

Public Opinion Background Note 101

(produced 17th August 1985)

1. Introduction

The results of our latest 'tracking' study are they same as the results of the Gallup survey published in the Daily Telegraph on 15th August. The survey conducted from 7th to 12th August involved interviews with over 1,000 electors throughout Great Britain.

The survey found 40% claiming they would vote Labour, 34% for one of the so-called 'Alliance' parties, 24% Conservative and 2% for 'other' parties. This is the lowest level of Conservative support since late 1981. Our support has dropped from 30% in late July (17-22 July) to 24% in the latest study; Labour support has increased from 30% to 40% over the same period, 'Alliance' support has fallen from 36.5% to 34%.

Full details of the trend of support for the main parties since January 1985 showing voting intentions when those respondents not giving details of voting intention are excluded and when they were included as a separate group are shown in the tables in section 2 below:

2. Voting Intention(a) Voting Intention (excluding don't knows) - all figures are percentages

	Con %	Lab %	Lib %	SDP %	Others %	Con lead Over Labour %	SDP & Liberal %	Con lead over Alliance Liberal & SDP %
1985								
3-8 Jan	35.0	35.0	11.0	17.0	2.0	0.0	28.0	+7.0
9-14 Jan	39.0	33.0	9.5	16.0	2.5	+6.0	25.5	+13.5*
16-21 Jan	39.0	34.0	10.0	16.0	1.0	+5.0	26.0	+13.0
23-28 Jan	36.0	32.0	11.0	20.0	1.0	+4.0	31.0	+5.0
30 Jan-4 Feb	34.0	37.0	10.0	17.5	1.5	-3.0	27.5	+6.5
6-11 Feb	35.0	32.0	10.5	21.0	1.5	+3.0	31.5	+3.5*
13-18 Feb	38.0	33.0	10.0	16.5	2.5	+5.0	26.5	+11.5
20-25 Feb	33.5	38.0	10.0	17.0	1.5	-4.5	27.0	+6.5
27 Feb-4 March	35.0	35.0	10.0	18.0	2.0	0.0	28.0	+7.0
6-11 March	37.0	34.0	10.5	17.0	1.5	+3.0	27.5	+10.5
13-18 March	35.0	34.0	12.0	16.0	3.0	+1.0	28.0	+7.0
21-25 March	33.0	39.5	10.0	16.0	1.5	-6.5	26.0	+6.0
27 March - 1 April	38.0	33.0	13.0	15.0	1.0	+5.0	28.0	+10.0
3 - 9 April	37.0	40.0	7.5	13.5	2.0	-3.0	21.0	+16.0
10 - 15 April	36.5	35.5	13.0	13.0	2.0	+1.0	26.0	+11.5
17-22 April	34.0	37.5	12.0	14.0	2.0	-3.5	26.5	+7.5*
24-29 April	33.5	38.0	10.0	16.5	2.0	-4.5	26.5	+7.0
1 - 6 May	31.5	36.0	11.5	18.5	2.5	-4.5	30.0	+1.5
6-13 May	30.5	34.0	11.5	22.0	2.0	-3.5	33.5	-3.0*
15-20 May	31.0	36.5	10.0	21.0	1.5	-5.5	31.0	0.0
23-28 May	29.0	35.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-6.0	33.0	-4.0
29 May - 3 June	31.0	37.0	13.0	17.0	2.0	-6.0	30.0	+1.0
5-10 June	28.0	36.0	12.0	21.5	2.5	-8.0	33.5	-5.5
12-17 June	34.5	34.5	12.0	18.0	1.0	0.0	30.0	+4.5*
19-24 June	31.0	35.0	13.0	19.0	2.0	-4.0	32.0	-1.0
26 June-1 July	35.0	34.0	12.0	17.0	2.0	+1.0	29.0	+6.0

2. Voting Intention (Cont.)

(a) Voting Intention (excluding 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 Over Labour</u> %	<u>SDP & Liberal</u> %	<u>Con lead over Allianc Liberal & SDP</u> %
<u>1985</u>								
3-8 July	30.5	36.5	12.0	19.0	2.0	-6.0	31.0	+0.5
10-15 July	27.5	38.0	12.5	20.0	2.0	-10.5	32.5	-5.0
17-22 July	30.0	30.0	12.5	24.0	3.5	0.0	36.5	-6.5
24-29 July	28.0	34.0	14.5	22.0	1.5	-6.0	36.5	-8.5
31 July-5 Aug	25.0	36.5	12.5	24.0	2.0	-11.5	36.5	-11.5
7-12 Aug	24.0	40.0	13.0	21.0	2.0	-16.0	34.0	-10.0

(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>1985</u>							
3-8 Jan	33.0	32.0	10.0	16.0	2.0	7.0	+1.0
9-14 Jan	36.0	30.0	9.0	15.0	3.0	8.0	+6.0
16-21 Jan	35.0	31.0	9.0	14.0	1.0	9.0	+4.0
23-28 Jan	33.0	29.0	10.0	18.0	1.0	8.0	+4.0
30 Jan - 4 Feb	31.0	33.0	9.0	16.0	1.0	11.0	-2.0
6-11 Feb	32.0	29.0	9.0	19.0	1.0	9.0	+3.0
13-18 Feb	35.0	30.0	9.0	15.0	2.0	8.0	+5.0
20-25 Feb	31.0	35.0	9.0	15.0	1.0	9.0	-4.0
27 Feb-4 March	32.0	32.0	9.0	16.0	2.0	9.0	0.0
6 - 11 March	34.0	31.0	10.0	15.0	1.0	9.0	+3.0
13-18 March	33.0	32.0	11.0	15.0	3.0	7.0	+1.0
21-25 March	30.0	36.0	9.0	14.0	2.0	8.0	-6.0
27 March-1 April	35.0	30.0	13.0	12.0	1.0	8.0	+5.0
3 - 9 April	34.0	37.0	7.0	12.0	2.0	8.0	-3.0
10 - 15 April	33.0	32.0	12.0	12.0	3.0	9.0	+1.0
17-22 April	31.0	34.0	12.0	13.0	2.0	9.0	-3.0
24-29 April	31.0	35.0	9.0	15.0	2.0	8.0	-4.0
1 - 6 May	29.0	33.0	11.0	17.0	2.0	9.0	-4.0
6-13 May	28.0	31.0	11.0	20.0	2.0	8.0	-3.0
15-20 May	28.0	34.0	9.0	19.0	2.0	8.0	-6.0
23-28 May	27.0	33.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	7.0	-6.0
29 May-3rd June	28.0	33.0	11.0	15.0	2.0	11.0	-5.0
5 - 10 June	26.0	33.0	11.0	20.0	2.0	8.0	-7.0
12 - 17 June	32.0	32.0	11.0	17.0	1.0	7.0	0.0
19-24 June	29.0	32.0	12.0	17.0	3.0	7.0	-3.0
26 June-1 July	32.0	31.0	11.0	16.0	1.0	8.0	+1.0
3-8 July	28.0	33.0	11.0	17.0	1.0	9.0	-5.0
10-15 July	26.0	35.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	6.0	-9.0
17-22 July	27.0	28.0	11.0	22.0	3.0	8.0	-1.0
24-29 July	25.0	31.0	13.0	20.0	2.0	9.0	-6.0
31 July - 5 Aug	23.0	33.0	11.0	22.0	1.0	9.0	-10.0
7-12 Aug	22.0	37.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	8.0	-15.0

3. Government Record

Gallup found the lowest level of approval of the record of the Government since 1981/ early 1982. Only 23% claimed to approve of our record to date (32% at start of year), 65% disapproved (53% at start of year) and 12% did not have a view (14% at start of year). Details are shown in the table below:-

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1985			
3-8 Jan(%)	32	53	14
9-14Jan(%)	33	54	13
16-21 Jan(%)	35	48	16
23-28 Jan(%)	33	54	12
30 Jan-4 Feb(%)	29	59	12
6-11Feb (%)	31	55	13
13-18 Feb(%)	33	55	12
20-25 Feb(%)	29	58	13
27 Feb - 4 March(%)	34	53	13
6-11 March(%)	32	55	13
13-18 March(%)	31	56	13
21-25 March(%)	30	58	12
27 March - 1 April(%)	34	55	11
3 - 9 April (%)	32	57	11
10-15 April (%)	32	54	14
17-22 April (%)	32	57	11
24-29 April (%)	31	55	14
1 - 6 May(%)	31	56	13
6-13 May (%)	28	58	14
15-20 May(%)	27	60	13
23-28 May (%)	28	60	12
29 May-3 June (%)	27	59	14
5 - 10 June (%)	26	61	13
12-17 June (%)	31	59	9
19-24 June (%)	28	60	12
26 June-1 July (%)	30	57	12
3-8 July (%)	29	58	12
10-15 July (%)	28	59	13
17 - 22 July(%)	28	60	12
24-29 July (%)	26	61	13
31 July - 5 Aug (%)	25	61	14
7-12 August (%)	23	65	12

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs. Thatcher's popularity is at the lowest level since 1981/82 with 30% claiming to be satisfied with her as Prime Minister, 65% dissatisfied and 5% with no view. This compares with 39% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs. Thatcher at the start of the year, 57% dissatisfied and 5% with no view. Mr. Kinnock's popularity remains around the 34% level - around which point is has fluctuated since the start of the year.

The popularity of both Mr. Steel and Dr. Owen fell but they both remain significantly more popular than at the start of the year. Details are shown in the tables on the following page:-

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Mr. Kinnock</u>	
	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>		<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>1985</u>						
3-8 Jan (%)	39	57	5	33	48	19
9-14 Jan (%)	40	54	6	36	49	15
16-21 Jan (%)	43	51	6	31	51	18
23-28 Jan (%)	40	56	5	33	52	15
30 Jan to 4 Feb (%)	38	56	6	36	49	15
6-11 Feb (%)	37	57	6	31	54	15
13-18 Feb (%)	40	55	5	31	57	12
20-25 Feb (%)	38	58	4	34	52	14
27 Feb-4 March (%)	40	54	5	31	53	16
6 - 11 March (%)	41	55	4	34	51	15
13-18 March (%)	40	55	5	32	52	16
21-25 March (%)	37	58	5	37	47	6
27 March - 1 April (%)	39	56	5	33	50	16
3-9 April (%)	37	59	4	43	44	13
10-15 April (%)	38	57	6	35	47	18
17-22 April (%)	38	57	5	36	48	16
24-29 April (%)	37	57	6	35	48	16
1 - 6 May (%)	37	58	5	36	49	16
6 - 13 May (%)	36	59	5	38	45	17
15-20 May (%)	32	63	5	36	47	18
23-28 May (%)	35	60	5	35	49	16
29 May-3 June (%)	34	61	5	34	50	16
5 - 10 June (%)	34	61	6	33	49	17
12-17 June (%)	38	56	8	37	51	12
19-24 June (%)	36	59	5	34	51	15
26 June-1 July (%)	40	56	5	37	46	17
3-8 July (%)	36	58	6	37	48	16
10-15 July (%)	34	60	5	38	47	15
17 - 22 July (%)	34	61	6	32	52	15
24-29 July (%)	31	63	6	34	49	16
31 July - 5 Aug (%)	32	63	5	36	49	15
7-12 Aug (%)	30	65	5	34	48	18

	<u>Mr Steel</u>			<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Dr Owen</u>	
	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>		<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1985</u>						
3-8 Jan (%)	56	24	20	50	25	25
9-14 Jan (%)	57	26	17	52	27	21
16-21 Jan (%)	60	24	16	52	22	26
23-28 Jan (%)	57	25	18	55	21	24
30 Jan - 4 Feb (%)	55	28	18	51	25	23
6-11 Feb (%)	57	24	18	55	21	24
13-18 Feb (%)	59	24	17	57	24	20
20-25 Feb (%)	61	23	16	57	22	21
27 Feb-4 March (%)	57	25	19	52	23	25
6 - 11 March (%)	56	27	17	52	25	23
13-18 March (%)	57	27	17	53	23	24
21-25 March (%)	60	23	17	53	21	25
27 March-1 April (%)	64	21	15	54	24	22
3 - 9 April (%)	58	25	17	52	26	22
10-15 April (%)	58	24	18	49	26	25

(Cont.)

	<u>Is Good Leader</u> %	<u>Mr Steel Is Not Good Leader</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is Good Leader</u> %	<u>Dr Owen Is Not Good Leader</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
1985						
17-22 April (%)	60	24	17	52	26	22
24-29 April (%)	60	22	18	51	24	25
1 - 6 May (%)	65	20	15	54	22	24
6 - 13 May (%)	64	19	16	56	21	23
15-20 May (%)	60	24	16	51	23	25
23-28 May (%)	65	20	15	52	26	21
29 May-3 June (%)	61	22	17	49	27	24
5 - 10 June (%)	62	22	16	53	25	22
12-17 June (%)	63	22	15	56	23	21
19-24 June (%)	63	21	16	51	25	23
26-June-1 July (%)	62	20	18	52	24	25
3-8 July (%)	64	20	16	50	25	25
10-15 July (%)	65	20	15	54	24	22
17-22 July (%)	64	21	15	51	26	23
24-29 July (%)	64	21	14	56	24	20
31 July - 5 Aug (%)	67	18	15	57	20	23
7-12 Aug (%)	63	21	17	54	24	23

5. Published Polls

(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 15th August 1985)

The Daily Telegraph on 15th August included, in addition to the standard tracking questions, a number of other questions on attitudes to the Government.

Gallup asked a standard question with regard to what the electorate regarded as the most important problem facing the country. They found:-

MOST URGENT PROBLEMS

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Conservative Supporters</u> %	<u>Labour Supporters</u> %	<u>Liberal Supporters</u> %	<u>Alliance/SDP Supporters</u> %
Unemployment	89	81	90	92	93
Cost of Living/Prices	14	12	17	14	13
Health/Hospitals	12	9	15	13	11
Housing/Rates/Mortgages	12	9	13	12	12
Defence/Nuclear Weapons	10	9	12	11	11
Law and Order	9	13	5	11	14

It is perhaps worth noting the importance given by the electorate to health/hospitals and housing issues.

Gallup asked respondents whether they saw the main parties as united or divided. They found

PARTIES - DIVIDED

	<u>Conservative Party</u> %	<u>Labour Party</u> %	<u>Alliance Party</u> %
United	41	21	57
Divided	49	70	22
Don't Know	10	9	21

More electors see the 'Alliance' as being united, than see the Conservative Party as united.

In terms of policies and leaders, Gallup asked 'Taking everything into account, which party has the best policies and the best leaders?':-

POLICIES/LEADERS

	<u>Best Policies</u>	<u>Best Leaders</u>
	%	%
Conservative	25	33
Labour	34	23
Liberal	9	12
Social Democrats	8	9
Alliance	8	10
Other	1	0
Don't Know	16	13

On the question of which party has the best policies in a number of key areas, Gallup found:-

BEST POLICIES?

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>'Alliance'</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Inflation & Prices	34	29	14	0	23
Unemployment	13	45	18	0	24
Britain's Defence	43	24	15	0	18
Common Market	33	25	13	0	29
Strikes and Industrial Disputes	35	32	14	0	18
National Health Service	12	52	18	0	19
Education and Schools	18	42	21	0	20
Law and Order	42	23	13	0	22

We asked who they thought would make the best Prime Minister - Mrs. Thatcher, Mr. Kinnock, Mr. Steel or Dr. Owen. 25% selected Mrs. Thatcher, 25% Mr. Kinnock, 22% Mr. Steel and 16% Dr. Owen.

Gallup included a range of questions on attitudes to the parties:-

ATTITUDES TO THE PARTIES

	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>SDP</u>
	%	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
<u>The Conservatives Are Too Rigid And Inflexible</u>					
Agree	78	48	87	83	91
Disagree	19	49	10	10	6
Don't Know	4	3	3	7	2
<u>The Conservatives Are The Only Party That Can control The Unions</u>					
Agree	43	77	29	33	42
Disagree	50	18	67	58	50
Don't Know	7	4	5	9	8

ATTITUDES TO THE PARTIES (cont.)

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Conservative</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>Labour</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>Liberal</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>SDP</u> <u>Supporters</u> %
<u>The Conservatives Provide Strong Leadership</u>					
Agree	73	97	59	70	77
Disagree	23	2	37	28	20
Don't Know	4	1	5	2	3
<u>The Conservatives Don't Care What Hardship Their Policies Cause</u>					
Agree	70	29	90	83	72
Disagree	24	68	6	10	20
Don't Know	6	4	4	0	8
<u>The Conservative Party Has Kept Its Election Promises</u>					
Agree	21	49	13	13	16
Disagree	69	37	82	78	76
Don't Know	10	13	6	9	8
<u>The Conservatives Have Failed To Solve Britain's Most Important Problems</u>					
Agree	75	43	85	85	86
Disagree	19	47	12	9	10
Don't Know	6	10	3	6	4
<u>The Conservatives Look After The Interests Of The Rich, Not Ordinary People</u>					
Agree	74	32	92	85	82
Disagree	22	65	6	10	15
Don't Know	4	2	2	5	3
<u>The Conservatives Want To Cut Back Too Much On Health, Education And Other Services</u>					
Agree	85	56	96	91	91
Disagree	12	41	2	9	5
Don't Know	3	3	2	0	3
<u>Causing Unemployment Is Not An Acceptable Way To Deal With Inflation</u>					
Agree	77	56	82	88	85
Disagree	12	26	8	5	9
Don't Know	11	18	10	7	6

Even among Conservative supporters, 48% agreed with the view that the Conservatives are too rigid and inflexible (78% agreed among the electorate).

70% of the electorate, including 29% of Conservative supporters, agreed with the statement that Conservatives don't care what hardships their policies cause.

75% of the electorate, including 43% of Conservatives, agreed with the view that the Conservatives have failed to solve Britain's most important problems.

74% of the electorate, including 32% of the Conservatives, agreed with the view that the Conservatives look after the interests of the rich, not ordinary people.

85% of the electorate, including 56% of the Conservatives, agreed with the view that the Conservatives want to cut back too much on health, education and other services.

77% of the electorate, including 56% of the Conservatives, agreed with the view that causing unemployment is not an acceptable way to deal with inflation.

Gallup also put to the electorate a range of statements about the Labour Party - they found:-

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Conservative</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>Labour</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>Liberal</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>SDP</u> <u>Supporters</u> %
<u>Labour Has Become Too Extreme</u>					
Agree	59	82	33	80	77
Disagree	32	15	56	13	17
Don't Know	9	4	10	7	6
<u>Labour Is The Only Party That Can Turn Out The Present Government</u>					
Agree	39	27	64	23	21
Disagree	53	68	27	72	75
Don't Know	7	5	9	6	4
<u>Labour Leadership Is Poor Now</u>					
Agree	62	84	38	69	77
Disagree	31	14	56	22	16
Don't Know	7	2	6	8	7
<u>Labour Would Bring In Real Thorough-Going Changes</u>					
Agree	65	60	79	55	60
Disagree	22	30	13	32	29
Don't Know	12	10	9	13	11
<u>Labour Is Too Split And Divided</u>					
Agree	70	91	49	83	82
Disagree	23	6	44	13	12
Don't Know	7	3	7	4	6
<u>Labour Is The Only Party That Looks After Ordinary Working People And Their Families</u>					
Agree	44	14	79	28	26
Disagree	51	82	18	71	68
Don't Know	5	4	3	1	6

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Conservative</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>Labour</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>Liberal</u> <u>Supporters</u> %	<u>SDP</u> <u>Supporters</u> %
<u>Its Not Clear What A Vote For Labour Means These Days</u>					
Agree	67	87	42	85	81
Disagree	25	8	48	12	12
Don't Know	8	4	10	3	3

<u>Labour's Policy Of Getting Rid Of All Our Nuclear Weapons Would Be Dangerous</u>					
Agree	65	89	48	68	69
Disagree	25	8	39	23	21
Don't Know	10	3	12	10	10

<u>The Economy Would Be In A Worse State Under Labour</u>					
Agree	42	85	10	44	56
Disagree	44	8	81	39	23
Don't Know	14	6	9	16	21

59% of the electorate, including 33% of Labour supporters agreed with the view that Labour has become too extreme.

62% of the electorate, including 38% of Labour supporters agreed with the view that Labour leadership is poor now.

70% of the electorate, including 49% of Labour supporters, agreed that Labour is too split and divided.

67% of the electorate, including 42% of Labour supporters, agreed that 'It's not very clear what a vote for Labour means these days'.

(b) MORI (Sunday Times, 18th August 1985)

The Sunday Times on 18th August included details of a MORI poll on attitudes to football conducted from 30th July to 4th August.

Among those interested in football MORI found the following reasons being given for not going to football matches:-

WHY FANS STAY AWAY

Threat of violence/ hooliganism:	34%
Prefer to watch on TV:.....	28%
Too Expensive:.....	15%
Matches insufficiently entertaining:.....	14%
Family responsibilities:.....	11%
Other sport/leisure activities:.....	8%
Transport problems:.....	8%
Watching other sports:.....	6%
Poor ground facilities:.....	5%
Don't know/none of these:.....	27%