

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 101  
(produced 21st February 1982)

1. Introduction

The results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are the same as the results of the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on 18th February. The interviewing for this study was conducted from 10th to 15th February and Gallup found 27½% claiming they would vote Conservative (compared with 27½% in the previous published Gallup poll conducted 13/18 January), 34% Labour (29½% in previous published poll), 14½% Liberal (13% in previous published poll) and 21½% Social Democrat (26½% in previous published poll).

Looking at the results of the latest study in terms of the trend of support for the main parties in our weekly unpublished tracking studies, Conservative support has increased slightly since the start of the year - up from 23% 9/14 December to 27½% 10/15 February. In terms of past trend, it is back to the level it was in late October 1981. Labour support has increased by over 10 percentage points since the end of 1981 - up from 23½% (9/14 December) to 34% (10/15 February). Liberal support in the latest study remains unchanged when compared with our last study in 1981 - 14½% at both times. Social Democrat support has collapsed from 36% (9/14 December) to 21½% in the latest study (10/15 February). This puts them back at the level of support they had in early October 1981. It would be reasonable to assume that the drop in Social Democrat support and the rise in Labour support has involved a switch from Social Democrat to Labour.

The downward trend in support for the Social Democrats that we found in our tracking study was confirmed by a Marplan survey conducted in late January which found 34% claiming they will vote Conservative, 32% Labour and 29% for the two Alliance parties.

Please see the following page for details.



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 DEMOCRAT</u>
1979	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
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	-2.0**	39.5
20/25 Jan	30.0	27.0	14.0	26.5	2.5	+3.0	40.5
27Jan/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

\* First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published polls

## 2. Government Record

Our latest study found a slight fall in the level of approval of the record of the Government. We found 24% approving of our record and 66% disapproving. Details are shown on the following page.

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
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

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest 'tracking' study found a slight fall in the popularity of the leaders of all three political parties. 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- sat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
<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

4. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 18th February 1982)

In addition to the standard questions on voting intention, the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on 18th February and conducted 10/15 February the survey included the standard Gallup question on what electors regard as the most urgent problems facing the country. Details of the findings are shown below:-

	<u>Most Urgent Problems Facing the Country</u>				
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Social Democrat</u>
	%	Supporters %	Supporters %	Supporters %	Supporters %
Unemployment	86	85	86	89	91
Cost of living/ prices	33	26	36	40	35
Other economic problems/taxation	10	12	7	9	13
Housing/Rates/ Mortgages	6	3	9	6	5
Strikes/trade unions	6	10	3	3	6
Defence/nuclear weapons	6	3	7	4	9
Pensions	5	5	7	5	3
Law and Order	5	10	1	6	4

Looking forward to the Budget in three weeks' time, one in two (46 per cent) think the Government will increase taxation, while 15 percent think it will be decreased. The remainder either think taxes will be left as they are (35 per cent) or are undecided ( 4 per cent).

One in two (49 per cent) of the public would prefer Government services to be extended even if more taxes had to be imposed as a consequence, 26 per cent would like to leave things as they are, and 21 per cent would cut taxes even if this mean cuts in services.

Gallup then asked people whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements relating to the Government's taxation policy.

% Agreeing with Statements

	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Feb</u>
	1982	1981	1981	1980
	%	%	%	%
The rich get richer, the poor poorer	76	70	69	66
Not fair to the lower paid	65	66	59	56
They look after the middle classes	53	47	55	58
People who want to work will gain	48	47	45	54
They've given a bit to everyone	30	26	38	51
They try to give you the money you have earned	26	23	33	40
They are giving people the incentive to work harder	25	18	27	38

(b) Marplan (BBC Newsnight 19th February 1982)

A Marplan poll conducted at the end of January found 34% claiming they will vote Conservative, 32% Labour and 29% Alliance. Marplan found 65% in favour of the introduction of proportional representation.