

# Conservative Research Department

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KB/sgc

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Derek Howe  
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CONFIDENTIAL

2nd April 1981  
*[Signature]*

*Dear Derek,*

## PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 58

The interviewing for our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted before the official launch of the Social Democrats. The standard voting intention question (which does not mention any party) found that for the first time the Social Democrats have moved into third place after the Labour and Conservative parties. They lead the Liberals by only a small margin but it is clear that the electorate are fully aware of their existence and regard them as a political party alongside the other three main national parties.

*[Signature]*  
*Heath*

D. K. Britto

Enc.

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 58

(produced 28th March 1981)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted from 18th until 23rd March - the interviewing was completed before the launch of the new Social Democratic Party on Thursday March 26th. The standard voting intention question found an 8% Labour lead over the Conservatives with the Social Democrats pushing the Liberals into fourth place. The traditional voting intention question 'If an election were to take place tomorrow how would you vote?' found 31% saying they would vote Labour, 23% Conservative, 17% Social Democrat and 15% Liberal. When Gallup asked 'If an election were to take place tomorrow and a candidate from a new Social Democratic party stood, how would you vote?' 27% of respondents said they would vote for the new Social Democratic Party, 22% Labour, 18% Conservative and 11% Liberal. When asked 'If a new Social Democratic Party made an alliance with the Liberals, so that a candidate from only one of these parties would stand in each constituency, how would you vote?' They found 38% claiming they would vote for a Social Democratic-Liberal alliance, 22% Labour and 17% Conservative.

Full details of the trend in support we have found in all of these questions since early February are shown below - it should be noted that these figures do not exclude don't knows.

VOTING INTENTION  
(including don't knows)

	<u>Standard Voting Intention</u>							<u>Voting Intention if Social Democratic Candidate</u>						
	<u>3/9</u> Feb	<u>10/16</u> Feb	<u>18/23</u> Feb	<u>25 Feb</u> 2 Mar	<u>4/9</u> Mar	<u>12/16</u> Mar	<u>18/23</u> Mar	<u>3/9</u> Feb	<u>10/16</u> Feb	<u>18/23</u> Feb	<u>25 Feb</u> 2 Mar	<u>4/9</u> Mar	<u>12/16</u> Mar	<u>18/23</u> Mar
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	31	32	30	28	27	27	23	21	23	24	22	22	21	18
Labour	35	31	35	32	32	30	31	25	23	25	25	25	22	22
Liberal	18	17	19	19	18	16	15	11	12	11	13	12	11	11
Others	7	8	8	9	3	4	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Social Democratic Party-*	-	-	-	-	12	12	17	22	21	22	21	25	25	27
Social Democratic/Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/it depends	9	12	9	12	8	11	12	19	16	17	14	16	17	20

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

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. Voting Intention

Details of the trend in support for the main parties since January 1981 are shown below - support for the Conservatives has fallen from 34% (7/12 Jan) to 26% (18/23 March). Support for Labour has fallen from 48% (7/12 Jan) to 35% (18/23 March). Liberal support has increased from 15% (7/12 Jan) to 17% (18/23 March). In addition we found 17% of those interviewed claiming (unprompted) that they would vote Social Democrat. It should be noted that these figures are recalculated to exclude don't knows.

Please see following page for table.

VOTING INTENTION

(excluding don't knows)

	<u>CON</u> %	<u>LAB</u> %	<u>LIB</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	16.0+	-5.0
12/16 March	30.0	34.0	18.0	18.0++	-4.0
18/23 March	26.0	35.0	17.0	22.0+++	-9.0

\* First Gallup post-election survey

\*\* Published polls

+ includes 12½% who said they would vote Social Democrat

++ includes 14% who said they would vote Social Democrat

+++ includes 17% who said they would vote Social Democratic

3. Government Record

The latest 'tracking' survey found no change in the popularity of the Government with 23% approving of our record to date and 67% disapproving.

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	10
18/23 March	23	67	9

#### 4. Popularity of Political Leaders

No significant change in the popularity of the leaders of the three main parties. Details are shown below and in the attached graphs.

	<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>									
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

#### 5. Published Polls

##### Audience Selection (The Sun - March 25th 1981)

An Audience Selection poll published in the Sun on 25th March 1981 and conducted on March 12th looked at the attitudes of women. They found:

<u>DO YOU AGREE THAT:</u>	<u>WOMEN AND JOBS</u>		
	<u>All</u> <u>women</u>	<u>Working</u> <u>women</u>	<u>Young</u> <u>(16-24)</u> <u>working</u> <u>women</u>
	%	%	%
Women are paid less than men for the same jobs	64	62	50
If the wife can earn more, the husband should stay at home and look after the house	36	40	41
Mothers of young children should be able to go out to work if they wish	68	69	72
There should be more TV women presenters and chat show hosts	52	49	58

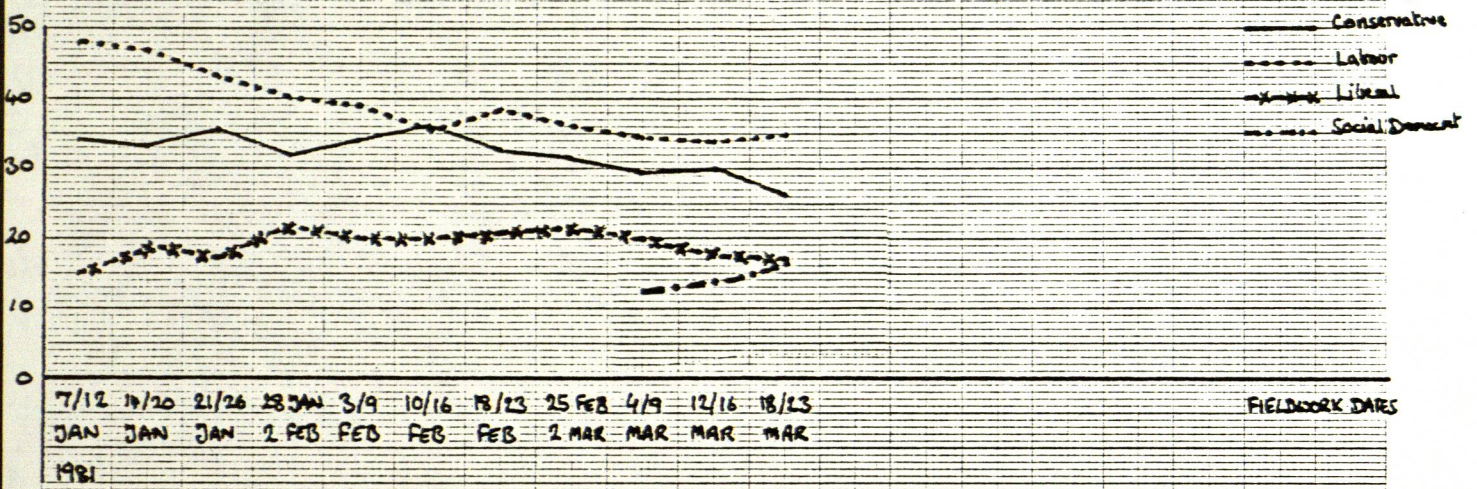
5. Published Polls (continued)

WOMEN AND POLITICS

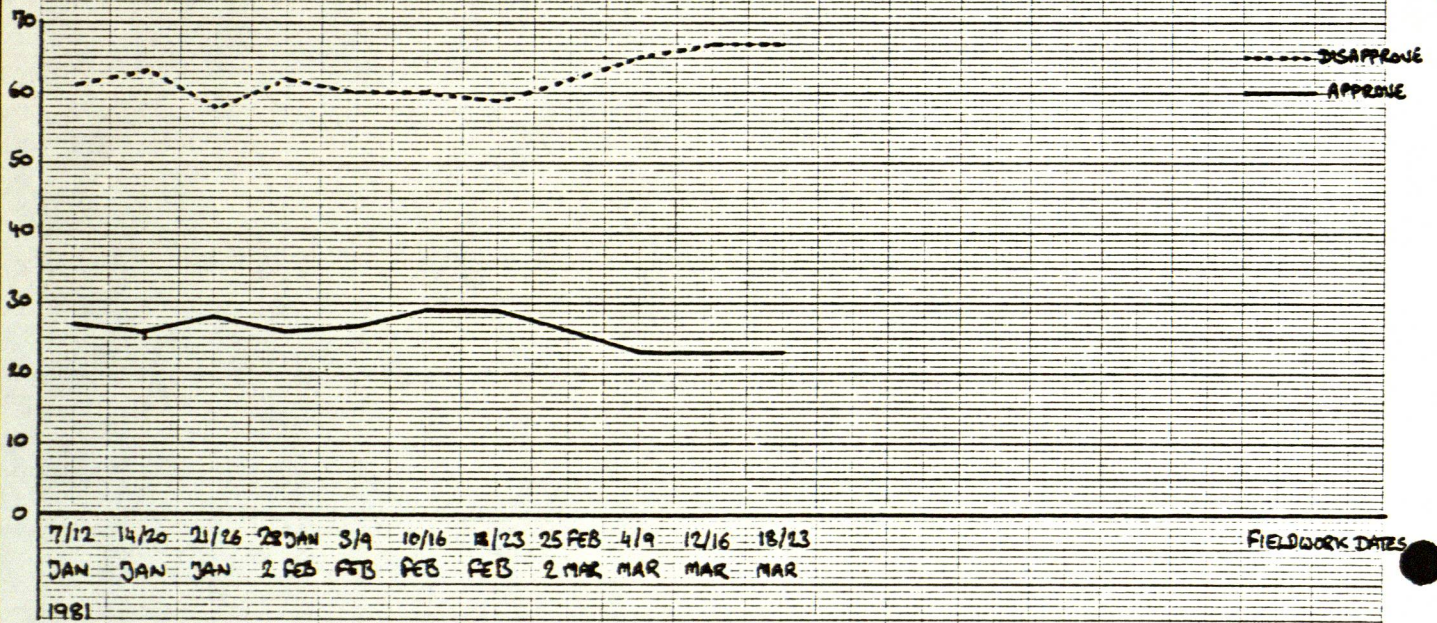
	<u>All</u> <u>Women</u> %	<u>Profes-</u> <u>sional</u> %	<u>Clerical</u> %	<u>Manual</u> %
Why do you think there are so few women MP's?				
Prejudice: men won't let them stand	47	59	41	41
Women are too busy to stand	26	32	35	28
It's a man's job	23	23	17	31
Women aren't tough enough	17	15	17	17

# BACKGROUND GRAPHS

## VOTING INTENTION



## GOVERNMENT RECORD

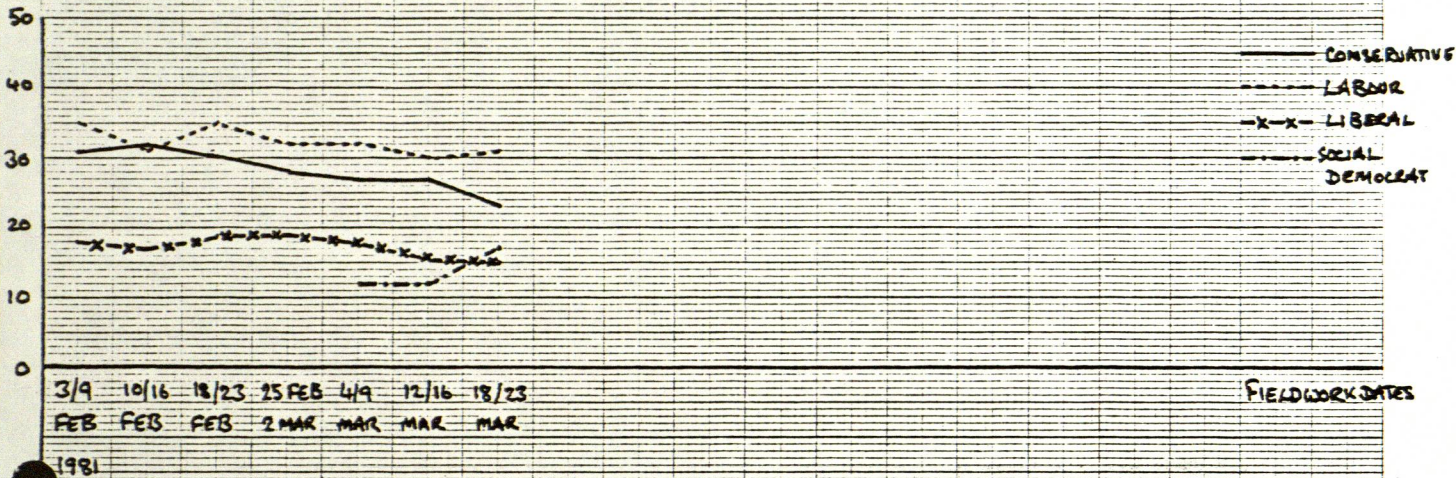


## POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

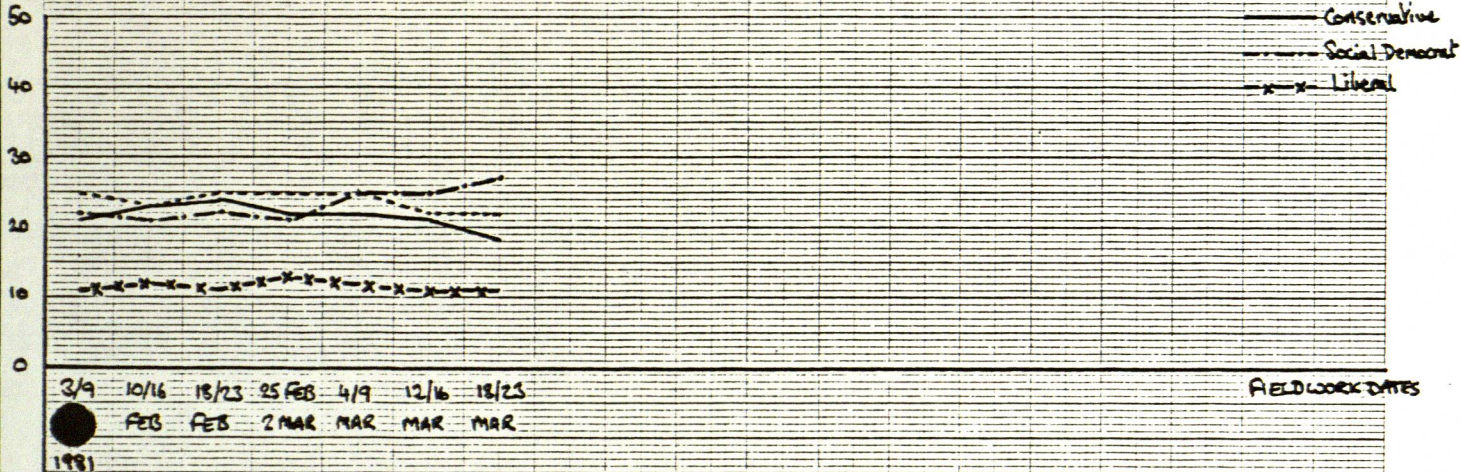


# BACKGROUND GRAPHS

## STANDARD VOTING INTENTION



## VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE



## VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC / LIBERAL CANDIDATE

