

Weekend box

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 109
(produced 19th April 1982)

1. Introduction

The results from our latest 'tracking' study are the same as the results of the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday, 15th April 1982. The interviewing for this latest study was conducted from 7th to 12th April and Gallup interviewed over 900 electors throughout Great Britain. The latest tracking study found 31½% claiming they would vote Conservative, 29% Labour, 26% Social Democrat and 11% Liberal. This compares with the previous published Gallup poll (conducted 11/15 March) which found 31½% claiming they would vote Conservative, 33% Labour, 21½% Social Democrat and 11½% Liberal. When we compare the results of this latest published study with our previous (unpublished) tracking study (conducted 31 March/ 5 April) we found no change in the level of Social Democrat support (26% in both studies), a very marginal increase in Liberal support (up from 10% to 11%), a small support (up from 27% to 29%). The combined level of Liberal and Social Democrat support of 37% remains far short of the peak of 51½% reached just before Christmas. Details of the trend in support for the main parties since early June are shown on the following page.

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</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>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	-2.5**	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/+5 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

*First Gallup post-Election survey

** Published Polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the 'Alliance'

2. Government Record

The study found a further slight improvement in the popularity of the Government - 32% approved of the record of the Government, 56% disapproved and 12% did not have a view. The 32% who approved in the latest study compares with 18% who approved the record of the Government just before Christmas 1981. Details of the trend in approval for the record of the Government 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
3/8 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

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest study found a slight fall in Mrs Thatcher's popularity - down to 35% satisfied with her as Prime Minister. The survey found a slight improvement in Mr Foot's popularity and Mr Steel's popularity. 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
3/8 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/1st 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

4. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 15th April 1982)

The Daily Telegraph on 15th April 1982, in addition to the results of our 'tracking' study also included the results of a number of other questions.

Gallup included the results of the standard question on what electors regard as the most urgent problems facing the country. They found:-

	<u>Top Issue</u>	<u>Top Two Issues</u>
	%	%
Unemployment	47	74
International affairs - the Falklands	27	38
Cost of living	8	25
Defence	3	8

Not since November 1961, following the isolation of Berlin by the Wall has international affairs featured so high in terms of importance.

Gallup asked respondents whether they saw the various parties as being united or divided - they found:-

	<u>United</u>	<u>Divided</u>	<u>No Answer/Don't know</u>
Labour (%)	9	87	5
Conservative (%)	43	49	9
Liberals & Social Democrats (%)	47	31	23

When asked who they thought would be the best leader of the Social Democrats - 38% selected Roy Jenkins, 26% Shirley Williams, 19% David Owen and 2% William Rodgers.

When asked who they thought would make the best leader of the Alliance between the Social Democrats and the Liberals, 35% selected David Steel, 27% Roy Jenkins, 13% Shirley Williams, 8% David Owen and 1% William Rodgers.

(b) MORI (The Economist 17th April 1982)

The Economist on 17th April 1982 included the results of an MORI opinion poll conducted on April 14th on attitudes to the Falkland Islands crisis.

MORI asked 'Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Labour Party is responding to the Government's handling of the situation in the Falkland Islands?' MORI found 40% claiming to be satisfied, 39% dissatisfied and 21% with no view.

They also asked 'Do you think Mrs Thatcher should resign as Prime Minister over the situation in the Falkland Islands or not?' - 62% thought she should not resign, 34% should resign and 4% did not know.

On the question of sovereignty, MORI asked respondents 'How much do you personally care whether Britain regains sovereignty over the Falkland Islands or not?' They found 51% claiming to 'care very much', 32% 'care a little', 14% 'don't care at all' and 3% did not have a view.

MORI put to respondents a range of possible government reactions to the Falkland Islands situation. They found:-

Should Britain take/have taken the following measures over the Falkland Islands Situation

	<u>Percentage saying Yes</u>
Ban Argentinian imports into Britain	84
Send the naval task force to the Falklands	83
Freeze Argentinian assets in British banks	82
Sever diplomatic relations with Argentina	71
Land troops on the Falklands	67
Sink Argentinian ships in Falkland waters	52
Allow UN to take over administration of the Falklands	45
Bomb Argentinian military and naval bases	28
Land troops/invoke the Argentinian mainland	21

When the idea of 'the islands becoming Argentinian territory but leased back to the British Government for administration' was put to respondents only 26% were in favour and 63% against. However when the idea that 'retaining British sovereignty over the islands is important enough to justify the loss of British servicemen's lives', 49% said no and 44% yes. When asked whether retaining sovereignty justified the possible loss of Falkland Islanders' lives, say in a forced landing, 55% felt sovereignty was not that full.

58% claimed that the issue of our sovereignty over the Falklands is 'important enough to pay increased taxes to maintain military and naval forces to protect them', 36% that it is not that important.

MORI asked respondents what they thought the outcome of the crisis would be - only 6% expected defeat, 50% expected hostilities to be necessary for re-occupation and 20% expected the islands to be returned without a fight.

(c) Gallup (Sunday Telegraph 18th April 1982)

The Sunday Telegraph on 18th April included the results of a Gallup poll conducted from 10th to 13th April on attitudes to the Falkland Islands dispute. Gallup asked 'The Government have been criticised for being caught off-guard by the Argentinian invasion of the Falkland Islands. Do you think this criticism is justified or not?' 78% thought the criticism is justified (including 74% of Conservative supporters, 77% of Labour supporters, 82% of Liberal supporters and 86% of SDP supporters), 14% not justified and 8% did not have a view.

78% of respondents approved of the decision to send a British fleet to the Falklands, 16% disapproved and 6% did not have a view.

When asked about their attitudes in general to the Government's handling of the Falkland Islands crisis 67% approved of the Government's handling, 24% disapproved and 9% did not have a view.

Gallup put to respondents some options with regard to our actions over the Falkland Islands. They found 61% approving of 'attacking the Argentine ships and troops guarding the Falkland Islands' - 32% disapproved and 7% did not have a view. 68% disapproved of the idea of attacking mainland Argentina - 24% approved and 8% did not have a view. 86% approved of the idea of cutting of all trade with Argentina - 9% disapproved and 5% did not have a view.