

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 106

(29th March 1982)

1. Introduction

Gallup completed the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study on 22nd March - two days before the Glasgow Hillhead by-election. The study found the first Conservative lead over both the Alliance (Social Democrat plus Liberal) and the Labour Party since the emergence of the Alliance in early 1981. The survey found a continuation of the upward drift in the level of Conservative support that we have been finding since late February. This study found 34% claiming they will vote Conservative (26½% 17/22 Feb), 30% Labour (33½% 17/22 Feb), 11% Liberal (14% 17/22 Feb) and 21% Social Democrat (22% 17/22 Feb).

If the pattern of national support for the parties we found after the Social Democrat victory at Crosby is repeated after Hillhead, we can expect some improvement in the Alliance position in our next tracking study which will have been conducted largely after the Hillhead by-election. The table on the following page shows details of the trend in support for the main parties since early June 1981. It would be noted that it excludes 'don't knows'.



## VOTING INTENTION ----

(unprompted question, excluding don't knows)

|                | <u>CON</u> | <u>LAB</u> | <u>LIB</u> | <u>SOCIAL</u><br><u>DEMOCRAT</u> | <u>OTHER</u> | <u>LEAD</u> | <u>LIBERAL &amp; SOCIAL</u><br><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   |
| 11/15 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   |

\* First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published polls

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

2. Government Record

The latest tracking study found almost no change in the level of approval of the record of the Government - 28% approved and 60% disapproved. Details are shown below:-



GOVERNMENT RECORD

|                        | <u>Approve</u><br>% | <u>Disapprove</u><br>% | <u>Don't know</u><br>% |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <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                     |

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

As with the standard question on attitudes to the record of the Government, our tracking question on attitudes to the leaders of the three main parties showed almost no change in our latest study. 33% claimed to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister (62% dissatisfied), 64% thought Mr Foot is not a good leader of the Opposition (22% thought he is) and 59% thought Mr Steel is a good leader of the Liberals (21% thought he is not).



## 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           |

4. Published Polls(a) N.O.P. (Daily Mail 24th March 1982)

The Daily Mail on 24th March included the results of an N.O.P. poll on attitudes to law and order conducted on 21/22 March.

They found that eight out of ten people believe that sentences for violent crimes are not tough enough. N.O.P. found 57% thought this had contributed a great deal to the increase in violent crime and another 34% thought that lighter penalties have contributed 'a fair amount' to the rise in the crime figures. N.O.P. found that 88% of the electorate believe that the present penalties for rape are not tough enough and nearly half believe there should be a jail sentence of 10 years or more.



When asked about Willie Whitelaw, N.O.P. found that 67% thought he is being too soft and that 21% thought he is handling violent crime about right. Of those who were critical of him 47% thought he should quit.

When N.O.P. asked voters which group they believe could do more to support the police they found:-

|                         | %  |
|-------------------------|----|
| The Public              | 51 |
| Judges and Magistrates  | 38 |
| The Government          | 28 |
| Black Community Leaders | 19 |
| Local Government        | 16 |
| Social Workers          | 15 |
| Church Leaders          | 8  |
| Labour MP's             | 7  |
| Liberal/SDP MP's        | 8  |

N.O.P. found that 43% of electors thought the law and order situation had got worse since Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister while 45% thought that having Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister has made no difference. Only 6% thought there had been some improvement. When asked which item electors thought had most contributed to the increase in violent crime N.O.P. found:-

|   | %  |
|---|----|
| Unemployment  | 61 |
| Lack of parental control  | 59 |
| Less discipline in schools  | 47 |
| Criminals less frightened of being caught                               | 38 |
| Sex and violence on TV and films  | 35 |
| Greater public acceptance of people committing vice and going to prison | 17 |
| Government handling of law and order                                    | 13 |
| Sex and violence in pop music   | 12 |
| Police methods  |    |

When N.O.P. asked what they thought would be the single most effective way to reduce violent crimes they found:-

|                              | %  |
|------------------------------|----|
| Capital punishment           | 33 |
| Corporal punishment          | 21 |
| More police on the beat      | 14 |
| Reduced unemployment         | 11 |
| Police support by the public | 8  |
| Longer prison sentences      | 6  |
| More coloured policemen      | 2  |
| Changed police methods       | 2  |
| Improved housing             | 1  |
| Don't know                   | 2  |

(b) MORI (BBC Radio 12th March 1982)

MORI conducted a poll on attitudes to the Common Market on 10th March 1982. They asked 'If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay or get out of the Common Market, how would you vote?' They found 36% claiming they would vote to stay in, 55% to get out and 9% did not have a view.



MORI then put to respondents a range of statements about Britain and the Common Market. The main findings from these questions are summarised below:-

Q. Do you think Britain's Membership of the Common Market over the past few years has or has not ...

|   | <u>Has</u> | <u>Has Not</u> | <u>Don't know</u> |
|---|------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Made Britain more prosperous than it would have been (%)  | 14         | 74             | 12                |
| Reduced Britain's control over her own destiny (%)        | 63         | 25             | 13                |
| Increased the political stability of Europe (%)           | 43         | 37             | 20                |
| Made food prices go up more than they would have done (%) | 85         | 8              | 7                 |

MORI found 74% thought that our membership of the Common Market has not made us more prosperous. 63% thought our membership has reduced our control over our destiny. On the question of our membership leading to increased political stability in Europe, MORI found the electorate divided - 43% thought it had and 37% that had not. 85% thought our membership has made food prices go up more than they would have done.

On the question of Britain's contribution to the EEC budget only 17% agreed with the view that our contribution is fair, 65% disagreed and 18% did not have a view.

On the question of Mrs Thatcher's handling of the Common Market Budget negotiations, 47% thought she has handled them well, 33% badly and 20% did not have a view.

MORI also asked whether respondents knew the name of their Euro-MP - only 12% could name him (or her), 88% could not.

MORI finished the research by asking 'If there were a General Election tomorrow and the Labour Party was the only Party in favour of Britain withdrawing from the Common Market, which Party would you vote for'. 30% said Conservative, 37% Labour, 6% Liberal, 13% Alliance and the remainder for 'other' parties or claiming they would not vote.

(c) Opinion Research Centre (Weekend World 28th March 1982)

Weekend World on 28th March included the results of an Opinion Research Centre poll conducted on Friday 26th March. The survey was conducted across the whole of Great Britain and did not show signs of any 'bandwagon' movement to the Social Democrats. It found in terms of voting intention - Conservative 33%, Labour 32%, Liberal and Alliance 32% and others 2%. ORC found a large protest vote with 73% claiming they would vote alliance as protest vote and only 23% because they liked the leaders and policies. ORC found protest voters much weaker in their support for the Alliance than those claiming they would vote Alliance because of policies and leaders.