

Public Opinion Background Note 156/157

(produced 19th April 1983)

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 31st March to 5th April. The survey involved interviews with 893 people throughout Great Britain. Compared with the results of the previous published Gallup study (conducted 17/21 March) this latest study found a sharp increase in Labour support - up from 28½% to 36%. Conservative support also increased slightly - from 39½% to 42%. Our lead over Labour fell from 11.0% (17/21 March) to 6% in the latest study (31st March/5th April). Alliance support fell from 28% to 21% over the same period.

Details of the trend of support for the main parties in our Gallup studies since the start of the year are shown overleaf:-

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

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT	<u>OTH</u>	<u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab	<u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<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>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	+0.0	21.0

* 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

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

2. Government Record

The latest study found a fall in Government popularity compared with the latest published Gallup survey - the proportion of the electorate approving of the record of the Government fell from 41% to 39%, although the proportion disapproving remained constant at 48%.

Details of the trend of replies to this question 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>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

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest study found a slight fall in Mrs Thatcher's popularity when compared both with the last published Gallup study and the first Gallup study in 1982. The study found 45% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister, 50% dissatisfied and 5% not having a view - comparative figures at the start of 1983 showed 48% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister, 47% dissatisfied and 6% not having a view.

Mr Foot remains slightly more popular than in early January, as does Mr Steel. Mr Jenkin's popularity remains almost unchanged.

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
9/11 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

4. Published Polls(a) MORI (Daily Express 29th March)

The Daily Express on 29th March included details of a MORI poll on attitudes to Mrs Thatcher. The survey was conducted from 17th to 23rd March. The survey (conducted before Darlington) found 43% claiming they would vote Conservative, 28% Labour, 28% SDP/Liberal and 1% for 'others'.

MORI asked Conservative supporters why they claimed they would support us. The findings are:-

Why Support the Conservatives?

	<u>Main Reason</u>	<u>Not Main Reason</u>
	%	%
Mrs Thatcher's strength of character	33	4
Government's handling of the Falklands	29	6
Performance on inflation	24	7
Influence of Labour left-wing	18	5
Mrs Thatcher's understanding of Britain's problems	15	8
Mrs Thatcher's personality	11	14
Mr Foot's personality and performance	10	6
Government's performance on defence and disarmament	7	8
Handling of law and order	5	8
Handling of taxation	4	10
Ability of other Government Ministers	4	0
Government's performance on unemployment	2	40
None of these	6	6
Don't know	13	18

(b) MORI (Daily Express 12th April 1983)

The Daily Express on 12th April included details of a MORI poll conducted from April 8th to 9th on women's attitudes to the Greenham Common protest.

When MORI asked women for their opinion of the peace protestors 58% of women had an 'unfavourable' view (51% of men), 22% supported them (31% of men) and 20% had no opinion (18% of men).

(c) System Three (Glasgow Herald 22nd March 1983)

The Glasgow Herald on 22nd March included details of a System Three poll conducted in Scotland from February 25th to March 7th. The survey found 47% claiming they will vote Labour, 22% Conservative, 18% Alliance and 13% SNP.

Details of the trend of support in Scotland are shown overleaf:-

	<u>March</u> <u>1983</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1983</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1982</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	22	30	20
Labour	47	47	40
Alliance	18	11	25
SNP	13	12	14.

Conservative support in Scotland has fallen by 8 percentage points since February and Alliance support has increased by 7 percentage points.