

Public Opinion Background Note 136

(produced 24th October 1982)

1. Introduction

We have had three national opinion polls in the last week - all of which have found a substantial Conservative lead over the other parties. Details are given below:-

	<u>Gallup*</u> (conducted 13/18 Oct)	<u>MORI</u> (conducted 7/12 Oct)	<u>NOP</u> (conducted 19/20 Oct)
	%	%	%
Conservative	43.0	42.0	45.0
Labour	31.0	33.0	32.0
Liberal	9.0		
Social Democrat	13.5 } 22.5 }	23.0	21.0
Others	3.5	2.0	2.0

* Private unpublished 'tracking' study.

The three polls have been conducted across the period 7th to 20th October and show very little change in the fortunes of any of the main parties. Conservative support has varied from 42% to 45%, Labour support from 31% to 33% and Alliance support from 21% to 23%.

The present situation can be compared with the results of surveys taken at the time of the Falklands Crisis which found almost 50% of the electorate claiming they would vote Conservative.

If we examine the results of our 'tracking' study in recent weeks (trends shown in table on next page) we find that Conservative support since the end of August has varied between 40% and 44%, Labour support between 28½% and 33%, Liberal support between 8% and 13½% and Social Democrat support between 13½% and 17%. In no case is a clear upward or downward trend shown.

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

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTH</u>	<u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab	<u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> <u>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>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	- 2.5**	39.5
20/25 Jan	30.0	27.0	14.0	26.5	2.5	+ 3.0	40.5
27 Jan/1 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	24.0	3.0	0.0	39.0
3/8 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	26.0	1.0	0.0	41.0
10/15 Feb	27.5	34.0	14.5	21.5	2.5	- 6.5**	35.0
17/22 Feb	26.5	33.5	14.0	22.0	4.0	- 7.0	36.0
24 Feb/1 March	31.0	32.5	11.0	22.5	3.0	- 1.5	33.5
3/8 March	30.0	33.5	11.5	21.0+	4.0	- 3.5	32.5
11/15 March	31.5	33.0	11.5	21.5+	2.5	- 1.5**	33.0
17/22 March	34.0	30.0	11.0	21.0+	4.0	+ 4.0	32.0
24/29 March	32.0	28.0	11.0	27.5+	1.5	+ 4.0	38.5
31 March/5 April	34.0	27.0	10.0	26.0+	3.0	+ 7.0	36.0
7/12 April	31.5	29.0	11.0	26.0+	2.5	+ 2.5**	37.0
13/19 April	31.0	30.0	10.0	26.0+	3.0	+ 1.0	36.0
21/26 April	31.5	33.0	10.5	24.5+	0.5	- 1.5	35.0
28 April/3 May	37.0	30.5	11.0	20.0+	1.5	+ 6.5	31.0
5/10 May	41.5	28.0	9.5	19.5+	1.5	+ 13.5**	29.0
12/17 May	42.0	31.0	10.0	16.0+	1.0	+ 11.5	26.0
19/24 May	45.0	27.0	11.0	15.0+	2.0	+ 18.0	26.0
26/31 May	45.5	27.0	9.5	16.0+	2.0	+ 18.5	25.5
2/7 June	48.5	23.5	11.5	14.5+	2.0	+ 25.0	26.0
9/14 June	45.0	25.0	10.0	18.5+	1.5	+ 20.0**	28.5
16/21 June	49.0	24.0	10.0	15.5+	2.0	+ 25.0	25.5
23/28 June	45.5	29.0	10.0	13.0+	2.5	+ 16.5	23.0
30 June/5 July	45.0	25.5	12.5	15.0+	2.0	+ 19.5	27.5
7/12 July	46.5	27.5	7.5	16.5+	2.0	+ 19.0**	24.0
14/19 July	44.0	27.5	8.5	18.0+	2.0	+ 16.5	26.5
21/26 July	39.0	30.5	10.0	17.5+	3.0	+ 8.5	27.5
28 July/2 Aug	43.5	30.0	8.5	16.0+	2.0	+ 13.5	24.5
4/9 Aug	46.0	28.0	9.0	13.5+	3.5	+18.0	22.5
11/16 Aug	44.5	26.5	10.5	17.0+	1.5	+18.0**	27.5
18/23 Aug	45.5	27.0	9.0	16.5+	2.0	+18.5	25.5
25/30 Aug	40.0	32.0	11.5	15.0+	1.5	+ 8.0	26.5
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

* First Gallup Post-Election survey

** Published Polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance

2. Government Record

The latest study found 38% approving of the record of the Government to date, 48% disapproving and 14% not having a view. Since the end of August the proportion approving of the record of the Government has varied between 36% and 41%. Details are shown in the table below:-

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<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
3/8 Feb	26	63	11
10/15 Feb	24	66	10
17/22 Feb	22	66	13
24 Feb/1 March	23	63	13
3/8 March	24	65	11
11/15 March	29	59	12
17/22 March	28	60	13
24/29 March	29	58	13
31 March/ 5 April	31	57	12
7/12 April	32	56	12
13/19 April	34	54	12
21/26 April	34	55	11
28 April/3 May	40	47	13
5/10 May	42	46	12
12/17 May	43	42	15
19/24 May	46	44	10
26/31 May	50	38	12
2/7 June	49	39	12
9/14 June	48	40	12
16/21 June	51	36	13
23/28 June	47	41	12
30 June/5 July	47	39	14
7/12 July	47	41	12
14/19 July	44	43	13
21/26 July	43	45	12
28 July/2 Aug	43	43	15
4/9 Aug	42	45	12
11/16 Aug	42	44	14
18/23 Aug	43	43	14
25/30 Aug	37	52	11
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

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest 'tracking' study found almost no change in the popularity of Mrs Thatcher or Mr Foot. It found 45% of the electorate claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister and only 23% claiming to be satisfied with Mr Foot as leader of the Opposition. Mr Steel's popularity improved slightly. Details are shown in the table below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</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>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
7/8 Feb	31	65	4	20	63	17	61	20	19
10/15 Feb	29	66	5	19	66	15	59	23	17
17/22 Feb	29	65	5	20	64	16	58	20	21
24 Feb/1 March	32	63	5	21	64	15	55	23	22
3/8 March	30	66	4	20	64	16	58	24	18
11/15 March	34	62	4	21	65	14	58	22	10
17/22 March	33	62	5	22	64	14	59	21	20
24/29 March	35	59	6	19	65	15	61	20	19
31 March/5 April	37	58	5	20	65	15	60	22	18
7/12 April	35	60	5	23	61	16	63	18	19
13/19 April	36	60	5	28	59	14	63	18	19
21/26 April	37	59	4	26	60	14	66	17	17
28 April/3 May	41	53	6	24	65	12	62	20	18
5/10 May	44	51	6	18	71	11	64	20	17
12/17 May	48	47	5	17	71	12	65	18	17
19/24 May	47	48	5	18	72	10	63	18	19
26/31 May	50	43	7	16	75	10	64	18	19
2/7 June	53	42	5	15	74	5	61	21	18
9/14 June	51	44	5	14	75	11	62	21	18
16/21 June	55	40	5	17	74	9	58	20	20
23/28 June	52	42	5	14	75	10	62	19	20
30 June/5 July	53	41	6	14	77	9	64	18	18
7/12 July	52	43	5	16	72	12	61	20	19
14/19 July	49	46	5	14	75	11	60	18	21
21/26 July	47	47	6	15	74	11	59	21	20
28 July/2 Aug	48	46	6	14	75	11	62	18	20
4/9 Aug	48	47	5	12	73	12	60	20	20
11/16 Aug	49	47	4	15	74	11	62	19	19
18/23 Aug	49	46	5	13	74	13	58	21	21
25/30 Aug	44	50	6	18	72	10	61	19	20
1/ Sept	49	45	6	14	74	12	59	20	21
8/13 Sept	48	47	5	16	74	10	59	21	20
15/21 Sept	46	49	6	14	73	12	62	19	19
22/27 Sept	46	50	4	16	74	11	64	20	16
29 Sept/4 Oct	44	51	5	27	60	13	64	19	17
6/11 Oct	46	48	6	25	62	13	62	22	17
13/18 Oct	45	50	5	23	66	11	56	25	19

4. Published Polls

a) Central TV

A Central TV poll conducted in Northfield found a small Conservative lead over Labour. It is not clear what techniques had been used to conduct the survey and the results must be viewed with caution.

b) MORI (Evening Standard 19th Oct 1982)

In addition to the voting intention question considered above the MORI poll in the Evening Standard (conducted 7/12 Oct) included a number of other questions.

In terms of the most important issues they found the electorate mentioning the following:-

	%
Unemployment	88
Prices	29
Defence/foreign affairs	16
Law and order	13
Health Service	13
Trade Unions	11.

c) NOP (Observer 24th Oct 1982)

The Observer on 24th October included details of a NOP poll conducted on 19th and 20th October. In addition to the voting intention question considered above the survey found a clear majority of the electorate wanted to cancel Trident (32% wanted to buy it). It found 47% wanted U.S. nuclear bases closed - 39% wanted them left.

46% wanted no further de-nationalization and 42% wanted more de-nationalization.

More than half (52%) think the Government should recommend voluntary guidelines for wage increases; 25% wanted a statutory incomes policy and 16% did not think the Government should attempt to control pay at all.