

Public Opinion Background Note 131(produced 19th September 1982)1. Introduction

The results of our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are the same as those published in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday 16th September. The interviewing for the survey was conducted from 8th to 13th September and Gallup interviewed 971 electors throughout Great Britain. The survey found 44% claiming they would vote Conservative, 30½% Labour, 14½% Social Democrat, 8½% Liberal and 2½% for 'other' parties. When we compare the results of this published study with the findings of our previous unpublished 'tracking' study conducted from 1st to 6th September we find almost no change in the level of support for the main parties. Our previous study had found 43½% claiming they would vote Conservative, 28½% Labour, 17% Social Democrat 8% Liberal and 3% for 'other' parties.

Looking back on the results of previous published Gallup surveys since June we find a remarkable constant level of Conservative support, a slow upward drift of Labour support and a slow downward drift in Social Democrat support. Details of the trend in support for the parties as found in published Gallup polls are shown below:-

Published Gallup Polls

| | <u>Sept</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>July</u> | <u>June</u> |
|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Conservative | 44 | 44½ | 46½ | 45 |
| Labour | 30½ | 26½ | 27½ | 25 |
| SDP | 11 | 17 | 16½ | 18½ |
| Liberal | 12 | 10½ | 7½ | 10 |
| Others | 2½ | 1½ | 2 | 1½ |

It is interesting to compare the results of the latest Gallup survey with the results of the first Gallup survey conducted in 1982 (6/11 January) which found 25½% claiming they would vote Conservative, 30% Labour, 25% Social Democrat, 17% Liberal and 2½% for 'other' parties. Support for the Conservative Party has increased 18½ percentage points, Labour support is almost exactly the same, Liberal support is down 8½ percentage points and Social Democrat support is down 10½ percentage points.

The trend of support for the main parties since January 1982 as found in the weekly Gallup surveys are shown in the table over:-

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

| | <u>CON</u> | <u>LAB</u> | <u>LIB</u> | <u>SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT | <u>OTH</u> | <u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab | <u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| <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 |

* First Gallup post-Election survey

** Published Polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

2. Government Record

The latest study found almost no change in the level of approval for the record of the Government when compared with our previous unpublished study. This latest survey found 40% approving of our record, 48% disapproving and 13% not having a view. This compares with 23% approving of our record and 65% disapproving at the start of the year.

Details of the trend of approval/disapproval for the record of the Government since the start of the year 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>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 |

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Although Mrs Thatcher's popularity has dropped slightly from the peak reached during the Falklands Crisis it still remains high when compared with the results of surveys conducted at the start of the year. The latest study found 48% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister, 47% dissatisfied and 5% not having a view. This compares with the results of the first 'tracking' study conducted in 1982 which found 30% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister, and 65% dissatisfied.

Mr Foot's popularity remains extremely low - only 16% of the electorate claimed to be satisfied with Mr Foot as leader of the opposition, 74% dissatisfied and 10% did not have a view.

Mr Steel's popularity remains high - 59% approved of his record as leader of the Liberals, 21% dissatisfied and 20% did not have a view.

Details of the trend of approval/disapproval for the leaders of the three parties since the start of the year 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>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/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 | 19 |
| 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 | 23 | 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 | 9 | 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 | 6 | 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 | 18 |
| 14/19 July | 49 | 46 | 5 | 14 | 75 | 11 | 60 | 18 | 21 |
| 21/26 July | 47 | 47 | 6 | 18 | 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 | 16 | 72 | 10 | 61 | 19 | 20 |
| 1/ Sept | 49 | 46 | 5 | 14 | 71 | 12 | 60 | 20 | 21 |
| 8/13 Sept | 48 | 47 | 5 | 16 | 74 | 10 | 59 | 21 | 20 |

4. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 16th Sept 1982)

In addition to the standard 'tracking' questions included in the Daily Telegraph on 16th September the survey also included details of the results from a range of other questions.

Gallup asked Alliance supporters how likely it was that they would vote for the Alliance if it was represented by a Liberal candidate and an SDP candidate. The following tables show the replies to these two questions analysed by Liberal and SDP supporters from Gallup's standard voting question:-

| | <u>Liberal Candidate</u> | | <u>SDP Candidate</u> | |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | Vote Liberal % | Vote SDP % | Vote Liberal % | Vote SDP % |
| <u>Based on All who would vote for Alliance</u> | | | | |
| Definitely vote | 72 | 52 | 41 | 74 |
| Probably vote | 21 | 37 | 28 | 26 |
| Probably not | 0 | 5 | 9 | 0 |
| Definitely not | 3 | 2 | 11 | 0 |
| Don't know | 4 | 4 | 11 | 0 |

The tables show a distinct reluctance on the part of the supporters from both wings of the Alliance to give whole-hearted support to a candidate not of their own party. For example, only 52% of SDP supporters would definitely vote for the Alliance if it were to be represented by a Liberal candidate; while even fewer (41%) Liberals would definitely vote for an SDP candidate.

Gallup also asked the standard question with regard to what the electorate regarded as the most urgent problems facing the country. They found:-

| | <u>Most Urgent Problems</u> | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | <u>All</u> % | <u>Conservative</u> <u>Supporters</u> % | <u>Labour</u> <u>Supporters</u> % | <u>Liberal</u> <u>Supporters</u> % | <u>Alliance/SDP</u> <u>Supporters</u> % |
| Unemployment | 89 | 88 | 90 | 88 | 94 |
| Cost of Living/ prices | 27 | 29 | 28 | 20 | 24 |
| Law and Order | 9 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 7 |
| Health/Hospitals | 8 | 6 | 8 | 18 | 8 |
| Strikes/Trade Unions | 8 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 9 |
| Other Economic problems | 7 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 5 |

Gallup asked 'Do you think there should be a General Election in the near future or should the Government carry on - 43% thought there should be an election soon, 53% that the Government should carry on and 3% did not have a view. They also asked 'Irrespective of how you, yourself, will vote, who do you think will win the next General Election? - 58% thought the Conservatives, 19% Labour, 3% Social Democrats and 1% the Liberals.

Gallup asked for each of the parties whether respondents thought the main parties are united or divided at the present time. They found:-

| | <u>United/Divided Party</u> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | % |
| <u>Labour Party</u> | |
| United | 8 |
| Divided | 88 |
| Don't know | 4 |
| <u>Conservative Party</u> | |
| United | 67 |
| Divided | 26 |
| Don't know | 7 |
| <u>Alliance</u> | |
| United | 43 |
| Divided | 29 |
| Don't know | 28 |

(b) MORI (The Daily Star 16th Sept 1982)

The Daily Star on 16th September conducted details of a MORI survey conducted in Gower on 14th September. The survey found 48% claiming they would vote Labour, 22% Conservative, 22% Alliance and 8% Plaid Cymru.

(c) MORI (New Statesman 10th September 1982)

The New Statesman on 10th September 1982 included details of a MORI survey conducted between 19 and 24 August 1982. MORI asked respondents which party they thought had the best policies on a number of issues. They found:-

Party having best policies on each of the
following issues?

| | <u>All voters saying</u> | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| | <u>Con</u> | <u>Lab</u> | <u>Lib</u> | <u>SDP</u> | <u>Don't know</u> |
| Unemployment (%) | 22 | 32 | 6 | 3 | 36 |
| Prices inflation (%) | 44 | 19 | 4 | 2 | 29 |
| Pay/wages (%) | 35 | 26 | 5 | 2 | 31 |
| Trade unions/ Industrial relation (%) | 29 | 32 | 4 | 3 | 30 |
| Law and Order(%) | 45 | 14 | 4 | 2 | 35 |

(d) MORI Panorama 20th September 1982)

The BBC Panorama programme on 20th September included details of a MORI poll which found 47% claiming they would vote Conservative, 37% Labour and 14% for the Alliance.

(e) NOP (BUPA 16th September 1982)

BUPA released on 16th September the results of a NOP poll on attitudes to trade unions conducted between 13th and 18th May 1982. The survey found that most members of trade unions (64%) as well as most members of the public (61%) believe that unions should not be actively involved in party politics. A large majority of union members (81%) and the public (72%) also feel that union members should have some say as to which political party their levy is paid. The survey also found that 59% of union members and 53% of the public also believe that unions should not be working to get a Labour Government elected in 1984. 82% of trade unionists interviewed as well as 72% of the public agreed with the view that many union leaders tend to be out of touch with their members. 54% of both union members and the public agreed that on the whole trade union leaders were well to the left of their members.