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Public Opinion Background

We have just received the results from our second 'State of Battle' survey which was conducted by Harris (ORC) for us on 20/21 May. Harris (ORC) interviewed 2,064 electors throughout Great Britain - enough to permit us to look at the level of public support for the parties in each of the main regions. The first page of the report provides a summary of the main findings of the research. I would particularly draw your attention to the following points:-

- There has been no significant change in voting intentions when compared with the previous survey.
- There is a slight sign of an Alliance improvement in the South East.
- The potential for an Alliance 'bandwagon' is still there, but there are no major signs of the 'bandwagon' taking off.
- There has been no change with regard to attitudes in some of the key policy areas - the Conservatives are still strong on defence, but vulnerable on unemployment, health and education.

In addition to the report of the State of Battle a copy of my second review of published opinion polls is enclosed together with a copy of the weekly summary from our 'Fast Feedback' exercise.

D. K. BRITTO

HARRIS RESEARCH CENTRE

Summary of Findings of
the second State of Battle
survey.

Fieldwork 20/21 May 1983

Sample: A nationally representative quota sample of
2064 electors.

SUMMARY

1. There has been no significant change in voting intentions over the last week.

The Conservative position in the North, Scotland and Wales is relatively weaker than elsewhere.

There is a slight sign of an Alliance improvement in the South East.

2. The potential for an Alliance 'bandwagon' (one in five Conservatives and almost one in three Labour voters) is still there, but there is no sign of the 'bandwagon' taking off.
3. There has been no change on agreement with policy propositions - the Conservatives still strong on defence but vulnerable on unemployment, health and education.
4. If perception of the Conservatives' effectiveness in dealing with unemployment can be improved they will be even with Labour in terms of policy and effectiveness.

On understanding unemployment and on caring about unemployment they lag far behind Labour.

5. Public spending is perceived as the least effective way of dealing with unemployment. Improvements across a wide range of economic and industrial situations advocated by the Conservatives are thought more likely to produce results.
6. Conservative strength on defence, law and order, Trade unions, the EEC and prices is substantial and unchanged.
7. There is widespread support for the main planks and the Trade Union Reform proposals.
8. Labour left wing posture is still thought to endanger the traditional way of life in Britain.

JH/sg
22.5.83

1. Voting Intention

Voting intention has not changed significantly over the last two weeks.

	Fieldwork dates		
	20/21	13/14	6/7
	May	May	May
Conservative	46	48	44
Labour	34	34	34
Alliance	19	16	20
Other	1	2	2

2. Regional Analysis

In most regions the changes over the last week are not significant. Though the Conservatives still have a commanding lead in the South East, there has been some slippage as there has in Yorkshire & Humberside and Scotland. At the same time there has been an improvement in the Conservative position in the South West. The Labour vote has been fairly static while there have been some signs of the Alliance improving slightly in London and the South East.

VOTING INTENTION

<u>England</u>	<u>Conservative</u>			<u>Labour</u>			<u>Alliance</u>			<u>Others</u>			<u>Don't Know</u>		
	<u>20/21</u> May	<u>13/14</u> May	<u>6/7</u> May	<u>20/21</u> May	<u>13/14</u> May	<u>6/7</u> May	<u>20/21</u> May	<u>13/14</u> May	<u>6/7</u> May	<u>20/21</u> May	<u>13/14</u> May	<u>6/7</u> May	<u>20/21</u> May	<u>13/14</u> May	<u>6/7</u> May
North (%)	30	32	27	46	44	50	13	14	10	-	2	2	10	8	12
Yorks & Humberside (%)	39	44	45	39	39	29	15	12	22	-	1	-	7	5	4
E. Midlands (%)	49	48	39	27	28	41	16	18	15	1	-	-	6	6	5
E. Anglia (%)	49	51	53	23	26	17	17	12	22	-	1	-	11	10	8
South East (%)	47	53	53	24	19	21	22	18	20	-	1	-	7	9	6
G.L.C. (%)	39	42	41	34	34	37	19	13	15	-	1	1	7	10	6
South West (%)	54	43	49	16	17	23	21	25	24	-	-	-	9	15	4
W. Midlands (%)	45	47	44	29	31	30	16	12	21	-	1	-	10	9	5
North West (%)	38	36	37	40	42	40	11	11	18	-	-	-	11	10	6
Scotland (%)	33	42	26	35	33	38	17	12	20	7	6	11	8	7	5
Wales (%)	37	38	40	37	33	32	16	19	18	1	3	7	10	8	3
Great Britain (%)	42	44	42	32	31	32	17	15	19	1	2	1	9	8	5

Amongst the 18-24 year olds the Labour position has improved to make the two parties 'level pegging' at 43% each compared with a 12% Conservative lead last week. This has been compensated for by an improvement in the Conservative share amongst older people.

Labour still has a significant lead amongst Council tenants, the DE social group and Union members.

2. Strength of Loyalty

The strength of Conservative support has hardened up a little since May 6th/ 7th (47% very strong as opposed to 42%). There are however 17% of Conservative voters who do not feel very strongly Conservative, compared with 19% 'not strong' among Labour voters. The Alliance vote is softest with 27% (unchanged since 6/7 May) 'not strong'.

	<u>Conservative</u>		<u>Labour</u>		<u>Alliance</u>	
	May		May		May	
	20/21 %	6/7 %	20/21 %	6/7 %	20/21 %	6/7 %
Very strongly	47	42	48	51	23	25
Fairly strongly	33	41	31	33	47	49
Not very strongly	17	17	19	15	27	27
Don't know	2	1	2	2	3	-

3. Perceived outcome of Election

75% of voters compared with 79% last week think the Conservatives will win the Election. 13% think Labour will win (19% in Northern area, 20% in Yorkshire and 17% in the North West).

4. Manifestoes

Two thirds of voters were aware of the publication of Labour and Conservative manifestos and 53% of the Alliance manifesto.

The Conservative manifesto was thought to have had good rather than bad publicity, while the perception of the publicity given to Labour's manifesto was evenly divided. Only a minority of voters took a view on this.

Base All voters	Manifesto received	
	Good publicity %	Bad publicity %
Conservative	22	9
Labour	17	20
Alliance	9	7
Other	1	1
Don't know/ none	62	67

Opinions were similar across all demographics and geographic groups and across all shades of political opinion.

5. Unfair Campaigning

There is no significant difference between the two major parties on the level of 'unfairness' in their campaign. Fewer voters are critical of the Alliance.

Party thought to be unfair	<u>All Voters</u>	
	May 20/21	May 19
Labour	24	18
Conservative	22	21
Alliance	7	7
Other	1	4
Don't know/none	63	65

6. Election Debating Propositions

- a. "The current level of unemployment is largely due to the present Conservative Government's policies."

The electorate's view on this has not changed over the last two weeks.

	% agree	% disagree
6/7 May	51	40
13/14 May	46	41
20/21 May	48	40

18% of those intending to vote Conservative still accept this proposition.

- b. "Labour's policies on Nuclear disarmament are likely to win more support than Conservative policies."

Again, no change - 32% accept the proposition (including a higher proportion of women and young voters) but 53% reject it.

	% agree	% disagree
6/7 May	37	45
13/14 May	30	53
20/21 May	32	53

- c. "The policies of the Conservative Government since they were elected have severely damaged the National Health Service."

More voters accept this than reject it, and the last week's campaigning has not moved attitudes at all.

	% agree	% disagree
6/7 May	52	29
13/14 May	46	38
20/21 May	49	37

- d. "The policies of the Conservative Government since they were elected have severely damaged the Education service for most children."

Attitudes to this have not altered at all and the Conservative party is still potentially vulnerable.

	% agree	% disagree
6/7 May	53	31
13/14 May	46	38
20/21 May	46	39

7. Effectiveness of Parties at dealing with problems

More people think the Labour Party would deal with unemployment best than think the Conservatives would do so. Though their lead on this (40% - 28%) is much the same as last week is not so great as some of the published polls relating to policies would suggest. It makes sense to go on talking about "being effective at dealing with unemployment."

Labour is also thought to be best at "helping old age pensioners" - by 47% to 26%, but amongst pensioners themselves to whom, presumably this is most likely to be a voting issue, the standing of the parties is very close (39% Labour and 36% Conservative).

On rising prices, law and order, controlling unions and dealing with the Common Market and Defence of the Country the Conservative lead is as commanding as it was last week.

Base: All voters	<u>Party thought to be best at dealing with</u> (last week's figures in brackets)				Other/ Don't Know
	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>		
<u>Best at dealing with</u>					
Unemployment (%)	28 (29)	40 (39)	12 (10)	20 (22)	
Rising prices (%)	48 (47)	26 (26)	8 (8)	17 (19)	
Law and Order (%)	51 (52)	20 (19)	7 (7)	21 (22)	
Controlling Trade Unions (%)	56 (54)	28 (30)	6 (5)	11 (12)	
Dealing with Common Market (%)	53 (54)	25 (23)	8 (7)	14 (16)	
Defence of the Country (%)	61 (60)	21 (18)	7 (5)	11 (17)	
Helping old age pensioners (%)	26 (*)	47 (*)	8 (*)	18 (*)	

* not asked

8. Unemployment

a. The blame for unemployment

36% of voters most blame World Economic conditions compared with 32% at the end of March while 30% blame "the present Conservative Government" compared with 22%.

The proportion of those intending to vote Conservative and blaming the Government at 5% has not increased significantly since March.

Just under two thirds of Labour supporters and just over one third of Alliance voters blame the Government - the latter figure a significant increase since March.

Blame for Unemployment

(March figures in brackets)

	<u>All Electors</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	%	%	%
World economic conditions	36 (32)	49 (39)	16 (14)	39 (37)
The Conservative Government	30 (22)	5 (2)	61 (57)	36 (19)
Trade Unions	15 (21)	24 (34)	6 (4)	12 (19)
The Common Market	4 (11)	2 (7)	8 (17)	3 (13)
Nationalised industries	3 (4)	4 (6)	1 (1)	2 (3)
The last Labour Government	5 (2)	9 (5)	2 (5)	2 (1)
Manufacturers and businesses	3 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)	3 (2)
None of these	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (-)	1 (2)
Don't know	3 (4)	3 (3)	2 (4)	2 (3)

b. Party Identity

The Conservative and Labour parties are thought equally to have "The right policies to deal with unemployment" and to be "practical in their approach to unemployment".

10% more people believe the Conservatives would be ineffective in dealing with unemployment than believe Labour would be

The big Labour pluses are in

	<u>Labour lead over Conservatives</u>
They would be strong in dealing with unemployment	25%
They understand the problems of unemployment	23%
While the Conservatives are thought to be	<u>Conservative lead over Labour</u>
"out of touch with the problems of unemployment"	21%
"too complacent about unemployment"	30%

c. The Solutions

Labour's policies of massive public spending and the Alliance policy of increasing public spending secures less agreement than any of the broader economic positions proposed by the Government.

	<u>% agree</u>
We need to encourage small businesses	91
Government should make the economy strong	91
We can only reduce unemployment by making Britain more competitive	84
Industry should end inefficiency and overmanning	81
We need to build Britain's long term future even if it means unemployment in the short term	67
Government should reduce the power of the unions	61
Government should provide more Youth training schemes	59
We need to expand the economy by increasing public spending	48
Government should introduce a massive programme of public spending	35

9. Trade Unions

There is general agreement with the idea of new laws to curb union power.

57% think it a good idea
32% a bad idea

With secret ballots for the election of Union leaders.

70% good idea
21% bad idea

With secret ballots before striking.

75% good idea
17% bad idea

Union members themselves strongly favour both ballot propositions but are evenly divided on further laws to curb union power.

10. The Alliance and Labour

Those more likely to vote Alliance if they thought they would get a majority

24% of Conservatives compared with 20% last week
29% of Labour supporters compared with 31% last week.

If they were likely to hold the balance of power.

21% of Conservatives compared with 17% last week

29% of Labour supporters compared with 30% last week

If they would win only a few seats.

7% of Conservatives compared with 5% last week.

8% of Labour supporters compared with 9% last week.

There is still no credibility in the proposition that Alliance - Labour policies are similar.

52% last week agree that Labour's policies are so left wing that they could damage our traditional way of life in Britain compared with 37% who disagree. 55% of Alliance voters hold this view.

General Election 1983 Public Opinion Review 2
Produced 22nd May 1983

1. Introduction

Since the Election was declared we have had 15 published opinion polls giving details of voting intention. In addition the Party has conducted two major studies giving voting intention. Details of the results from all these surveys are shown in Section 2 of this note.

Support for the Conservative Party has remained extremely stable -it has varied between 44% and 52% (if we look at both published and private polls) and if we exclude the Harris poll the variation has been between 44% and 49%. The latest studies confirm the stability of Conservative support - MORI in the Daily Express on Friday 20th May (conducted 19th May) found 46% claiming they will vote Conservative, Marplan in the Sunday Mirror (conducted 20th May) 47%, Harris in the Observer (conducted 19/20 May) 45%, ORC(Harris) in our private State of Battle poll (conducted 20/21 May) 46% and the Sunday Times Panel (MORI conducted 17/18 May) 47%. Labour support has varied between 30% and 37% and in the latest four studies (both published and private) has varied between 30% and 36%. There is no sign of any clear upward trend in support for Labour. Alliance support has varied between 16% and 21% and the four latest studies (both published and private) have found support varying between 18% and 21%. As with Labour there is no evidence of any upward trend in support for them.

The Conservative lead over Labour has varied from 7% to 21%. In the latest four studies (published and private) it varied from 9% to 17% in the Sunday Times panel. If the Sunday Times panel is excluded our lead varied between 9% and 13%.

2. Voting Intention - Nationally

The table below shows the results of all opinion polls (both published and private) that included a voting intention question, that have been conducted since the election was announced on 9th May. In all cases the 'don't knows' have been excluded and the figures re-percentage.

GENERAL ELECTION 1983Voting Intention

(excluding don't knows)

<u>Fieldwork Dates</u>	<u>Poll and Publication</u>	<u>Sample Size</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Oth</u>	<u>Con Lead</u>
4-9 May	Gallup (D. Tel)	971	49	31½	17½	2	17½
5-6 May	Harris (Observer)	1053	46	38	15	1	8
6-7 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	2307	44	34	20	2	10
6-7 May	Gallup (PRIVATE POLL)	2103	46	31	20	2	15
6-7 May	NOP (Mail on Sunday)	1058	47	34	18	1	13
6 May	MORI (Panorama)	1090	45	34	20	1	11
5-11 May	MORI (Standard)	1824	46	32	22	0	14
10 May	MORI (Daily Star)	1047	46	31	21	2	15
9-11 May	Marplan (Guardian)	1457	46	34	19	1	12
11 May	Harris (TV Eye)	1048	52	31	17	0	21
11-16 May	Gallup (Daily Tele.)	946	46	33	19	2	13
12 May	MORI (D. Express)	964	49	34	15	2	15
13-14 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	2092	48	34	16	2	14
16 May	MORI (Daily Star)	1090	44	37	17	2	7
16 May	Audience Sel (Sun)	1154	46	31	21	2	15
17 May	Audience Sel (Sun)	507	44	33	21	2	11
16-17 May	NOP (Daily Mail)	1584	49	31	18	2	18
17-18 May	Harris (TV Eye)	1053	45	35	17	3	10
17-18 May	MORI (Sunday Times Panel)	960	47	30	21	2	17
19 May	MORI (Daily Express)	1100	46	37	16	1	9
19-20 May	Harris (Observer)	1052	45	36	18	1	9
20 May	Maplan (Sunday Mirror)	1250	47	34	18	1	13
20-21 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	2064	46	34	19	1	12

* Panel study should not be directly compared with the other studies.

3. Voting Intention - Scotland and Wales

The report from our second State of Battle survey (conducted 20/21 May) and circulated separately includes details of the trend of support for the parties in the English regions. We have had in the past week separate published surveys in Scotland and Wales.

(i) Scotland

The Glasgow Herald on Friday 20th May included results of a System Three poll conducted in Scotland from 13-17 May. The survey found a sharp improvement in our support in Scotland up from 24% in the last System Three survey conducted before the election was declared to 32% in the latest study. Details are shown below.

	<u>System Three Scotland</u>					<u>Private ORC (Harris)</u>
	<u>May</u> <u>20</u> <u>(Conducted</u> <u>13-17 May)</u>	<u>May</u> <u>13</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Scotland</u> <u>Conducted 20/21 May</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	32	24	25	22	30	35
Labour	44	49	49	47	47	39
Alliance	12	15	14	18	11	18
SNP	12	11	13	13	12	7

Our private survey was conducted about a week after the System Three poll and found a further improvement in Conservative support.

(ii) Wales

HTV included on 20th May the results of an opinion poll conducted in Wales on 17/19 May which found 44% claiming they would vote Labour, 38% Conservative, 14% Alliance and 5% for Plaid Cymru.

These results can be compared with the results of the 1979 General Election in Wales when 32.2% voted Conservative, 48.6% Labour, 10.6% Liberal, 8.1% Plaid Cymru and 0.5% for 'other' parties. Details of the results both of the HTV and our State of Battle survey conducted 20/21 May are shown below.

	<u>HTV Wales</u> <u>(Conducted 17/19 May)</u>	<u>Private Poll</u> <u>Conducted 20/21 May</u>
	%	%
Labour	44	41
Conservative	38	41
Alliance	14	18
Plaid Cymru	5	1
Others	-	-

The HTV poll also found 38% of the Welsh electorate claiming that Mrs Thatcher would be the best Prime Minister, 20% Mr. Steel and only 19% Mr. Foot. 57% of the Welsh electorate wanted us to stay in the EEC (only 39% leave). Only 22% claimed to be in favour of unilateral Disarmament and 72% against. 88% wanted council tenants to have the right to buy their own council houses. 82% wanted 'the Government to maintain social services, even if this means higher taxation.' 42% agreed with the view that 'the Government should not interfere with the rights of Trade Unions' 39% disagreed. 67% agreed that 'the NCB should close pits which do not make a profit', 21% disagreed.

4. Harris (Observer 22nd May 1983)

The Observer on 22nd May included details of a Harris poll conducted on 19/20 May. In addition to the standard voting intention question (considered above) Harris included a range of other questions on aspects of the campaign.

The survey included a range of questions on the Labour party which will not provide good reading for Michael Foot. Only 34% of the electorate believe Labour would keep its election promises - if elected, 53% think they would not. 50% of electors believe that a Labour Government would reduce unemployment, 42% do not believe they will. 53% think a Labour Government would bring about better industrial relations, 37% think they would not. In terms of government Harris found 48% of the electorate taking the view that a Labour Government would govern in the interests of the country as a whole and 40% that they would not.

When Harris asked about attitudes to the leaders of the three main parties, they found Mrs. Thatcher leading on all the aspects of leadership image they included.

Harris - Leadership Images

<u>Which of the Party Leaders;</u>	<u>Thatcher</u>	<u>Foot</u>	<u>Jenkins</u>
- would gain respect for Britain abroad (%)	61	15	16
- has good judgement in a crisis (%)	57	19	15
- offers a vision of where he/she wants to lead the country (%)	53	26	13
- explains his/her policies effectively to the public (%)	52	27	16
- changes position on issues only to get elected (%)	31	40	21
- leaving politics aside is a nice person (%)	29	28	23

On issues Harris found 74% agreeing with the view 'Britain should keep its own independent nuclear weapons', 20% disagreed and 6% did not have a view. 69% agreed that 'it would be dangerous for Britain to cut defence spending', 21% disagreed. 55% agreed that 'Britain should not allow any new American nuclear arms like Cruise to be based here', 32% disagreed. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the view 'Britain should close down all American nuclear bases in this country, 36% agreed and 52% disagreed. Details of the answers to the questions for the supporters of the main parties are shown below.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following . . .		PERCENTAGES			
		ALL ELECTORS	SUPPORTERS		
			CON	LAB	LIB/SDP
Britain should keep its own independent nuclear weapons	AGREE	74	88	62	73
	DISAGREE	20	8	30	22
	DON'T KNOW	6	4	8	4
Britain should not allow any new American nuclear arms like cruise to be based here	AGREE	55	37	71	68
	DISAGREE	32	46	22	23
	DON'T KNOW	13	17	7	9
Britain should close down all American nuclear bases in this country	AGREE	36	13	59	41
	DISAGREE	52	73	31	48
	DON'T KNOW	13	14	10	11
It would be dangerous for Britain to cut defence spending	AGREE	69	85	55	64
	DISAGREE	21	10	34	23
	DON'T KNOW	9	5	11	13

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5. MORI (Sunday Times 22nd May 1983)

The Sunday Times on 22nd May included details of the second 'wave' of a MORI 'panel' study being conducted for them. This 'wave' of the panel was conducted from 17th May to 18th. The 'panel' technique involves interviewing the named individuals on how they have changed their attitudes. Details of the main MORI findings are shown below.

HOW THE VOTERS ARE CHANGING THEIR MINDS					
First poll (April 21-25)	Breakdown of results of second poll (May 17, 18)				Second poll May 17-18
Tories 41%	Stay Tory 39½%	To Labour Under ½%	To Alliance ½%	To don't know ½%	Tories 42%
Labour 27%	Stay Labour 24%	To Tories Under ½%	To Alliance 1%	To don't know 2%	Labour 27%
Alliance 21%	Stay Alliance 16%	To Tories 1%	To Labour 2%	To don't know 1½%	Alliance 19%
Don't know 10%	Stay don't know 5½%	To Tories 1½%	To Labour 1½%	To Alliance 1%	Don't know 10%

The table shows that - although the *total* numbers voting for each party have changed little - many individuals have changed their minds. The "don't know" category also includes those who say they will not vote and those who refused to answer. The table excludes respondents linked with "other parties."

6. NOP (Mail on Sunday 22nd May 1983)

The Mail on Sunday included details of a NOP survey - the overall voting intention figures have been considered in Section 2. The survey was conducted on 16/17 May and found among the unemployed that 26% said they intended to vote Conservative, 58% Labour, 15% Alliance and 1% for 'others'. Among Trade Unionists, 39% claimed they would vote Conservative, 39% Labour, 20% Alliance and 2% 'others'.

7. Harris (Weekend World 22nd May 1983)

The Weekend World programme on 22nd May included details of a Harris survey conducted on 18/19 May in the following categories of seats

- Conservative/Labour marginals.
- Alliance marginals. Seats held by the Liberals or with the Liberals mounting a strong challenge.
- Seats on the SDP 'hit' list.

Details of the voting intention questions for these three types of seats are given below.

	<u>Conservative/ Labour Marginals</u> %	<u>Alliance Marginals - Liberal chances</u>	<u>SDP 'hit' seats</u>
Conservative	43	48	41
Labour	41	23½	43
Alliance	15	27½	15
SDP	1	1	1

We have a lead in both Conservative/Labour marginals and in seats in which are either held by the Liberals or in which we face a challenge from them. In the seats on the so called SDP 'hit' list they are in a poor third place.