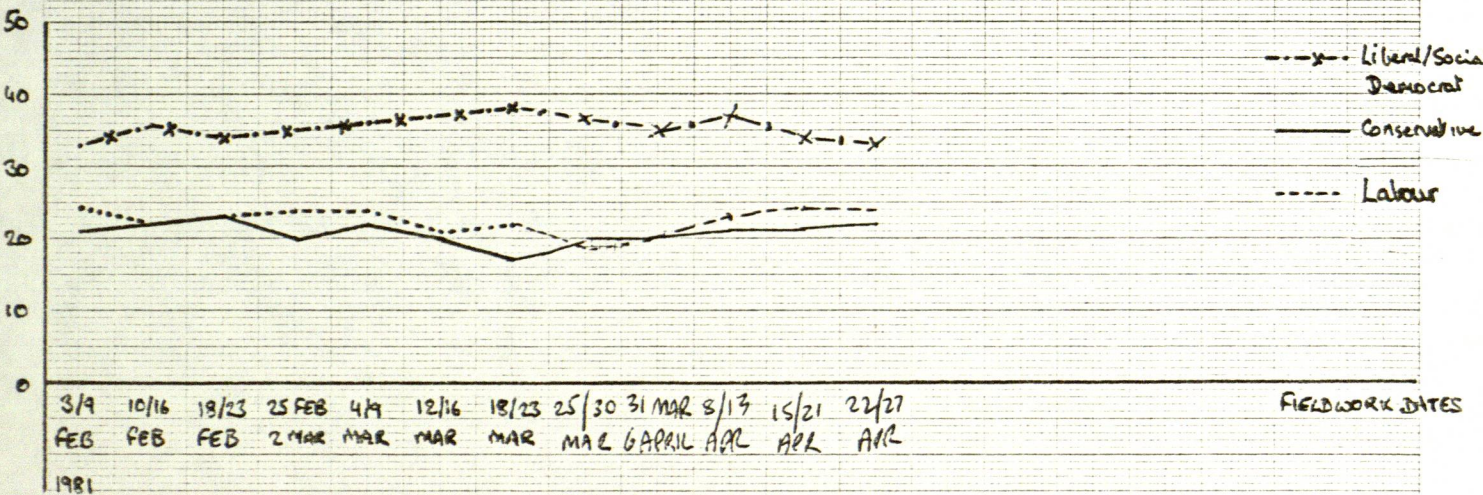
STANDARD VOTING INTENTION



VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

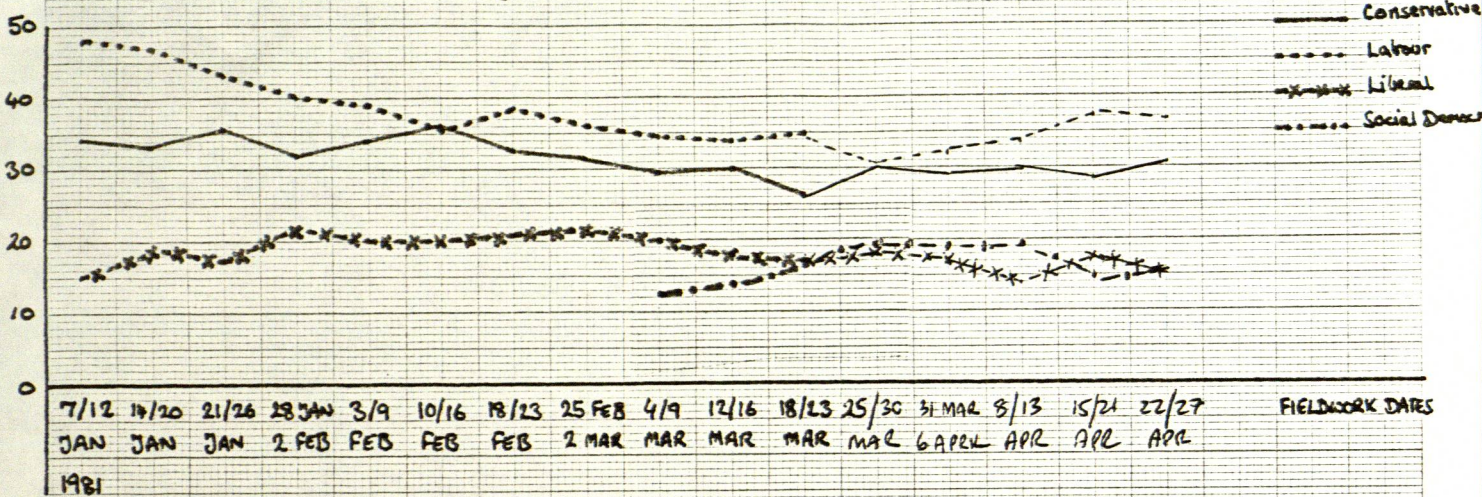


VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC / LIBERAL CANDIDATE

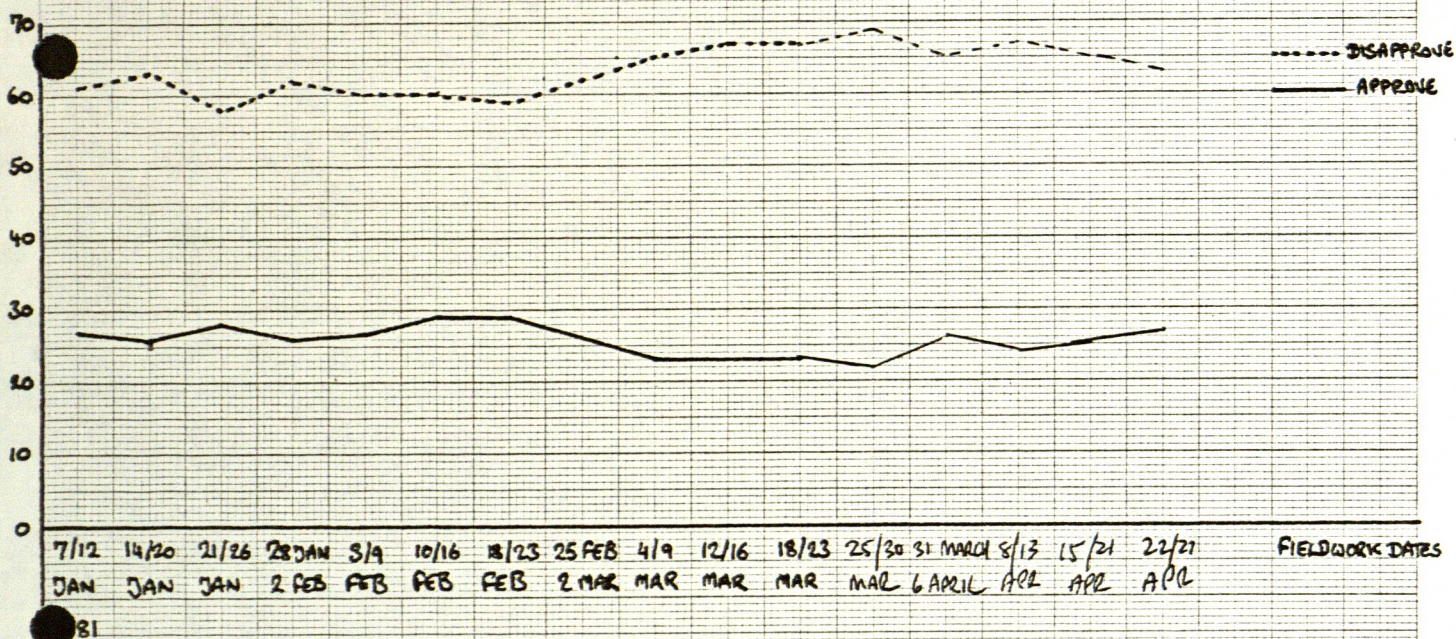


BACKGROUND GRAPHS

VOTING INTENTION (excluding don't knows)



GOVERNMENT RECORD



POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

