

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 99

(produced 10th February 1982)

1. Introduction

Our latest Gallup 'tracking' study (conducted 27th January/ 1st February) and two recently published surveys all confirm the sharp drop in support for the Social Democrats our unpublished 'tracking' study found in early January. Support for the two Alliance parties has dropped from 51½% in the period 2/7 December to 39% in the latest study. Social Democrat support is down from 38% to 24% but Liberal support has increased slightly from 13½% to 15%. Over the same period Conservative support is up from 26% to 29% and Labour support from 21% to 29%.

The table below shows the results of the three latest polls on voting intention.

	<u>CON</u> %	<u>LAB</u> %	<u>LIB</u> %	<u>SOCIAL DEMOCRAT</u> %	<u>OTHERS</u> %
Gallup (conducted 27 Jan/ 1 Feb)	29.0	29.0	15.0	24.0	3.0
			39%		
			40%		
MORI (21/25 Jan)	29.0	30.0	-	-	1.0
			34%		
MORI (3/4 Feb)	33.0	31.0	-	-	2.0

The findings of the two MORI polls confirm the results of our Gallup 'tracking' study and the latest MORI poll conducted after our Gallup study would appear to indicate that the downward trend in Social Democrat/Liberal support is continuing.

The table on the following page shows details of the trend in support for the main parties since early June 1981.

VOTING INTENTION
(unprompted question, excluding don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL + SOCIAL 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	-	5.0	-9.0	13.0
<u>1981</u>							
3/8 June	31.0	40.0	14.0	12.5	2.5	-9.0	26.5
9/15 June	29.5	37.5	18.0	12.5	2.5	-8.0**	30.5
16/22 June	32.0	37.0	15.5	13.0	2.5	-5.0	28.5
24/30 June	29.0	40.0	17.0	12.0	2.0	-11.0	29.0
1/6 July	30.5	39.5	14.0	13.0	3.0	-9.0	27.0
8/13 July	30.0	40.5	14.5	12.0	3.0	-10.5**	26.5
15/20 July	29.0	36.0	16.0	17.0	2.0	-7.0	33.0
22/27 July	26.0	38.0	13.0	21.0	2.0	-12.0	34.0
29 July/3 Aug	25.5	40.0	11.5	20.5	2.5	-14.5	32.0
5/10 Aug	27.0	36.0	15.0	19.0	4.0	-9.0	33.0
12/17 Aug	28.0	38.5	13.0	19.0	1.5	-10.5**	32.0
19/24 Aug	29.0	34.0	17.0	18.0	2.0	-5.0	35.0
26/31 Aug	26.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	2.0	-15.0	31.0
1/7 Sept	25.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	-16.0	31.0
9/14 Sept	32.0	36.5	11.5	17.5	2.5	-4.5**	29.0
16/21 Sept	25.0	36.5	16.0	19.0	3.5	-11.5	35.0
23/28 Sept	24.5	33.5	16.5	24.0	1.5	-9.0	40.5
30 Sept/5 Oct	26.0	38.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-12.0	33.0
7/12 Oct	27.0	31.0	12.5	26.5	3.0	-4.0	39.0
14/19 Oct	28.5	34.0	12.5	22.0	3.0	-5.5	34.5
21/25 Oct	29.5	28.0	13.5	26.5	2.5	+1.5**	40.0
28 Oct/ 2 Nov	26.5	29.0	13.0	29.5	2.5	-2.5	42.5
4/9 Nov	26.5	28.5	14.5	28.5	2.0	-2.0	43.0
11/16 Nov	26.5	29.0	15.0	27.0	2.5	-2.5**	42.0
18/23 Nov	25.5	26.0	14.0	32.0	2.5	-0.5	46.0
25/30 Nov	25.0	26.5	15.5	30.0	3.0	-1.5	45.5
2/7 Dec	26.0	21.0	13.5	38.0	1.5	+5.0	51.5
9/14 Dec	23.0	23.5	14.5	36.0	3.0	-0.5**	50.5
<u>1982</u>							
6/11 Jan	25.5	30.0	17.0	25.0	2.5	-4.5	42.0
13/18 Jan	27.5	29.5	13.0	26.5	3.5	-2.0**	39.5
20/25 Jan	30.0	27.0	14.0	26.5	2.5	+3.0	40.5
27Jan/1 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	24.0	3.0	0.0	39.0

* First Gallup Post-election survey

** Published Polls

2. Government Record

Our latest 'tracking' study found almost no change in the level of approval of the record of the Government. Details 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>1981</u>			
1/7 September	23	65	13
9/14 September	26	63	11
16/21 September	21	67	11
23/28 September	21	66	13
30 Sept/ 5 Oct	21	70	10
7/12 October	20	68	12
14/19 October	24	65	12
21/26 October	24	62	13
28 October/ 2 November	23	66	10
4/9 November	27	64	9
11/16 November	23	66	11
18/23 November	22	66	12
25/30 November	22	65	14
2/7 December	20	69	11
9/14 December	18	70	12
<u>1982</u>			
6/11 January	23	65	12
13/18 January	24	65	12
20/25 January	26	62	13
27 Jan/1 Feb	25	62	13

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

For the third week running Gallup found almost no change in the popularity of the leaders of the three main parties. The improvement in Mrs Thatcher's popularity in comparison with before Christmas has been maintained. Details are shown below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Don't</u>
	sat.	sat.	Know		Not	Know		Not	Know
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1981</u>									
1/7 September	28	67	5	29	52	19	63	18	19
9/14 September	32	62	6	28	54	18	56	21	23
16/21 September	27	68	5	28	52	20	64	16	20
23/28 September	28	67	5	25	57	18	64	17	19
30 Sept/ 5 Oct	27	68	6	31	49	20	60	20	20
7/12 Oct	26	68	6	28	50	22	62	19	18
14/19 Oct	31	62	7	31	50	20	64	15	21
21/26 Oct	33	62	5	27	54	19	64	20	16
28 Oct/ 2 Nov	29	65	6	25	59	16	64	19	17
4/9 Nov	32	64	3	24	62	14	68	16	16
11/16 Nov	28	66	6	16	67	17	64	17	19
18/23 Nov	29	66	5	18	68	15	69	15	16
25/30 Nov	29	65	5	18	68	15	67	15	18
2/7 Dec	29	66	5	18	68	14	64	18	18
9/14 Dec	25	70	5	19	67	14	63	18	19
<u>1982</u>									
6/11 January	30	65	5	20	65	14	62	20	18
13/18 January	32	65	4	18	67	16	59	22	19
20/25 January	32	64	4	17	68	15	59	22	19
27 Jan/1 Feb	33	62	5	19	64	17	60	18	22

4. Published Polls(a) MORI (Daily Express 5th February 1982)

Details of the trend in support for the main parties found in the MORI poll published in the Daily Express on 5th February and conducted 21/25 January are shown below:-

VOTING INTENTION

	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	27	27	29
Labour	27	29	30
SDP	16	19	15
Liberal	8	11	12
Alliance	19	13	13
Others	3	1	1

(b) MORI (Sunday Times 7th February 1982)

An MORI survey published in the Sunday Times and conducted 3/4 February found 34% claiming they will vote Liberal-SDP, 33% Conservative, 31% Labour and 2% others.

In addition to voting intention, MORI asked electors who claimed they would vote Liberal, how they would vote if their candidate stood down in favour of a Social Democrat. Only 57% said they would vote SDP, 13% said they would vote Labour, 12% Conservative, 7% would not vote and the rest were undecided. Similarly if the Social Democrat stood down in favour of a Liberal, 29% of SDP supporters would not follow that lead, 12% would vote Labour and 9% Conservative.

When asked who they wanted as Prime Minister Leader, 44% selected Steel, 23% Mrs Williams, 20% Jenkins and 11% Owen. Even among SDP supporters Steel is the first choice for Prime Minister. Details of the electorate's attitudes to aspects of SDP image are shown below:-

What is your image of the Social Democrats?

	All voters	SDP supporters
	%	%
I don't know what their policies are	42	27
It is in touch with ordinary people	33	59
It has capable leaders	27	52
It has good policies for the country	20	40
It tries to be all things to all men	19	22
It is idealistic	16	23
They are divided among themselves	15	6
It is only interested in power	11	2

(c) Telephone Survey Research Unit (Sunday Standard/ BBC Scotland Agenda)

A telephone survey in Glasgow Hillhead found when 24% of respondents who were undecided on how they would vote in a by-election are excluded that 31% claimed they would vote Labour, 31% Alliance, 26% Conservative and 12% SNP.

The survey found that the Alliance in Hillhead is taking 26% of its support from Conservatives, 25% from Labour and only 19% from SNP.