

General Election Public Opinion Review 4

(produced 5th June 1983)

1. Introduction

On Sunday 5th June TV and the newspapers produced eight opinion polls, five of which provided a reliable measure of voting intention. In addition we received the results from our fourth private 'State of Battle' survey conducted by ORC on 3/4 June.

SUNDAY POLLS - 5th June 1983

<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 (over Lab)</u>
31 May-2 June	Gallup (S. Tel)	1,989	45½	31½	22	1	14
1/3 June	MORI (S. Times)*	942	45	28	25	2	17
2/3 June	Harris (Observer)	1,041	47	28	23	2	19
3 June	NOP (Mail on S.)	1,074	47	29	23	1	18
3 June	Marplan (S. Mirror)	1,311	44	27	27½	1½	17
3/4 June	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	2,073	45	28	24	2	17
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2 June	Data Plan (S. Express) Marginals only	993	43½	31	23½	2	12½
3 June	Audience Selection (News of the W.) (Women only)	1 038	45	24	28	3	21

* Panel Study

In looking at the results of these latest polls it is perhaps worth considering the following points:-

(a) that the only one national poll of voting intention shows the Alliance in second place to us - Marplan. Our unpublished 'State of Battle' survey was conducted after the Marplan study and did not confirm the Marplan findings.

(b) the Sunday papers included five published surveys, including one conducted on the same day as the Marplan survey - none confirmed either the movement to the Alliance shown by Marplan or the sharp change of trend in Alliance support. The average of the published polls is Conservatives 45½%, Labour 28½% and Alliance 24%. These averages are not significantly different to the trend found in earlier polls - see section 2 for details.

(c) the Sunday Express survey in 100 marginal seats found a 12½% lead for the Conservatives over Labour and the Alliance in third place.

(d) the News of the World survey was conducted among women only by telephone on Friday and needs to be treated with caution.

Voting Intention

Since the start of the election we have had 52 published and unpublished polls giving details of voting intention - the results from all these surveys are shown below:-

GENERAL ELECTION 1983 - VOTING 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	Marplan (Sunday Mirror)	1250	47	34	18	1	13
20-21 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	2064	46	34	19	1	12
18/23 May	Gallup (unpublished)	916	46	33	20	1	13
23 May	MORI (Daily Star)	1068	51	33	15	1	18
23 May	Audience Selection (TV AM)	1071	45	32	20	3	13
20/23 May	Gallup (Daily Telegraph)	1700	48	33	18	1	15
23 May	NOP (Daily Mail)	1104	52	33	14	1	17
23/25 May	Marplan (Guardian)	1422	47½	32½	19	1	15
24/25 May	MORI (Sunday Times Panel)*	1023	46	30	23	1	16
24 May	Audience Sel (Sun)	557	45	32	21	2	13
24/26 May	Gallup (Sunday Tel)	2015	49	31½	18	1½	17½
26 May	MORI (Express)	1088	51	29	18	2	22
26 May	Harris (TV Eye)	1045	48	33	18	1	15
26 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	1050	49	32	18	1	17
26/27 May	Harris (Observer)	1029	47	30	21	2	17
27 May	Marplan (Sunday Mirror)	1325	49½	31	19	½	18½
27/28 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	1893	46	32	20	2	14
30 May	Audience Selection (TV-AM)	1056	41	30	24	5	11
25/30 May	Gallup (D. Tel)	918	47½	28	23	1½	19½
31 May	MORI (D. Star)	1026	44	32	21	3	12
31 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	1050	47	28	24	1	19
1 June	Audience Selection (Sun)	504	44	29	25	2	15
31 May/1 June	Harris (TV Eye)	1038	46	28	24	2	18
1 June	Marplan (Guardian)	1276	47	30	22	1	17
2 June	MORI (D. Express)	1067	43	32	23	2	11
2 June	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	1049	44	29	24	3	15
31 May/ 2 June	Gallup (S. Tel)	1989	45½	31½	22	1	14
1/3 June	MORI (S. Times)*	942	45	28	25	2	17

GENERAL ELECTION 1983 - VOTING INTENTION (contd)

(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>
2/3 June	Harris (Observer)	1041	47	28	23	2	19
3 June	(NOP (Mail on S.))	1074	47	29	23	1	18
3 June	Marplan (S. Mirror)	1311	44	27	27½	1½	17
3/4 June	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	2073	45	28	24	2	17
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2 June	Data Plan (S. Express) Marginals only	993	43½	31	23½	2	12½
3 June	Audience Selection (News of the W.) (Women only)	1038	45	24	28	3	21

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

If we compare the situation in the latest polls with that in surveys conducted before the election was announced, we find that Conservative support has fallen very slightly (between 1 and 2 per cent depending upon the poll), Labour support has fallen by between 8 and 10 per cent and Alliance support has increased by 3 or 4 per cent.

3. Harris Poll (Observer 5th June 1983).

The Observer on 5th June included details of a Harris Poll conducted on 2/3 June. In addition to the standard voting intention question considered in Section 1 the survey included a range of other questions on attitudes to aspects of the campaign.

For Labour the findings suggest that they have failed to keep their own support - only 60% of those who recall voting Labour in 1979 say they will do so again, 22% say they will vote Alliance and 11% say they will vote Conservative. Among Conservatives 76% claim they will vote Conservative again, 4% say they will vote Labour and 12% Alliance.

Harris asked respondents 'Which of the items on this list do you think have been successes of the last four years of Conservative government and which have been failures'. They found:-

	<u>Success</u>	<u>Failure</u>
Falkland Islands War (%)	51	23
Mrs. Thatcher's leadership (%)	46	19
Economic Policy (%)	31	31
Falklands Policy since the War (%)	16	20
Combating crime (%)	11	45
Education Policy (%)	9	46
Policy on old-age pensioners (%)	18	32
Health service policy (%)	11	44

In terms of the future under a Conservative government. Harris asked 'Do you think the Conservatives, if elected to power, would or would not...'. They found:-

		PERCENTAGES			
		ALL ELECTORS	SUPPORTERS		
			CON	LAB	LIB/SDP
... reduce unemployment?	would	30	58	6	13
	would not	59	27	90	80
	don't know	11	15	4	7
... keep inflation down?	would	68	89	42	68
	would not	25	7	49	28
	don't know	6	4	8	4
... bring about better industrial relations?	would	38	69	11	19
	would not	50	17	83	75
	don't know	12	14	6	6
... care about the interests of people like you?	would	45	74	13	25
	would not	47	12	82	66
	don't know	8	8	5	8
... govern in the interests of the country as a whole?	would	55	92	16	35
	would not	38	4	78	57
	don't know	7	4	5	8
... keep its promises?	would	46	80	15	30
	would not	42	11	75	59
	don't know	12	9	10	12

4. MORI (Sunday Times 5th June 1983)

The Sunday Times on 5th June included the results of the last 'wave' of the MORI 'panel' study conducted on May 24/25. As with the Harris study MORI found a considerable degree of optimism about a future Conservative administration. However, both surveys found a failure of our communication efforts in the caring areas - health, education, and pensions. Details of the MORI findings are shown below:-

What the Electorate Expect from a Conservative Government

Q. If the Conservative government is re-elected, do you think it will or will not...

	<u>Will</u>	<u>Will Not</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Keep its promises	51	41	8
Be able to work with the trade unions	28	60	12
Keep inflation down	66	28	6
Reduce unemployment	30	60	9
Cut income tax	35	51	14
Help to improve your living standard	36	55	8
Get a better deal from the Common Market	66	24	10
Reduce the crime rate	34	50	16
Cut Welfare State services	57	32	11
Increase the likelihood of nuclear war	29	56	15
Increase the likelihood of riots in the streets	36	50	14
Encourage greater racial harmony	35	40	25
Make the rich richer and the poor poorer	59	33	8

5. Data Plan (Sunday Express 5th June 1983)

The Sunday Express' survey of attitudes in 100 marginal seats conducted on 2nd June found 43% claimed they would vote Conservative, 31% Labour, 23% Alliance and 1% for 'other' parties.

6. Harris (Weekend World 5th June 1983)

The Weekend World programme on 5th June included details of a Harris survey in marginal seats conducted on 1-3 June. The study found:-

	<u>Lab/Con</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>SDP</u>
%	<u>Marginals</u>	<u>Marginals</u>	<u>'Hit' List</u>
Conservative	45	42	41
Labour	32	18	31
Alliance	20	37	27
Other	3	3	1

In the Conservative/Labour marginals our support has remained almost unchanged, Labour support has fallen and Alliance support increased. There has been almost no change in the Liberal marginals over the last week and over the past two weeks no change in Conservative support in the Alliance 'hit' list seats but a significant fall in Labour support and increase in Alliance support.

5. c.
OPERATION FAST FEED BACK.

SUMMARY OF WEEK MON 30th MAY TO FRI 3rd. JUNE 1983.

1/ In the critical week of the campaign the Socialists blew their chances in a way that could not have been imagined.

Following their meeting to re-structure their campaign Foot fumbled more than ever and the new front man ruined his own credibility and was a disaster for his party.

HATTERSLEY MADE LITTLE IMPACT and Kinnock (a) did not appear to believe some of the things he was saying and (b) appeared exhausted.

As the week drew to a close statements made by Foot appeared to show the inevitability of defeat.

2/ CONSERVATIVE PRESS ADVERTISEMENTS - EEC advertisement considered excellent.

CONSERVATIVE PRESS CONFERENCES - Much better and dealt decisively with Healey. Greater evidence of team performance.

T.V. INTERVIEWS - Mrs. Thatcher was outstanding and Parkinson also very good. Strong evidence that Tory key spokesmen have mastered the art of dealing with aggressive interviewers. Pym had a decidedly better week.

3/ For SOCIALISTS - a week of continuous disasters. By Thursday there was clearly no chance for any sort of recovery.

PRESS ADVERTISEMENTS - have made no serious impact throughout campaign.

PRESS CONFERENCES - DETERIORATED AS PROBLEMS INCREASED.

T.V. INTERVIEWS - REVEALED ACCEPTANCE OF DEFEAT.

4/ For the ALLIANCE - The week-end meeting in Scotland undoubtedly gave them new heart. However Jenkins was increasingly demoralised and shifted away from the mainstream of activity.

Steel did well but showed signs of disenchantment with 'gang of four' and resorted too much to poll figures (some dubious) to prove growth of support.

PRESS ADVERTISEMENTS - No impact at all/

PRESS CONFERENCES - varying but very weak when challenged on specific policies.

NOTE..... Our panellists quickly determined that whilst Alliance activity increased there was no evidence that they offered a real threat nationally.

5/ CONSERVATIVE PARTY...STRONG POINTS -

1. Dominance of Mrs Thatcher.
2. Greater evidence of Tory team.
3. Wider coverage of details of manifesto.
4. General running of campaign and it's overall impact.
5. Much improved attitude towards unemployment - particularly youth.
6. The unspoken enormous effect of the 'Falklands Factor'.

WEAK POINTS - 1. Lack of clear evidence that Tories would deal with Law & Order. 2. In retrospect it is otherwise difficult to see how strategy could have been better.

6/ SOCIALIST PARTY. ..STRONG POINTS -

1. Few good moments for Labour this week but they did make a reasonable effort on unemployment figures and O.A.Ps.

WEAK POINTS -

1. Internal strife.
2. Failure to get message across.
3. Acceptance of defeat.

MAJOR POINTS FOR CAMPAIGN NEXT WEEK.

1. No letting up...Stress "YOUR VOTE IS VITAL".
2. Keep spelling out item by item the future with a Conservative Government.
3. Urge constituency workers to get maximum turn-out ---even in safe seats.