

Public Opinion Background Note 20
(produced 15th January 1984)

1. Introduction

The result of our first 1984 Gallup 'tracking' study conducted from 6th to 9th January continued the trend Gallup had found in late 1983. The latest study when compared with the last of the 1983 studies (conducted 7-12 December) found the Conservative lead over Labour falling from 6% to 3%, the proportion of the electorate claiming they would vote Conservative falling from 42½% to 41%, and the proportion claiming they would vote Labour increasing from 36½% to 38%. The proportion claiming they would vote Alliance remained almost constant - 19½% before Christmas compared with 20% in the latest study.

2. Voting Intention

The two tables below show voting intention when 'don't knows' have been excluded (the conventional way of presenting opinion research figures) and when don't knows are shown as a separate category.

(a) Voting Intention (excluded don't knows) - all figures are percentages

	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>SDP</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Con lead</u> <u>over Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u> <u>(SDP &</u> <u>Liberal)</u>	<u>Con lead</u> <u>over Alliance</u> <u>(Liberal & SDP)</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1983</u>								
General Election 1983	42.4	27.6	13.7	11.6	4.6	+14.8	25.3	+17.1
29 June/4 July	46.5	25.5	12.0	15.0	1.0	+21.0	27.0	+19.5
7-11 July	44.0	28.5	11.0	15.0	1.5	+15.5*	26.0	+18.0
13-18 July	42.0	26.0	14.0	16.0	2.0	+16.0	30.0	+12.0
21-25 July	41.0	29.0	13.0	16.0	1.0	+12.0	29.0	+12.0
28 July/1 August	43.5	26.0	14.0	15.0	1.5	+17.5	29.0	+14.5
3-8 August	45.0	26.5	11.0	15.0	2.5	+18.5	26.0	+19.0
10-15 August	44.5	25.0	13.0	16.0	1.5	+19.5*	29.0	+15.5
17-22 August	44.5	25.0	12.0	16.5	2.0	+19.5	28.5	+16.0
24-30 August	45.0	27.5	12.0	14.0	1.5	+17.5	26.0	+19.0
31 August/5 September	44.0	27.0	11.0	16.0	2.0	+17.0	27.0	+17.0
7-12 September	45.5	24.5	10.5	18.5	1.0	+21.0*	29.0	+16.5
14-19 September	43.0	24.5	12.0	19.0	1.5	+18.5	31.0	+12.0
21-26 September	41.0	26.0	16.0	15.0	2.0	+15.0	31.0	+10.0
28 Sept - 3 Oct	46.0	24.0	12.5	16.0	1.5	+22.0	28.5	+17.5
5-10 October	42.0	36.0	10.0	12.0	2.0	+8.0	22.0	+20.0
12-18 October	43.5	40.0	6.5	9.0	1.0	+3.5	15.5	+28.0
19-24 October	42.5	35.5	9.5	10.5	2.0	+7.0*	20.0	+22.5
26-31 October	42.5	37.0	9.5	9.0	2.0	+5.5	18.5	+24.0
2-7 November	41.5	37.5	9.0	10.0	2.0	+4.0	19.0	+22.5
9-14 November	43.5	36.0	11.0	8.5	1.0	+7.5*	19.5	+24.0
16-21 November	41.0	38.0	8.0	11.0	2.0	+3.0	19.0	+22.0
23-28 November	41.0	37.0	13.0	8.0	1.0	+4.0	21.0	+20.0
30-5 December	44.0	38.0	8.0	9.0	1.0	+6.0	17.0	+27.0
7-12 December	42.5	36.5	8.0	11.5	2.0	+6.0*	19.5	+23.0
<u>1984</u>								
6-9 January 1984	41.0	38.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	+3.0	20.0	+21.0

* Published in the Daily Telegraph

(b) Voting Intention (including don't knows)

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>SDP</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Conservative lead over Labour</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1983</u>							
29 June/4 July	43.0	24.0	11.0	14.0	1.0	6.0	+19.0
7-11 July	41.0	27.0	10.0	14.0	1.0	6.0	+14.0
13-18 July	39.0	24.0	13.0	15.0	2.0	7.0	+15.0
21-25 July	39.0	27.0	12.0	16.0	1.0	5.0	+12.0
28 July/1 August	41.0	24.0	13.0	14.0	1.0	7.0	+17.0
3-8 August	43.0	25.0	11.0	15.0	2.0	5.0	+18.0
10-15 August	42.0	23.0	12.0	15.0	2.0	6.0	+19.0
17-22 August	41.0	23.0	11.0	15.0	2.0	7.0	+18.0
24-30 August	41.0	25.0	11.0	13.0	1.0	9.0	+16.0
31 August-5 Sept	41.0	25.0	10.0	15.0	1.0	7.0	+16.0
7-12 September	41.0	21.0	9.0	16.0	2.0	12.0	+20.0
14-19 September	40.0	23.0	11.0	18.0	1.0	7.0	+17.0
21-26 September	39.0	25.0	15.0	15.0	2.0	5.0	+14.0
28 Sept - 3 Oct	43.0	23.0	12.0	14.0	1.0	7.0	+20.0
5-10 October	38.0	33.0	9.0	10.0	1.0	8.0	+5.0
12-18 October	41.0	37.0	6.0	8.0	1.0	7.0	+4.0
19-24 October	40.0	34.0	9.0	10.0	2.0	6.0	+6.0
26-31 October	40.0	35.0	9.0	9.0	1.0	7.0	+5.0
2-7 November	38.0	35.0	8.0	9.0	1.0	8.0	+3.0
9-14 November	41.0	33.0	10.0	8.0	1.0	7.0	+8.0
16-21 November	39.0	36.0	8.0	11.0	1.0	6.0	+3.0
23-28 November	38.0	34.0	12.0	8.0	1.0	8.0	+4.0
30 Nov-5 Dec	41.0	35.0	7.0	9.0	1.0	7.0	+6.0
7-12 Dec	40.0	33.0	8.0	11.0	2.0	7.0	+7.0
<u>1984</u>							
6-9 January 1984	39.0	36.0	9.0	10.0	1.0	6.0	+3.0

3. Government Record

The latest study found 40% approving of the record of the government to date (38% in the last 1983 survey), 48% disapproving (50% in 1983) and 12% with no view (12% in 1983). Details are given in the table below:-

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
29 June/4 July (%)	48	39	13
7/11 July (%)	46	43	10
13/18 July (%)	44	44	12
21/25 July (%)	41	48	11
28 July - 1st August (%)	44	43	13
3/8 August (%)	46	44	10
10/15 August (%)	44	45	11
17/22 August (%)	45	45	10
24/30 August (%)	44	46	11
31 August - 5 September (%)	41	47	11
7/12 September (%)	47	42	11
14/19 September (%)	44	43	13
21/26 September (%)	43	46	11
28 Sept - 3 October (%)	43	47	10
5-10 October (%)	40	46	14
12-18 October (%)	42	45	13

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
19-24 October (%)	41	47	13
26-31 October (%)	41	46	13
2-7 November (%)	40	48	12
9-14 November (%)	40	49	11
16-21 November (%)	39	50	11
23-28 November (%)	38	47	15
30 Nov- 5 Dec (%)	39	48	13
7-12 Dec (%)	38	50	12
<u>1984</u>			
6-9 January (%)	40	48	12

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

The first 1984 study found no change in Mrs Thatcher's popularity - 47% claimed to be satisfied with her as Prime Minister, 49% dissatisfied and 5% had no view. Mr. Kinnock's popularity has improved after the drop recorded in the last of the 1983 surveys. There was a slight (but not significant) fall in the popularity of both Mr. Steel and Dr. Owen.

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Foot</u>		
	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1983</u>						
29 June/4 July (%)	54	41	5	10	85	5
7/11 July (%)	52	44	4	11	82	7
13/18 July (%)	48	47	5	10	84	6
21/25 July (%)	49	48	3	11	84	5
28 July/1 Aug (%)	51	46	3	10	83	6
3/8 August (%)	55	41	3	12	83	6
10/15 August (%)	51	46	3	10	84	6
17/22 August (%)	53	44	3	10	81	8
24/31 August (%)	50	45	5	11	83	7
31 August/5 Sept (%)	47	46	7	10	84	6
7/12 September (%)	53	43	4	9	84	7
14/19 September (%)	51	43	6	9	84	7
21/26 September (%)	51	45	5	11	82	7
28 Sept/3 Oct (%)	51	44	5	9	83	9
				<u>Mr. Kinnock</u>		
5/10 October (%)	47	47	6	61	14	25
12/18 October (%)	48	46	6	61	14	26
19/24 October (%)	48	47	5	58	17	25
26/31 October (%)	47	48	4	62	14	24
2/7 November (%)	47	50	3	50	17	33
9/14 November (%)	49	47	4	48	14	37
16/21 November (%)	46	50	4	48	15	37
23/28 November (%)	48	47	5	47	16	36
30 Nov/5 Dec (%)	49	47	4	48	22	30
7/12 December (%)	47	48	5	40	20	39
<u>1984</u>						
6-9 January (%)	47	49	5	46	22	31

	<u>Mr. Steel</u>			<u>Dr. Owen</u>		
	<u>Is Good</u>	<u>Is Not Good</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Is Good</u>	<u>Is Not Good</u>	<u>Don't</u>
	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Leader</u>		<u>Leader</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1983</u>						
29 June/4 July (%)	75	16	9	57	18	26
5/11 July (%)	72	14	13	55	19	27
13/18 July (%)	73	15	12	54	19	26
21/25 July (%)	74	13	13	56	17	25
28 July/1 Aug (%)	74	12	14	52	19	30
3/8 August (%)	74	16	10	54	20	26
10/15 August (%)	71	15	14	54	19	27
17/22 August (%)	67	18	15	53	18	29
24/30 August (%)	64	21	14	51	20	29
31 Aug/5 Sept (%)	62	22	16	53	21	26
7/12 Sept (%)	65	22	13	54	20	25
14/19 Sept (%)	67	18	15	61	15	24
21/26 Sept (%)	70	17	14	55	18	27
28 Sept/3 Oct (%)	69	17	15	57	19	28
5-10 October (%)	56	26	19	47	24	29
12-18 October (%)	58	24	18	46	24	30
19-24 October (%)	60	23	17	48	25	27
26-31 October (%)	54	28	17	48	24	28
2-7 November (%)	59	24	17	47	22	30
9-14 November (%)	63	21	16	47	24	29
16-21 November (%)	60	23	17	46	24	30
23-28 November (%)	64	20	16	45	24	31
30 Nov - 5 Dec (%)	61	25	15	48	26	26
7-12 December (%)	64	21	15	51	23	26
<u>1984</u>						
6-9 January (%)	62	22	16	48	24	28

5. Published Polls

(a) Harris (Thames News 29th December 1983)

The Thames News programme on 29th December included details of a Harris poll conducted in Greater London on 13th and 14th December. They found 67% claiming to be aware of the government's plans for the G.L.C. - 59% knew of the government's plans to abolish the G.L.C.

Harris asked respondents whether they thought the G.L.C. has done it's job well or badly - 16% thought it had done it's job very well, 41% fairly well, 22% neither well nor badly, 12% fairly badly, 8% very badly and 1% did not have a view. When asked about the government's decision to abolish the G.L.C. - 22% claimed they approved, 59% disapproved and 1% did not have a view.

Harris asked respondents how important they thought it was that London has a single body for services - 55% thought this was very important, 23% fairly important, 10% not very important, 5% not at all important and 6% did not have a view. They also asked how important respondents thought it was that the body responsible for services is elected. 64% thought it was very important, 12% fairly important, 2% not very important, 1% not at all important and 20% did not have a view.

(b) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 27th December 1983)

The Daily Telegraph on 27th December included details of a Gallup poll conducted in a number of countries during November and December.

Gallup asked:-

"So far as you are concerned, do you think that 1984 will be better or worse than 1983?"

The replies are shown in the table where "+" indicates a lead of optimists over the pessimists and "-" indicates the reverse.

	<u>Optimistic Countries</u>
Argentina	+81
South Korea	+61
USA	+55
Canada	+45
Australia	+38
Venezuela	+32
Greece	+23
Finland	+14
Spain	+12
Chile	+10
Japan	+10
Norway	+ 9
Switzerland	+ 9
Denmark	+ 8
Uruguay	+ 5
West Germany	+ 4
Colombia	+ 4
India	+ 2
Brazil	0

	<u>Pessimistic countries</u>
United Kingdom	- 1
Italy	- 9
Sweden	-11
Luxembourg	-12
Costa Rica	-22
France	-27
Holland	-27
Portugal	-27
Austria	-32
Bolivia	-35
Eire	-36
Belgium	-45
Philippines	-47

So far as the British are concerned, the main worries were that the coming year will see rising prices, increased unemployment, more industrial disputes, higher taxes and trouble abroad.

A majority (53%) expect 1984 to be a year of economic difficulty with only 13% taking an optimistic view.

The public is likewise pessimistic on employment prospects, with 52% expecting unemployment to increase next year.

A majority (55%) also think that 1984 will be a year of strikes and industrial disputes while 16% think the industrial scene will be peaceful.

The Chancellor's statement in his recent mini-Budget that he may be forced to raise taxes next year has registered with the public. Two in three (65%) believe that taxes will rise next year and only 7% expect them to fall.

With conflicts in Grenada and the Lebanon, and possibly heightened tension with the arrival of the American-controlled cruise missiles in Britain, the public takes a particularly pessimistic view of international relations in 1984.

Finally, Gallup asked for people's perceptions of Russia, China, and America in the new year. Forty per cent think that Russia's power in the world will increase and 35% that China's power will increase.

But 54% think that the power of the United States will rise. Never, in the last 26 years of asking the question, has the proportion for America previously topped the 50% mark.

The same issue of the Daily Telegraph included details of another Gallup survey on '1984'. They found a majority of British people believe that Governments manipulate information and ideas to condition the public opinion. Their survey conducted in Britain, West Germany and Switzerland shows that a majority of Britons believe that there is no real privacy in the United Kingdom. Details are shown below:

Move towards the ideas of '1984'

	<u>GB</u>	<u>West Germany</u>	<u>Switzerland</u>
There is no real privacy because the Government can learn anything it wants about you.	72	38	37
The Government uses false words and statistics to hide bad news about the economy and quality of life.	68	26	28
People are asked to make great economic sacrifices but Government officials, themselves, live in luxury.	67	50	28
Poor people think their only chance to get ahead in life is to win a lottery.	56	51	44
The country is ruled by a dictator.	20	7	5

	<u>GB</u>	<u>West Germany</u>	<u>Switzerland</u>
The Government urges people to surrender freedom in order to gain greater security.	18	23	16
The Government says the only way we can have peace is by waging war.	14	13	13
The Government urges citizens to hate people in other countries.	12	12	20
Anybody who criticises the Government is severely punished.	7	11	12
The Government hopes that some day all children will be produced by artificial insemination.	6	6	26

(c) MORI (Sunday Times 15th January 1984)

The Sunday Times on 15th January 1984 included details of a MORI poll of coal miners conducted on 13th January.

They found that by a majority of nearly two to one the miners opposed the ending of the overtime ban - 61% opposing the ending of the ban with 35% in favour of calling it off. Miners opposed calling a national strike - only 24% thought a national strike should be called with 68% opposed.

MORI found considerable disagreement and uncertainty among miners about the effectiveness of the ban. Asked whether it had been effective in putting pressure on the N.C.B. 24% thought it had been very effective, 30% fairly effective, 21% not very effective and 22% not at all effective.

(d) NOP (Daily Mail 13th January 1984)

The Daily Mail on 13th January included details of a NOP poll conducted in Chesterfield on 11/12 January - before Benn was selected as Labour candidate. They found 60% claiming they would vote Labour, 27% Conservative, 11% Alliance and 2% for 'other' parties.

(e) NOP (Daily Mail 16th January 1984)

The Daily Mail on 16th January included details of a NOP poll conducted on 4/5 January on attitudes to the government's proposals on rates.

When NOP told electors that the Government intends to put a limit by law on rate increases by high spending councils 58% backed such a limit. But while the public wanted action on the high spending there was less support for a general Government power to control rate levels. When NOP asked 'Should the Government have powers to limit the rate, increases of all councils or not?' - 49% said no to the idea while only 45% backed it. NOP found the electorate divided as to whether the Government has the right to interfere with local government spending levels - 47% thought it had and 43% that it did not.

When NOP put the statement 'High rates on local boundaries cause unemployment' - 72% agreed and 18% disagreed.