

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 97

(produced 24th January 1982)

1. Introduction

The results of our latest Gallup 'tracking' study conducted from 13th to 18th January are the same as the results of the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on Friday January 22nd. The survey found 29½% claiming they will vote Labour (23½% previous published poll conducted 9/14 Dec), 27½% Conservative (23% 9/14 December), 26½% Social Democrat (36% 9/14 December) and 13% Liberal (14½% 9/14 December). Combined support for the two Alliance parties has fallen from 50½% in the previous published Gallup poll (9/14 December) to 39½% in the latest survey. This published survey confirms the downward movement of support for the Alliance parties that we found in our first 1982 'tracking' study (conducted 6/11 January). We need still to wait for future research before we can conclude that we have seen a reversal of the movement of support to the Alliance parties that we found in 1982.

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

*First Gallup post election Survey

** Published Polls

2. Government Record

The latest 'tracking' study conducted 13/18 January confirmed the slight improvement in attitudes to the record of the Government we found in our first 1982 tracking study (conducted 6/11 January).

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
<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

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

When looking at the popularity of the political leaders, the latest 'tracking' study also confirmed the slight improvement in Mrs Thatcher's popularity we found in our first 1982 study (conducted 6/11 January). Mr Foot's popularity remains almost unchanged from late 1981, as has Mr Steel's popularity.

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
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<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

4. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 22nd January 1982)

In addition to the standard 'tracking' questions the Gallup study published in the Daily Telegraph (22nd January) included a range of other questions, some published and some made available to us.

The survey asked their standard question on what the electorate thinks are the most urgent problems faced by the country at the present time. They found:-

MOST URGENT PROBLEMS

	<u>All</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>SDP</u>
	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters
	%	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	83	78	84	84	90
Cost of living	37	38	32	32	39
Other Economic problems	9	12	7	9	11
Strikes/Trade Unions	7	14	3	9	6
Education	6	3	8	11	7
Housing/Rates/Mortgages	5	2	9	5	6
Defence/Nuclear weapons	5	4	5	3	6

When Gallup asked 'On the whole, how much confidence do you have in Conservative/Labour/Liberal/Social Democrat politicians to deal wisely with Britain's problems', they found:-

	<u>Conservative</u> Politicians	<u>Labour</u> Politicians	<u>Liberal</u> Politicians	<u>Social Democrat</u> Politicians
	%	%	%	%
Very great	5	3	2	3
Considerable	24	21	22	27
Little	21	24	27	21
Very little	28	25	21	14
None at all	20	25	16	19
Don't know	2	2	11	16

The electorate has little confidence in politicians with only 29% claiming to have 'very great' or 'considerable' confidence in Conservative politicians to deal wisely with Britain's problems. 24% took the same view about Labour politicians, 24% about Liberal politicians and 30% about Social Democrat politicians.

They also asked electors about which parties they thought had the best policies and leaders. They found:-

	<u>January 1982</u>	<u>October 1981</u>
	%	%
<u>Best Policies</u>		
Conservative	29	31
Labour	26	25
Liberal/SDP/Alliance	23	24
Other	1	1
Don't know	21	19
<u>Best Leaders</u>		
Conservative	29	35
Labour	19	20
Liberal/SDP/Alliance	31	30
Other	1	0
Don't know	20	17

Since October the only significant change has been the fall in the proportion of the electorate thinking the Conservatives have the best leaders - down from 35% to 29%.

When asked who they thought would make the best Prime Ministers, 36% mentioned Mr Steel, 30% Mrs Thatcher, 19% Mr Foot and 15% did not have a view.

Gallup asked respondents whether they saw the main parties as being united or divided at the present time. 89% saw the Labour party as being divided (6% united), 46% saw the Conservative party as being divided (45% united) and 34% the Social Democrats as being divided (45% united).

On prices 75% thought the Government is not doing enough to control the rise in prices (21% thought it is), 66% thought the present rise in prices is bound to continue (29% thought it can be stopped).

Gallup asked respondents what percentage increase they expect to get in their wages and salaries, what increase they think workers should aim for and what percentage increases in prices they expect. They found:-

	<u>Expected increase in wages or salaries</u>	<u>Wage Increase workers should aim for</u>	<u>Expected level of increase in prices</u>
	%	%	%
Nil	16	3	1
1% - 2%	2	1	2
3% - 4%	15	4	5
5% - 6%	16	12	11
7% - 8%	10	10	7
9% - 10%	12	24	21
11% - 12%	4	11	15
13% - 14%	1	4	5
15% - 20%	3	11	12
Over 20%	1	4	4

(b) NOP (Observer 24th January 1982)

The Observer on 24th January included the details of an NOP poll conducted on 21st January in the area of the Thames Valley police. Among those who saw the BBCTV 'Police' programme in which the victim of an alleged rape was grilled by three detectives (18th January), a quarter said their confidence in the force was decreased.

(c) MORI (Sunday Times 24th January 1982)

An MORI poll published in the Sunday Times on 24th January and conducted on 21/22 January looked at attitudes towards the handling of rape cases. It found:-

- a clear majority of the public believes that the police have too little sympathy for women reporting rape
- seven adults in ten believe that a man accused of rape has a good chance at getting away with it
- 85% of the population want rapists executed or sent to prison for at least seven years.

(d) Systems Three (Glasgow Herald 22nd January 1982)

The results of a Systems Three poll conducted from 9th to 20th January looked at attitudes in Scotland. It found a slight fall in support for the Social Democrats:-

	<u>Jan 1982</u>	<u>Dec 1981</u>	<u>Sept 1981</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	18	15	15
Labour	38	40	52
Liberal/SDP	25	27	16
SNP	18	17	17