

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTES 151/152

(produced 3rd March 1983)

1. Introduction

This edition of Public Opinion Background Note gives details of two Gallup tracking studies - one conducted from 17th to 21st February - before the Bermondsey by-election and the second from 24th to 28th February - largely after the Bermondsey by-election.

Details of the results of our two unpublished 'tracking' studies and two published studies are shown below:-

	<u>CON</u> %	<u>LAB</u> %	<u>ALLIANCE</u> %	<u>OTH</u> %	<u>Lead Conservative over Labour</u> %
Gallup (17/21 Feb)	44½	34½	19	2	+10.0
Gallup (24/28 Feb)	42	29	27	2	+13.0
ORC (25 Feb)	45	31	23	1	+14.0
MORI (25/26 Feb)	39	26	34	1	+13.0

ORC conducted a survey for Weekend World on Friday 25th February which found almost no change in Conservative support when compared with the results of our Gallup study conducted before Bermondsey (17/21 Feb). Our tracking study conducted largely after Bermondsey found a fall in Conservative support (42%) but not as large as found by the MORI survey published in the Sunday Times on 27th February which found 39% claiming they would vote Conservative. All three post-Bermondsey surveys found a sharp increase in Alliance support - Gallup (24/28 Feb) up to 27%, ORC (25 Feb) up to 23% and MORI (25/26 Feb) up to 34%. Labour support fell in all three studies.

Transposing the Gallup results into seats would give a large Conservative majority but with the Alliance having about 30 seats.

Two polls have been conducted in Darlington - details are shown below.

DARLINGTON POLLS

	<u>NOP</u> (26 Feb) %	<u>MORI</u> (26 Feb) %
Conservative	37	32
Labour	25	38
Alliance	38	30

The two surveys found significant differences in levels of support for the Parties - NOP found Conservative and Alliance 'neck and neck' with Labour in third place and MORI found Labour with a significant lead, and Conservatives and Alliance very close.

The two tables overleaf show the trend of support for the main parties nationally since September 1982 - the first shows support when 'don't knows' are excluded (the 'conventional' way of presenting opinion research findings) and the second shows the figures when don't knows are included. In the latest study Gallup found 12% of respondents who did not give a voting intention or claimed they did not know how they would vote.

Voting Intention
(unprompted question, excluding
don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT	<u>OTH</u>	<u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab	<u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<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>1982</u>							
1/6 Sept	43.5	28.5	8.0	17.0+	3.0	+15.0	25.0
8/13 Sept	44.0	30.5	8.5	14.5+	2.5	+13.5**	23.0
15/21 Sept	42.0	33.0	8.0	15.0+	2.0	+9.0	23.0
22/27 Sept	43.0	29.5	12.5	13.0+	2.0	+13.5	25.5
29 Sept/4 Oct	40.0	31.5	13.5	13.0+	2.0	+8.5	26.5
6/11 Oct	42.5	32.0	10.5	13.0+	2.0	+10.5	23.5
13/18 Oct	43.0	31.0	9.0	13.5+	3.5	+12.0	22.5
20/25 Oct	40.5	29.0	12.0	15.0+	3.5	+11.5**	27.0
27 Oct/1 Nov	48.0	31.0	8.5	11.0+	1.5	+17.0	19.5
3/10 Nov	44.0	33.0	9.0	12.0+	2.0	+11.0	21.0
10/15 Nov	42.0	35.0	8.0	13.0+	2.0	+7.0**	21.0
17/22 Nov	41.5	33.0	9.0	14.0+	2.5	+8.5	23.0
24/29 Nov	46.5	32.0	7.5	11.5+	2.5	+14.5	19.0
1/6 Dec	43.0	35.0	9.0	11.0+	2.0	+8.0	20.0
8/13 Dec	41.0	34.5	9.0	13.0+	2.5	+6.5**	22.0
<u>1983</u>							
7/11 Jan	44.0	33.0	10.5	11.0+	1.5	+11.0	21.5
12/17 Jan	44.0	31.5	11.5	11.0+	2.0	+12.5**	22.5
18/25 Jan	47.5	30.5	9.0	11.0+	2.0	+17.0	20.0
27/31 Jan	45.0	31.0	10.0	12.0+	2.0	+14.0	22.0
2/7 Feb	43.0	30.0	11.0	13.0+	3.0	+13.0	24.0
9/14 Feb	43.5	32.5	10.5	11.5+	2.0	+11.0**	22.0
17/21 Feb	44.5	34.5	9.0	10.0+	2.0	+10.0	19.0
24/28 Feb	42.0	29.0	10.0	17.0+	2.0	+13.0	27.0

* First Gallup Post-Election Survey, ** Published Polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

VOTING INTENTION

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(unprompted question, including
don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTH</u>	<u>DON'T</u> <u>KNOW</u>	<u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab	<u>LIBERAL</u> & <u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>								
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	-	+7.0	13.8
<u>1982</u>								
1/6 Sept	39.0	26.0	7.0	15.0	3.0	10.0	+13.0	22.0
8/13 Sept	40.0	28.0	8.0	13.0	2.0	8.0	+12.0**	21.0
15/21 Sept	38.0	29.0	7.0	12.0	2.0	11.0	+9.0	19.0
22/27 Sept	39.0	27.0	12.0	12.0	2.0	9.0	+12.0	24.0
29th Sept/4th Oct	37.0	29.0	12.0	12.0	2.0	8.0	+8.0	24.0
6/11 Oct	38.0	29.0	10.0	12.0	1.0	10.0	+9.0	22.0
13/18 Oct	39.0	28.0	8.0	13.0	3.0	9.0	+11.0	21.0
20/25 Oct	37.0	27.0	11.0	13.0	4.0	8.0	+10.0**	24.0
27 Oct/1 Nov	44.0	28.0	8.0	10.0	1.0	8.0	+16.0	18.0
3/10 Nov	41.0	31.0	8.0	11.0	2.0	8.0	+10.0	19.0
10/15 Nov	38.0	31.0	7.0	12.0	2.0	10.0	+7.0**	19.0
17/22 Nov	41.0	29.0	11.0	9.0	1.0	9.0	+12.0	20.0
24/29 Nov	41.0	29.0	7.0	10.0	2.0	11.0	+12.0	17.0
1/6 Dec	39.0	32.0	8.0	10.0	1.0	9.0	+7.0	18.0
8/13 Dec	37.0	31.0	8.0	11.0	3.0	10.0	+6.0**	19.0
<u>1983</u>								
7/11 Jan	39.5	29.5	9.5	9.5	1.5	10.5	+10.0	19.0
12/17 Jan	40.0	29.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	9.0	+11.0	20.0
18/25 Jan	43.0	28.0	8.0	10.0	1.0	10.0	+15.0	18.0
27/31 Jan	40.0	28.0	9.0	11.0	2.0	10.0	+12.0	20.0
2/7 Feb	39.0	27.0	10.0	12.0	2.0	9.0	+12.0	22.0
9/14 Feb	40.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	8.0	+10.0	20.0
17/21 Feb	41.0	31.0	8.0	9.0	1.0	9.0	+10.0	17.0
24/28 Feb	38.0	26.0	9.0	16.0	1.0	10.0	+12.0	25.0

** Published polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

2. Government Record

Our latest two surveys found no change in the level of popularity of the Government - our latest study (conducted 24/25 Feb) found 39% claiming to approve of the record of the Government, 49% disapprove and 12% did not have a view.

Details of the trend of replies to this standard question since early September 1982 are shown below:-

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<u>1982</u>			
1/6 Sept	41	45	14
8/13 Sept	40	48	13
15/21 Sept	38	49	13
22/27 Sept	38	50	12
29 Sept/4 Oct	36	51	13
6/11 Oct	40	47	13
13/18 Oct	38	48	14
20/25 Oct	40	49	11
27 Oct/1 Nov	42	45	13
3/10 Nov	41	45	15
10/15 Nov	39	48	13
17/22 Nov	39	47	13
24/29 Nov	44	44	13
1/6 Dec	42	47	11
8/13 Dec	37	50	13
<u>1983</u>			
7/11 Jan	43	44	13
12/17 Jan	43	43	14
18/25 Jan	45	43	12
27/31 Jan	41	44	15
2/7 Feb	40	48	12
9/14 Feb	39	49	12
17/21 Feb	41	46	13
24/25 Feb	39	49	12

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our two latest studies have found almost no change in the level of approval for Mrs Thatcher and Mr Foot, but a slight improvement in the popularity of Mr Steel and Mr Jenkins.

Details of the trend of approval/disapproval for the leaders of the main parties since early September 1982 are shown in the table below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>			<u>Mr Jenkins</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1982</u>												
1/6 Sept	49	45	6	14	74	12	59	20	21	35	30	35
8/13 Sept	48	47	5	16	74	10	59	21	20	37	32	31
15/21 Sept	46	49	6	14	73	12	62	19	19	33	34	33
22/27 Sept	46	50	4	16	74	11	64	20	16	35	31	34
29 Sept/4 Oct	44	51	5	27	60	13	64	19	17	36	33	31
6/11 Oct	46	48	6	25	62	13	62	22	17	35	33	32
13/18 Oct	45	50	5	23	66	11	56	25	19	34	36	30
20/25 Oct	46	50	4	20	69	12	60	22	18	35	34	31
27 Oct/1Nov	48	48	4	20	66	14	57	24	18	35	37	28
3/10 Nov	48	48	5	23	65	11	58	24	18	34	37	29
10/15 Nov	44	52	5	22	67	12	59	22	19	37	33	30
17/22 Nov	44	51	5	25	63	11	59	20	20	33	36	31
24/29 Nov	48	47	5	18	68	14	57	22	20	31	35	34
1/6 Dec	45	51	5	23	67	10	62	18	19	35	34	31
8/13 Dec	44	53	4	20	69	10	60	23	17	34	34	31
<u>1983</u>												
7/11 Jan	48	47	6	18	68	14	62	20	17	30	33	36
12/17 Jan	49	45	6	17	69	14	62	19	19	30	31	39
18/25 Jan	51	44	5	18	72	10	61	20	19	33	35	31
27/31 Jan	47	48	5	18	70	13	61	19	21	33	35	32
2/7 Feb	46	49	5	15	72	13	60	22	17	31	40	29
9/14 Feb	45	50	5	17	72	11	62	21	17	33	39	28
17/21 Feb	46	49	5	18	71	11	63	18	19	35	36	29
24/28 Feb	45	50	5	17	71	12	66	14	20	37	33	30

4. Published Polls(a) MORI (Sunday Times 27th February 1983)

In addition to the voting intention question, the MORI study published in the Sunday Times on 27th February (conducted 25/26 February) asked 'Do you think Michael Foot should remain leader of the Labour Party or should he resign?' 58% thought he should resign, 32% remain as leader and 10% had no view. MORI also asked 'If Michael Foot decided to resign, who do you think would make the best leader?' 47% selected Healey, 8% Benn, 4% Kinnock, 4% Shore and 3% Hattersley.

(b) ORC (Weekend World 27th February 1983)

Weekend World on 27th February 1983 included details of an ORC poll conducted on 25th February. In addition to the standard voting intention question (considered above) ORC asked respondents what they thought of Mr Foot's leadership of the Labour Party. 6% thought 'his leadership is very good', 29% 'fairly good', 27% 'fairly bad' and 30% 'very bad'. They also asked who would be the best leader of Labour for a General Election - 43% selected Healey, 10% Foot, 9% Benn, 7% Kinnock, 7% Shore, 5% Hattersley and 4% Silkin. 33% claimed they would be more likely to vote Labour if Denis Healey was Labour leader, 9% claimed they would be less likely to vote Labour and 52% claimed this would make no difference.

(c) Gallup (Guardian 7th March 1983)

The Guardian on 7th March included details of a Gallup survey conducted for the Association of University Teachers between February 16th and 22nd. They asked respondents whether they thought the Government was spending too much, too little or about the right amount on education, health, roads, defence and old age pensions. They found:-

Government spending is:	<u>Education & schools</u> %	<u>Roads</u> %	<u>NHS</u> %	<u>Armaments & Defence</u> %	<u>Old Age Pensions</u> %
Too much	6	6	4	49	1
Too little	72	61	71	13	64
About right	17	24	20	30	29
Don't know	5	9	5	8	6