

Public Opinion Background Note 159(produced 24th April 1983)1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 13th to 18th April and completed 963 interviews throughout Great Britain. The survey found 44½% claiming they would vote Conservative, 31% Labour, 12½% Social Democrat and 9½% Liberal - giving a Conservative lead over Labour of 13½%. The results of this survey can be compared with the results of the previous published Gallup study (conducted 6/11 April) which found a 5½% Conservative lead over Labour.

Two other surveys with a voting intention question have been published in the past week - comparative figures are given below:-

Latest Published Polls

(excluding don't knows)

<u>Company and Fieldwork Date</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>	<u>Others</u>
Marplan (11/13 April) %	43	32	23	2
MORI (7/12 April) %	44	35	20	1
MORI (13/18 April) %	44½	31	22	2½

All three surveys show Conservative support around the 43-44 percent level, Labour support varies between 31 and 35 percent and Alliance support between 20 and 23 percent. Marplan found a Conservative lead of 11%, MORI 9% and Gallup 13½%.

Details of the trend of support for the main parties found in our Gallup 'tracking' studies since the start of the year are shown in the tables 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	+0.0	21.0
6/11 April	40.5	35.0	10.0	12.5+	2.0	+5.5**	22.5
13/18 April	44.5	31.0	9.5	12.5+	2.5	+13.5	22.0

* 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
<hr/>								
<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
13/18 April	41.0	29.0	9.0	12.0	1.0	8.0	+12.0	21.0

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

2. Government Record

The latest 'tracking' study found an improvement in the popularity of the Government - in the latest study 41% claimed to approve of our record to date, 44% disapproved and 15% did not have a view. These findings can be compared with the situation at the start of the year when 43% claimed to approve 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
13/18 April	41	44	15

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest study found a very sharp improvement in Mrs Thatcher's popularity when compared with the results of the previous published Gallup 'tracking' study. We found 49% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister (44% 6/11 April), 47% dissatisfied (50% 6/11 April), and 4% with no view (5% 6/11 April). This latest study can be compared with 48% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher in early January, 47% dissatisfied and 6% with no view.

The latest study found almost no change in the popularity of the other three political leaders.

Details of the trend of popularity of the leaders of the four main parties are 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
13/18 April	49	47	4	22	67	11	65	19	16	31	42	28

4. Published Polls(a) ORC (ITN 18th April 1983)

News at Ten on 18th April 1983 included details of an ORC poll conducted on Saturday 16th April. The survey looked at attitudes to a possible General Election.

ORC asked respondents 'Do you think there should be a General Election soon, or do you think the Government should carry on?' 51% thought there should be a General Election soon, 38% thought the Government should carry on and 11% did not have a view. Details of the answers to this question for supporters of the main parties are shown below:-

	<u>General Election Soon?</u>			
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters
Soon	51	28	76	59
Carry on	38	62	19	28
Don't know	11	10	5	13

28% of Conservative supporters wanted an election soon as did 76% of Labour supporters and 59% of Alliance supporters. 62% of Conservative supporters wanted the Government to carry on as did 19% of Labour supporters and 28% of Alliance supporters.

ORC asked 'If the Government were to call a General Election soon, do you think it would be because they thought it was in the national interest, or in order to get the best political advantage from it?' 65% thought the Government would call a General Election because they thought they would get the best political advantage from it, 26% because it would be in the national interest and 9% did not have a view. Details of the answers to this question for the supporters of the main parties are shown below:-

General Election in National Interest or Best Political Advantage

	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters
Political advantage	65	59	74	73
National interest	26	33	20	22
Don't know	9	8	6	5

When ORC asked 'A General Election has to occur before the end of May next year. When do you think is the right time for this General Election?' 38% thought the General Election should be in the next couple of months (May/June), 26% later in the year (Sept/Oct), 11% next Spring (March/April), 16% at the latest possible time (May 1984) and 9% did not have a view. Details are shown below:-

Right Time for General Election

	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters
In the next couple of months (May/June)	38	23	53	42
Later in the year (Sept/Oct)	26	27	26	28
Next Spring (March/April)	11	16	8	11
At the latest possible time (May 1984)	16	25	7	11
Don't Know	9	9	6	8

Labour and Alliance supporters are more likely than Conservative supporters to want a May/June election.

When ORC asked 'If a General Election were to occur in the next couple of months which party do you think would get most advantage from it?', they found 49% thought the Conservatives, 24% Labour, 9% Alliance and 18% did not have a view. When ORC asked 'Do you think that General Elections should be required to take place at certain fixed times, or do you think that the Government of the day should select the date for elections?' - 50% wanted fixed dates, 43% wanted the Government to choose and 7% did not have a view.

(b) MORI (Evening Standard 19th April 1983)

The Evening Standard on 19th April 1983 included details of a MORI survey conducted between 7th and 12th April. Details of the answers to MORI's standard voting intention question are shown below:-

Voting Intention - MORI

	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	44	45	41	43
Labour	35	32	27	34
Alliance	20	21	30	22
Others	1	2	2	1
Conservative lead over Labour	+9	+13	+14	+9

(c) Marplan (The Guardian 21st April 1983)

The Guardian on 21st April 1983 included details of a Marplan poll conducted between 11th and 13th April. Details of the results from published Marplan surveys since December 1982 are shown below:-

Marplan - Voting Intention

	<u>April</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Dec</u>
	<u>1983</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1982</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	43	41	49	48	44
Labour	32	27	28	30	32
Alliance	23	31	22	21	23
Others	2	1	1	1	1.

(d) Audience Selection (The Sun 25th April 1983)

The Sun on 25th April included details of an Audience Selection telephone survey conducted at the weekend (23/24 April). The study found 43% claiming they will vote Conservative, 31% Labour, 22% Alliance and 4% for 'other' parties.

When Audience Selection asked when Mrs Thatcher should call an election they found:-

Should Mrs Thatcher call an Election in:-

	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
		<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
	%	%	%	%
June this year	51	29	72	57
October this year	23	29	16	25
April next year	26	42	12	18.