

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND 119  
(produced 27th June 1982)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study was conducted from 16th to 21st June and Gallup interviewed over 900 electors throughout Great Britain. The survey found 49% claiming they would vote Conservative (45% 9/14 June), 24% Labour (25% 9/14 June), 15½% Social Democrat (18½% 9/14 June) and 10% Liberal (10% 9/14 June). Since the start of January 1982 Conservative support has almost doubled from 25½% (6/11 January) to 49% in the latest study. Labour support has fallen from 30% to 24%, Liberal support is down from 17% to 10% and Social Democrat support down from 25% to 15½%. Full details are shown in the table below.

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

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL &amp; SOCIAL</u>
	%	%	%	<u>DEMOCRAT</u>	%	(CON over LAB)	<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	+11.0	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

\* First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published Polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance

The table below shows the level of support for the Parties among the main socio-economic groups:-

(a) SEX

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
	%	%
Conservative	45	45
Labour	23	21
Liberal	7	12
Social Democrat	15	12
Others	2	2
Don't knows	9	9

Support for the Conservatives stands at 45% among men and 45% among women. Labour support is higher among men than women, Liberal support is higher among women than men and Social Democrat support higher among men than women.

(b) AGE

	<u>18-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	40	47	47	50
Labour	25	20	21	20
Liberal	8	12	10	10
Social Democrat	16	9	12	14
Others	2	1	3	0
Don't knows	10	10	9	6

Conservative support is lowest in the 18-34 age group in which 40% claimed they would vote Conservative. Among the 35-44 age group 47% claimed they would vote Conservative, 47% in the 45-64 age group and 50% in the 65+ age group. Labour support is largest in the 18-34 age group.

(c) CLASS

	<u>ABC1</u>	<u>C2</u>	<u>DE</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	59	39	32
Labour	11	26	33
Liberal	10	8	11
Social Democrat	15	13	11
Others	2	0	3
Don't knows	4	13	10

In the ABC1 group 59% claimed they would vote Conservative, among the C2 group 39% claimed they would vote Conservative and among the DE group 32% claimed they would vote Conservative. 33% of the DE group claimed they would vote Labour, 26% of the C2 group and 11% of the ABC1 group. Liberal support is fairly evenly spread among social class groups - 10% of the ABC1 claimed they would vote Liberal, 8% of the C2 group and 11% of the DE class group. Social Democrat support is highest in the ABC1 group (15%), followed by the C2 group (13%) and the DE group (11%).

(d) TRADE UNIONISTS

	<u>Trade</u>	<u>Non-Trade</u>
	<u>Unionists</u>	<u>Unionists</u>
	%	%
Conservative	42	46
Labour	26	20
Liberal	7	11
Social Democrat	13	13
Others	3	2
Don't Know	9	9

Conservative support is slightly higher among non-trade unionists than among trade unionists. 42% of trade unionists claimed they would vote Conservative compared with 46% of non-trade unionists. Labour support is higher among trade unionists (26%) than among non-trade unionists (20%). Liberal support is higher among non-trade unionists. Social Democrat support is the same in both groups.

## 2. Government Record

The popularity of the Government in the latest study is the highest in any study since May 1979 - 51% claimed to approve of the record of the Government, 36% disapproved and 13% did not have a view. Details of the trend 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>			
11 January	23	65	12
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
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

## 3. Popularity of Political Leaders:-

The last published Gallup study conducted 9/14 June found 51% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister. This compares with the result of our latest 'tracking' study (conducted 16/21 June) which found 55% satisfied with Mrs Thatcher. Mr Foot's popularity remains low - 17% thought he is a good leader of the opposition, 74% that he is not a good leader and 9% did not have a view. Mr Steel's popularity fell slightly. Details of the trend are shown overleaf.

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
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
13/19 April	36	60	5	26	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

4. Published Polls(a) NOP (Observer 27th June 1982)

The Observer on 27th June 1982 included the results of an NOP poll conducted on 25th June 1982 on attitudes to the election for leader of the Social Democrats. Among the electorate NOP found almost half (47%) wanting to see David Owen as the SDP leader, 24% preferred Roy Jenkins, 12% replied 'neither' and 13% did not have a view. Among Alliance supporters 57% voted David Owen as Leader and only 33% Roy Jenkins.

NOP looked at the reasons for David Owen's popularity in a question asking respondents which of a list of adjectives they would apply to the two M.P.'s. David Owen won on intelligence (43%, against 32% for Roy Jenkins), businesslike (32%, against 24% for Roy Jenkins), fair (32%, against 19% for Roy Jenkins), honest (23%, against 16% for Roy Jenkins) and patriotic (18%, against 13% for Roy Jenkins)

Roy Jenkins got more votes for being smug (21%, against 10% for David Owen), out of touch (19%, against 6% for David Owen) and arrogant (15%, against 11% for David Owen). He came out ahead on only one positive quality: experience (47% against 21% for David Owen).

David Owen is preferred as SDP leader by Conservative votes; 49% favoured him compared with 38% for Roy Jenkins, while Roy Jenkins is slightly more popular among Labour votes; 32% against 27% for David Owen.

The NOP survey also investigated the question of who should become joint leader of the Liberal/SDP alliance. Here the Liberal leader David Steel comes out well ahead with exactly 50% among the electorate against 20% for David Owen and 16% for Roy Jenkins.

(b) MORI (The Economist 26th June 1982)

The Economist on 26th June 1982 included details of a MORI survey conducted on 21-23rd June on attitudes to the Falklands Islands dispute. The survey which is based on a panel study involved a telephone re-interview of a 'panel' of electors set up for the Economist. The survey found 51% claimed they would vote Conservative, 24% Labour and 23% Liberal SDP Alliance. MORI asked respondents 'Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Government is now handling the situation in the Falklands Islands'. 84% claimed to be satisfied with the Government's handling of the situation in the Falkland Islands.

MORI asked respondents '250 British servicemen have lost their lives recapturing the Falklands and the operation is estimated to have cost £1 billion. Given the cost in lives and money, do you think Britain should have sent the Task Force or not?' They found 76% thought we should have sent the Task Force, 22% we should not have sent it and 2% did not have a view.

On the question of the cost of the operation MORI asked 'Do you think that retaining British sovereignty over the Falklands is important enough to pay increased taxes to maintain military and naval forces to protect them'. 71% claimed that the Falklands are important enough, 24% they are not and 5% did not have a view.

MORI asked 'How satisfied are you with the support the United States has given Britain during the Falkland Islands dispute? Would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied'. 9% claimed to be 'very satisfied', 54% 'fairly satisfied', 25% 'not very satisfied', 10% 'not at all satisfied' and 2% did not have a view.

MORI presented respondents with three options for the long-term settlement of the Falkland Islands situation. They found:-

	<u>Acceptable</u> <u>May 29th</u>	<u>Acceptable</u> <u>June 21-23</u>
The Falklands should become Argentine sovereign territory but leased back to the British Government for administration (%)	21	11
The United Nations should take over trusteeship of the Islands (%)	51	39
British sovereignty of the Falklands should be retained backed up by British military and naval presence (%)	70	77

Support for any of the three solutions apart for retaining British sovereignty backed by military force has fallen since late May.

MORI found 72% of the British electorate wanting the Falkland Islanders to have the final say over the islands sovereignty. 46% would support a reduction in Britain's NATO commitment of men and money in order to be able to finance the defence of the Islands.

(c) ORC (Published 23rd June 1982)

News at Ten on 23rd June 1982 included details of an ORC poll conducted for ORAC and British Rail on attitudes to the rail dispute. The survey was conducted on 17th June and ORC interviewed more than 1,000 electors. ORC introduced the survey by telling respondents 'BR have offered their workers a 5% pay increase starting September 1982 providing they bring

in a number of productivity improvements to pay for the rise. BR say that they cannot afford more than that; that they will not ask the Government to provide any more, and that if the Unions do not agree the offer will be withdrawn'.

ORC asked 'Could you tell me whether you think BR is telling the truth or is not telling the truth when they say they cannot afford more than 5%'. 50% thought BR is telling the truth (47% of trade union members), 34% thought BR is not telling the truth (37% of trade union members)

81% of respondents (79% of trade union members) thought the Government should not raise the extra money from tax payers if BR unions strike for more money.

73% of respondents (61% of trade union members) thought that the unions should accept the BR pay offer.

ORC asked 'If there is a strike do you think that the Unions will win or the Management will win or both sides will lose and nobody gain anything?' 19% (22% trade unionists) thought the unionists will win, 12% thought Management will win (12% of Trade Unions) and 62% (58% of Trade Unionists) thought both sides will lose.

61% (49% of trade unionists) thought the Government should be taking a tough line with the railways if the strike goes ahead.

ORC asked 'Bearing in mind the fact that BR is heavily in the red and losing hundreds of millions of pounds a year, do you think their pay offer is fair, or bearing in mind that 5% is well below the rate of inflation do you think it is an unfair offer?' 64% (52% of Trade Unionists) thought it is a fair offer and 30% (41% of trade Unionists) thought it is an unfair offer.