

Conservative Research Department

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KB/sg-c

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CONFIDENTIAL

12th November 1981

Dear Derek,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 89

The results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study conducted from 28th October to 2nd November found, for the first time, a small Social Democrat lead in terms of an unprompted voting intention question. This survey found 29½% of the electorate claiming they would vote Social Democrat, 29% Labour, 26½% Conservative and 13% Liberal. The difference between the Parties in terms of support is, in opinion research terms, not significant, but it would appear that at present the three main parties are still neck and neck. If we add support for the Liberals and Social Democrats together, we then find 42½% of the electorate claiming they will support one of the Alliance parties.

Y
Hester

D. K. Britto

Enc.

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 89

(produced 9th November 1981)

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 28th October to 2nd November. For the first time in any tracking study they found the Social Democrats leading all the other parties on the standard unprompted voting intention question. This standard question, used by Gallup for many years, makes no mention of the name of any of the political parties - the question used is 'If there was a General Election tomorrow, which Party would you support?' Using questions that have included reference to the Social Democrats or the Alliance between the Liberals and the Social Democrats - opinion polls have found the new party leading in terms of support for some months.

Our latest Gallup 'tracking' study found 29½% of the electorate claiming they would vote Social Democrat if an election took place tomorrow, 29% Labour, 26½% Conservative and 13% Liberal. The Social Democrat lead is insignificant in opinion poll terms as indeed are the differences in support for the three main parties - we remain in a situation in which all three parties are neck and neck in terms of public support. However, if we add onto the 29½% of the electorate who claim they will vote Social Democrat the 13% who claim they will vote Liberal - 42½% of the electorate claimed (unprompted) they would vote for one of the Alliance parties. Such a combination would put the 'Alliance' in a commanding lead.

The findings from our Gallup study are very similar to the results of an M.O.R.I. survey conducted between October 23rd and 27th and published in the Daily Star on November 9th.

This M.O.R.I. survey found 27% claiming they would vote Conservative (26½% in Gallup study conducted 28th October- 2nd November), 31% Labour (29% in Gallup study), 26% SDP (29½% in Gallup study) and 14% Liberal (13% in Gallup study). M.O.R.I. found a combined level of support for the Liberals and Social Democrats of 40% compared with 42½% in our Gallup study.

Support for the Conservative Party in our weekly tracking studies has fluctuated to an extent over recent weeks, but in general since late July has been around the 25%/26% level - 25½% on 29th July/ 3 Aug, 26% 26/31 August, 26% 30th Sept/5 Oct and 26½% 28 Oct/ 2 Nov. Support for Labour has been edging downwards from the 41% we found in late August and early September - the downward trend is not even but the movement can be clearly seen in the table below. Liberal support has remained at around 12/13% level since late September, it has not returned to the 15/16% level Gallup found in July/August. Support for the Social Democrats has shown an almost continuous upward trend since late August - 16% claimed they would vote S.D. 26/31 August, 21% 30th Sept/ 5th Oct and 29½% 28th Oct/ 2nd Nov. Combined support for the Liberals and Social Democrats has also edged up but not as sharply as support for the S.D.'s - the increase in support for the S.D.'s has partly been compensated by an even and indeed slightly downward trend in support for the Liberals.

Details of the trend in support for the main parties on the standard Gallup unprompted voting intention question from both our unpublished 'tracking' studies and Gallup published polls are shown in the table below:-

VOTING INTENTION

	CON	LAB	LIB	SOCIAL DEMOCRAT	OTHER	LEAD	LIBERAL + SOCIAL DEMOCRAT
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>							
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0	13.8
13/18 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0	13.0
<u>1980</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 August	27.0	36.0	15.0	18.0	4.0	-9.0	33.0
12/17 August	28.0	38.5	13.0	19.0	1.5	-10.5**	32.0
19/24 August	29.0	34.0	17.0	18.0	2.0	-5.0	35.0
26/31 August	26.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	2.0	-15.0	31.0
1/7 September	25.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	-16.0	31.0
9/14 September	32.0	36.5	11.5	17.5	2.5	-4.5**	29.0
16/21 September	25.0	36.5	16.0	19.0	3.5	-11.5	35.0
23/28 September	24.5	33.5	16.5	24.0	1.5	-9.0	40.5
30 Sept/5th October	26.0	38.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-12.0	33.0
7/12 October	27.0	31.0	12.5	26.5	3.0	-4.0	39.0
14/19 October	28.5	34.0	12.5	22.0	3.0	-5.5	34.5
21/25 October	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

* First Gallup post-Election survey

** Published Polls

The tables below show the level of support for the parties in the main socio-demographic groups. It should be noted that unlike the table above, which excludes don't knows, these tables include don't knows as a separate category.

(a) Sex

	<u>15-20 July</u>		<u>28 Oct - 2 Nov</u>		<u>Differences July-Oct/Nov</u>	
	1981		1981		Men	Women
	Men	Women	Men	Women		
	%	%	%	%		
Conservative	24	28	24	23	0	-5
Labour	33	32	25	26	-8	-6
Liberal	12	16	8	15	-4	-1
Social Democrats	18	12	30	22	+ 12	+10
Others	3	2	2	1	-1	+1
Don't know	10	10	11	13	+1	+3

(b) Age15th - 20th July 1981

	<u>18-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	25	22	28	29
Labour	35	30	33	28
Liberal	14	10	14	19
Social Democrats	16	18	15	11
Others	2	6	1	2
Don't know	8	14	8	11

28th Oct - 2nd Nov 1981

	<u>18-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	20	20	25	31
Labour	28	25	23	25
Liberal	12	9	12	13
Social Democrat	29	31	23	21
Other	1	2	3	0
Don't know	10	12	14	10

Difference July-Oct/Nov

	<u>18-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	-5	-2	-3	+2
Labour	-7	-5	-10	-3
Liberal	-2	-1	-2	-6
Social Democrats	+13	+13	+8	+10
Other	-1	-4	+2	-2
Don't know	+2	-2	+6	-1

(c) Class15th - 20th July 1981

	<u>ABC1</u>	<u>C2</u>	<u>DE</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	37	20	18
Labour	19	36	46
Liberal	14	16	12
Social Democrats	19	16	9
Other	2	2	3
Don't know	9	10	12

29th Oct - 2nd Nov 1981

	<u>ABC1</u>	<u>C2</u>	<u>DE</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	35	18	14
Labour	14	26	40
Liberal	9	13	14
Social Democrats	28	28	21
Other	1	1	1
Don't know	13	13	9

Difference July - Oct/Nov

	<u>ABC1</u>	<u>C2</u>	<u>DE</u>
Conservative	-2	-2	-4
Labour	-5	-10	-6
Liberal	-5	-3	+2
Social Democrats	+9	+12	+12
Other	-1	-1	-1
Don't know	+4	+3	-3

(d) House Tenure

	<u>5th - 20th July 1981</u>		<u>28th Oct - 2nd Nov 1981</u>	
	<u>Own home</u>	<u>Council</u>	<u>Own home</u>	<u>Council</u>
	<u>or buying on</u>	<u>Rented</u>	<u>or buying on</u>	<u>Rented</u>
	<u>Mortgage</u>		<u>Mortgage</u>	
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	33	15	30	12
Labour	24	47	17	40
Liberal	14	13	11	14
Social Democrats	18	11	31	19
Other	2	4	2	2
Don't know	9	11	11	13

Difference July - Oct/Nov

	<u>Own home</u>	<u>Council</u>
	<u>or buying on</u>	<u>Rented</u>
	<u>Mortgage</u>	
Conservative	-3	-3
Labour	-7	-7
Liberal	-3	+1
Social Democrats	+13	+8
Other	0	-2
Don't know	+2	+2

(e) Trade Union Membership

	<u>15th - 20th July 1981</u>		<u>28th Oct - 2nd Nov 1981</u>	
	<u>Trade Union</u>	<u>Non-Trade</u>	<u>Trade Union</u>	<u>Non-Trade</u>
	<u>Member</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Member</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	18	31	15	29
Labour	40	27	29	23
Liberal	14	14	13	11
Social Democrat	16	14	30	24
Other	2	2	2	1
Don't know	9	10	11	12

Difference July - Oct/Nov

	<u>Trade Union</u>	<u>Non-Trade Union</u>
	<u>Member</u>	<u>Member</u>
Conservative	-3	-2
Labour	-11	-4
Liberal	-1	-3
Social Democrat	+14	+10
Other	0	-1
Don't know	+2	+2

(f) Region15-20th July 1981

	<u>North</u>	<u>Midlands</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Scotland</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	29	29	18
Labour	37	30	29	38
Liberal	14	11	17	12
Social Democrat	17	17	15	7
Other	1	2	1	12
Don't know	10	12	8	13

28th Oct - 2nd November 1981

	<u>North</u>	<u>Midlands</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Scotland</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	20	24	26	21
Labour	32	23	20	34
Liberal	11	11	12	14
Social Democrat	29	28	26	13
Other	0	0	2	10
Don't know	8	13	15	7

Difference July - Oct/Nov

	<u>North</u>	<u>Midlands</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Scotland</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	-1	-5	-3	+3
Labour	-5	-7	-9	-4
Liberal	-3	0	-5	+2
Social Democrat	+12	+11	+11	+5
Other	-1	-2	+1	-2
Don't know	-2	+1	+7	-6

In mid-July 1981 15% of the electorate (17% excluding don't knows) claimed they would vote Social Democrat - in our latest study - Oct/Nov 26% of the electorate claimed they would vote Social Democrat (29% excluding don't knows) In mid-July 1981 14% claimed they would vote Liberal and in the latest study 12%.

Looking at changes in support across the various socio-economic groups in the July-Oct/Nov period, it is perhaps worth noting the following points:-

- Social Democratic support has increased more among men than women highlighting further the imbalance among the sexes in terms of support for the Social Democrats. This imbalance is partly offset by the bias towards women in the profile of support for the Liberals
- Support for the Conservative Party over the period remained stable among men but fell by 5 percentage points among women.
- Labour support fell by almost equal proportions among men and women.
- Social Democrats gained slightly more support in the 18-34 and 35-44 age groups than in the 45-64 and 65+ age groups.

- The increase in support for the S.D.'s was slightly higher among the C.2's (up 12 percentage points) and the DE (up 12 percentage points) than among the ABC1's (up 9 percentage points).
- Support for Labour dropped particularly sharply in the C2 group. The fall in Conservative support was fairly evenly spread across the main class groups.
- Support for the S.D.'s has jumped 13 percentage points among electors who own their own homes or who are buying them on a mortgage and by 8 percentage points among council tenants.
- S.D. support is up by 14 percentage points among trade unionists and by 10 percentage points among non-trade unionists.
- Apart from Scotland, support for the Social Democrats has increased by 11 or 12 percentage points in the main regions of Great Britain.

In addition to the unprompted voting intention question considered in detail above our tracking exercise includes two prompted voting intention questions which ask respondents how they would vote if a Social Democrat or Social Democrat/Liberal Alliance candidate stands in their constituency. It is intended to revise the wordings of these questions in the near future but the trend of support for the parties in response to these prompted questions is shown below:-

VOTING INTENTION IF

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

(including don't knows)

	<u>3/8</u>	<u>9/15</u>	<u>16/22</u>	<u>24/30</u>	<u>1/6</u>	<u>8/13</u>	<u>15/20</u>	<u>22/27</u>	<u>29 July</u>	<u>5/10</u>	<u>12/17</u>
	June	June	June	June	July	July	July	July	3 Aug	Aug	Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	22	23	23	21	22	21	21	18	20	20	20
Labour	27	28	28	31	29	29	28	28	30	27	27
Liberal	9	12	11	11	8	9	11	9	7	8	8
Others	2	1	2	1½	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
Social Democrat Party	23	20	19	19	20	20	23	29	26	25	26
Social Democrat/ Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/it depends	17	16	16	16½	16	18	16	16	15	18	18

	<u>19/24</u>	<u>26/31</u>	<u>1/7</u>	<u>9/14</u>	<u>16/21</u>	<u>23/28</u>	<u>30th Sept</u>	<u>7/12</u>	<u>14/19</u>	<u>21/26</u>	<u>28 Oct/ 2 Nov</u>
	Aug	Aug	Sept	Sept	Sept	Sept	5th Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Nov
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	20	19	23	18	18	19	19	22	23	20
Labour	25	28	29	27	27	23	29	23	25	21	22
Liberal	11	9	10	7	11	11	8	8	9	9	10
Others	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1
Social Democrat Party	25	24	25	24	27	30	25	30	25	31	32
Social Democrat/ Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/it depends	16	18	15	18	15	17	17	18	18	14	14

	<u>3/8</u> June	<u>9/15</u> June	<u>16/22</u> June	<u>24/30</u> June	<u>1/6</u> July	<u>8/13</u> July	<u>15/20</u> July	<u>22/27</u> July	<u>29 July</u> 3 Aug	<u>5/10</u> Aug	<u>12/17</u> Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	22	24	20	22	20	21	18	20	20	19
Labour	27	27	27	29	28	27	27	27	29	25	27
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1
Social Dem. Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Democrat/ Liberal Alliance	32	30	28	32	28	31	33	37	33	33	33
Don't know/it depends	18	19	19	18	19	19	18	16	16	19	19

	<u>19/24</u> Aug	<u>26/31</u> Aug	<u>1/7</u> Sept	<u>9/14</u> Sept	<u>16/21</u> Sept	<u>23/28</u> Sept	<u>30th Sept</u> 5th Oct	<u>7/12</u> Oct	<u>14/19</u> Oct	<u>21/26</u> Oct	<u>28 Oct</u> 2 Nov
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	19	20	23	16	18	18	19	22	23	20
Labour	25	27	28	26	26	23	27	22	25	20	21
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
Social Democrat Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Democrat/ Liberal Alliance	35	31	33	32	40	40	34	38	33	39	40
Don't know/it depends	18	22	18	18	16	19	19	19	18	16	17

2. Government Record

Almost no change in the level of approval of the record of the Government to date, but a slight increase in the level of disapproval. 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>81</u>			
3/8 June	26	60	14
9/15 June	26	63	11
16/22 June	29	59	12
24/30 June	23	67	10
1/6 July	24	63	13
8/13 July	23	66	11
15/20 July	23	66	11
22/27 July	23	66	11
29 July/ 3 August	23	65	12
5/10 August	23	64	13
12/17 August	23	66	11
19/24 August	26	64	10
26/31 August	23	64	13
1/7 September	23	65	13
9/14 September	26	63	11
16/21 September	21	67	11
23/28 September	21	66	13
30th Sept/5th 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

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Slight fall in popularity of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Foot over last week's results but no change in Mr Steel's popularity. Details given below:-

	<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 not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1981</u>									
3/8 June	36	58	6	29	41	21	59	19	22
9/15 June	33	61	6	28	48	24	61	18	21
16/22 June	34	60	6	29	50	21	60	20	21
24/30 June	30	65	5	28	52	21	60	19	21
1/6 July	31	62	7	25	54	21	60	17	23
8/13 July	30	65	5	25	52	23	56	20	24
15/20 July	31	65	4	22	59	19	59	19	22
22/27 July	26	68	6	23	55	22	59	21	21
29 July/ 3 Aug	27	68	5	26	53	20	57	23	20
5/10 August	30	65	5	27	56	17	62	18	21
12/17 August	28	66	6	23	57	20	61	18	21
19/24 August	33	61	6	25	51	24	63	19	19
26/31 August	28	66	6	29	52	20	60	20	21
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
30th Sept/5th Oct	27	68	6	31	49	20	60	20	20
7/12 October	26	68	6	28	50	22	62	19	18
14/19 October	31	62	7	31	50	20	64	15	21
21/26 October	33	62	5	27	54	19	64	20	16
28 Oct/2 Nov	29	65	6	25	59	16	64	19	17

4. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Sunday Telegraph 9th November 1981)

A Gallup survey conducted between October 21st and 26th looking at attitudes to the medical treatment of handicapped babies was published in the Sunday Telegraph on 9th November. Gallup asked.

Q. When a baby is born with severe handicaps which its parents feel unable to accept, which of the following alternatives do you think preferable?

	<u>Agree (%)</u>
If the parents wish it, the baby should be allowed to die, even if this means withholding possible treatment.	59
The baby should be cared for by local authorities either in a foster home or a hospital for handicapped, or offered for adoption	30
Don't know	11

- Q. Some babies are found to be severely mentally or physically handicapped at birth. Which of these two statements is closest to your own opinion about this?

	<u>Agree (%)</u>
No matter how severe the handicap, any baby should receive all necessary medical and nursing care	32
Whether a baby should be allowed to live or die should depend on how severe the handicap is	60
Don't know	8

(b) MORI (Daily Star 9th November 1981)

An MORI poll conducted throughout Great Britain between October 23 and 27 was published in the Daily Star on 9th November. MORI found 31% claiming they will vote Labour, 27% Conservative, 26% SDP, 14% Liberal and 2% for other parties.

(c) NOP (Observer 8th November 1981)

An NOP poll looking at attitudes to nuclear weapons was published in the Observer on 8th November. The interviewing for the survey was conducted on 26/27 October.

They found 53% of the electorate thought American bases should be removed from Britain. On the question of unilateral disarmament, only 23% favoured this option and 67% were against the option.

On the question of NATO 73% of electors wanted Britain to stay in and only 12% pull out.

(d) MORI (Panorama 9th November 1981)

An MORI poll conducted for Panorama found 46% of the electorate thinking that everything possible should be done to help a severely handicapped baby to live but 23% thought a severely handicapped baby should be given a quick and painless death.