

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 98  
(produced 30th January 1982)

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 20th to 25th January. The survey did not find any major change in the level of support for the main parties and it confirmed the drop in support for the Social Democrats that we have been finding since the start of 1982. In early December 1981 (2/7 December) Gallup found 38% of the electorate claiming they would vote Social Democrat, this had fallen by 36% in the last pre-Christmas survey (9/14 December) but dropped to 25% in the first 1982 survey (conducted 6/11 January). The two further surveys conducted in 1982 have showed no signs of support reverting to late 1982 levels. Our latest unpublished study (conducted 20/25 January) found a small (statistically not significant) increase in support for the Conservative Party and a fall in Labour support when compared with the results of the previous study (conducted 13/18 January). Social Democrat support remained unchanged and Liberal support increased by one percentage point.

The table below shows details of the trend in support for the main parties since early June 1982.

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

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL + 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
9/15 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/ 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 Dec	26.0	21.0	13.5	38.0	1.5	+5.0	51.5
9/14 Dec	23.0	23.5	14.5	36.0	3.0	-0.5**	50.5
<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	-2.0**	39.5
20/25 Jan	30.0	27.0	14.0	26.5	2.5	-3.0	40.5

\* First Gallup post-election survey

\*\* Published Polls

## 2. Government Record

The latest study found a slight further improvement in the level of approval of the record of the Government. We now have 26% of the electorate approving of our record, compared with 18% in the last pre-Christmas tracking exercise (conducted 9/14 December). Details are shown in the table 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
<u>1981</u>			
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 October	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
9/14 December	18	70	12
<u>1982</u>			
6/11 January	23	65	12
13/18 January	24	65	12
20/25 January	26	62	13

## 3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest survey found almost no change in the popularity of any of the three main political Leaders covered by the Gallup questions. Details are shown on the following page.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1981</u>									
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	15	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
9/14 Dec	25	70	5	19	67	14	63	18	19
<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

4. Published PollsMORI (Daily Express 29th January 1982)

An MORI survey published in the Daily Express on 29th January looked at attitudes to the police. They found 59% of the electorate claimed they respected the police 'a lot' or 'a fair amount', only 10% claimed to distrust them 'a lot' or 'a fair amount'. 31% claimed to sympathise with them 'a lot' or 'a fair amount'.

MORI asked 'has your opinion of the police changed at all over the past few years? If yes, nowadays do you have a better or a worse opinion of the police than you used to?' 68% claimed their opinion had not changed. Of those who said their opinion had changed 9% said it had got better, 22% got worse and 1% did not have a view.

When asked how satisfied they are with the way their area is policed, 18% claimed to be 'very satisfied', 52% 'fairly satisfied', 20% 'not very satisfied', 5% 'not at all satisfied' and 5% did not have a view.

When MORI put to respondents a number of statements about the police they found 47% agreed with the idea 'there are now more policemen who are corrupt than there used to be' (27% disagreed). 67% agreed that 'policemen who break the law should be punished more severely than other people' (26% disagreed). 97% agreed that 'women who have been raped should have the option of being interviewed by women officers'. 83% agreed that 'the British police are still the best in the world'.

Gallup (Sunday Telegraph 31st January 1982)

A Gallup poll conducted between January 6th and 12th and published in the Sunday Telegraph on 31st January looked at attitudes among the electorate to unemployment.

Gallup asked 'What do you think the Government should give greater attention to - trying to curb inflation or trying to reduce unemployment' They found:-

	<u>Jan</u> 1982	<u>Nov</u> 1980	<u>Sept</u> 1980	<u>July</u> 1980
	%	%	%	%
Inflation	23	30	33	38
Unemployment	70	62	59	54
Don't know	7	8	8	8

/all

Among sections of the electorate Gallup found a majority wanting the problem of unemployment to be given priority over inflation. Even among Conservative voters, 48% opted for reducing unemployment against 43% wanting to curb inflation.

When Gallup asked 'Do you think that unemployment is always a bad thing or can it sometimes be justified as necessary during a period of adjustment?' They found:-

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>SDP</u>
	%	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters
	%	%	%	%	%
Always bad	54	37	65	54	58
Can be justified	39	56	27	42	37
Don't know	7	7	8	4	5

54% of the electorate (37% Conservative supporters, 65% of Labour supporters, 54% of Liberal supporters and 58% of SDP supporters) thought unemployment is always bad.

39% of the electorate (56% of Conservative supporters, 27% of Labour supporters, 42% of Liberal supporters and 37% of SDP supporters) thought unemployment can sometimes be justified.

When Gallup asked 'How many unemployed do you think are there through their own fault?' 6% thought 'most', 41% 'some', 56% 'few', 4% 'none' and 3% did not have a view.

56% agreed with the idea that the unemployed should be made to take a new job even if it means less money or lower status, 36% disagreed and 8% did not have a view.

On the question of work sharing, Gallup asked 'Some people say that those in work should be prepared to accept changes, for example, no overtime or work a 4-day week, in order to share work. Do you agree or disagree with this?' Among the employed 77% agreed with this idea and 16% disagreed.

Gallup found the electorate were not prepared to pay more taxes to help the unemployed. 30% said they would be prepared to pay more taxes and 50% were not.