

Public Opinion Background Note 158

(produced 17th April 1983)

1. Introduction

The results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are the same as those published in the Daily Telegraph on April 14th 1983. The survey was conducted from 6th to 11th April and involved interviews with almost 900 electors throughout Great Britain. Compared with the previous published Gallup study (conducted 17/21 March) this study found our lead over Labour has halved - down from 11% to 5½%. Compared with the results of our last unpublished study (conducted 31 March/5 April) this latest study found almost no change in Labour's lead - 6% 31 March/5 April and 5½% in the latest study.

Since the first survey in January (conducted 7/11 January) Conservative support has fallen from 44% to 40½%, Labour support has increased from 33% to 35% and Alliance support has increased from 21½% to 22½%.

Details of the trend of support for the parties is shown overleaf:-

Voting Intention
(unprompted question, excluding
don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>OTH</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u>
				DEMOCRAT		Con over Lab	<u>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	-	1.5	-9.0	13.0
<u>1983</u>							
7/11 Jan	44.0	33.0	10.5	11.0+	1.5	+11.0	21.5
12/17 Jan	44.0	31.5	11.5	11.0+	2.0	+12.5**	22.5
18/25 Jan	47.5	30.5	9.0	11.0+	2.0	+17.0	20.0
27/31 Jan	45.0	31.0	10.0	12.0+	2.0	+14.0	22.0
2/7 Feb	43.0	30.0	11.0	13.0+	3.0	+13.0	24.0
9/14 Feb	43.5	32.5	10.5	11.5+	2.0	+11.0**	22.0
17/21 Feb	44.5	34.5	9.0	10.0+	2.0	+10.0	19.0
24/28 Feb	42.0	29.0	10.0	17.0+	2.0	+13.0	27.0
2/7 March	42.0	28.5	12.0	15.0+	2.5	+13.5	27.0
9/14 March	47.5	24.0	10.0	16.5+	2.0	+23.5	26.5
17/21 March	39.5	28.5	10.5	17.5+	3.0	+11.0**	28.0
24/28 March	44.0	33.0	9.5	12.0+	4.5	+11.0	21.5
31 March/5 April	42.0	36.0	9.0	12.0+	1.0	+6.0	21.0
6/11 April	40.5	35.0	10.0	12.5+	2.0	+5.5**	22.5

* First Gallup Post-Election Survey, ** Published Polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

VOTING INTENTION

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(unprompted question, including
don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTH</u>	<u>DON'T</u> <u>KNOW</u>	<u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab	<u>LIBERAL</u> & <u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>								
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	-	+7.0	13.8
<u>1983</u>								
7/11 Jan	39.5	29.5	9.5	9.5	1.5	10.5	+10.0	19.0
12/17 Jan	40.0	29.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	9.0	+11.0	20.0
18/25 Jan	43.0	28.0	8.0	10.0	1.0	10.0	+15.0	18.0
27/31 Jan	40.0	28.0	9.0	11.0	2.0	10.0	+12.0	20.0
2/7 Feb	39.0	27.0	10.0	12.0	2.0	9.0	+12.0	22.0
9/14 Feb	40.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	8.0	+10.0	20.0
17/21 Feb	41.0	31.0	8.0	9.0	1.0	9.0	+10.0	17.0
24/28 Feb	38.0	26.0	9.0	16.0	1.0	10.0	+12.0	25.0
2/7 March	39.0	25.0	11.0	14.0	2.0	8.0	+13.0	25.0
9/14 March	42.0	21.0	9.0	15.0	1.0	11.0	+21.0	24.0
17/21 March	36.0	26.0	10.0	17.0	3.0	8.0	+10.0	27.0
24/28 March	41.0	31.0	9.0	11.0	1.0	8.0	+10.0	20.0
31 March/5 April	38.0	33.0	8.0	11.0	1.0	8.0	+5.0	19.0
6/11 April	37.0	32.0	9.0	11.0	2.0	9.0	+5.0	20.0

** Published polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

2. Government Record

The latest 'tracking' study found a further fall in the popularity of the Government - it found 38% approving of the record of the Government, 49% disapproving and 14% did not have a view. This compares with the situation at the start of the year when 43% approved of our record in Government, 44% disapproved and 13% did not have a view.

Details of the trend of approval/disapproval for the Government since the start of the year 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>1983</u>			
7/11 Jan	43	44	13
12/17 Jan	43	43	14
18/25 Jan	45	43	12
27/31 Jan	41	44	15
2/7 Feb	40	48	12
9/14 Feb	39	49	12
17/21 Feb	41	46	13
24/25 Feb	39	49	12
2/7 March	43	47	10
9/14 March	42	44	13
17/21 March	41	48	11
24/28 March	44	44	12
31 March/5 April	39	48	13
6/11 April	38	49	14

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs Thatcher's popularity has fallen from 48% claiming to be satisfied with her as Prime Minister in early January to 44% in the latest study. Mr Foot's popularity has improved slightly over the same period as has that of Mr Steel and Mr Jenkins.

Details of the trend of popularity of the leaders of the four main parties is shown below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>			<u>Mr Jenkins</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>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1983</u>												
7/11 Jan	48	47	6	18	68	14	62	20	17	30	33	36
12/17 Jan	49	45	6	17	69	14	62	19	19	30	31	39
18/25 Jan	51	44	5	18	72	10	61	20	19	33	35	31
27/31 Jan	47	48	5	18	70	13	61	19	21	33	35	32
2/7 Feb	46	49	5	15	72	13	60	22	17	31	40	29
9/14 Feb	45	50	5	17	72	11	62	21	17	33	39	28
17/21 Feb	46	49	5	18	71	11	63	18	19	35	36	29
24/28 Feb	45	50	5	17	71	12	66	14	20	37	33	30
2/7 March	47	49	4	20	70	10	69	15	15	35	34	30
9/14 March	48	47	5	16	71	13	67	15	18	36	32	32
17/21 March	47	48	5	19	71	10	69	14	17	39	35	26
24/28 March	50	46	4	25	64	11	66	16	17	29	45	26
31 March/5 April	45	50	5	22	63	11	66	16	17	31	45	24
6/11 April	44	50	5	21	64	15	64	17	19	31	41	29.

4. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 14th April 1983)

In addition to the standard 'tracking' questions considered above the Daily Telegraph on 14th April included details of the results from a series of other questions.

When Gallup asked three questions about Mr Jenkins and Mr Steel as Alliance Leaders, as Prime Minister and in terms of understanding the economy, Mr Jenkins was behind Mr Steel on the first two items, but equal on the economy. Details are shown below:-

	<u>Alliance Leader</u>	<u>Next Prime Minister</u>	<u>Understanding Economy</u>
	%	%	%
David Steel best	65	61	36
Roy Jenkins best	19	23	27.
Don't know	13	16	

We remain the electorate's firm favourites to win the next election - 59% expect us to win, 21% expect Labour to win and 4% the Alliance. The Conservatives are also thought to be the party with the best policies and the best leaders.

Gallup asked their standard questions on what the electorate regarded as the most important issues for the next election. They found:-

	<u>April</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Jan</u>
	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	85	88	89	87
Cost of living/Prices	54	58	64	60
National Health Service	42	43	48	40
Education and Schools	41	41	43	35
Law and Order	40	47	48	38
Defence and armaments	37	41	48	37
Housing, rents, rates	37	34	40	34
Pensions	30	36	39	27
Taxation	29	35	41	28
Trade Unions	23	24	35	21
Immigration /race relations	23	24	30	25
Common Market	22	26	29	23.