

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 112  
(produced 10th May 1982)

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 28th April to 3rd May over a period when events in the Falkland Islands conflict were rapidly developing, but before the Sheffield was hit. The study found 37% claiming they would vote Conservative (31½% 21/26 April), 30½% Labour (33% 21/26 April), 11% Liberal (10½% 21/26 April) and 20% Social Democrat (24½% 21/26 April). These latest results, although showing a fall in support for the Conservative Party since the MORI poll conducted on 30th April show a substantial increase in support since the start of the year. In early January 1982 25½% of the electorate claimed they would vote Conservative, 30% Labour, 17% Liberal and 25% Social Democrat.

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 AND 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>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 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	40.0
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

\* First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published Polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance

## 2. Government Record

The latest study found the largest improvement in the level of approval for the record of the Government we have found in any 'tracking' study since 1979. The level of approval for the record of the Government jumped from 34% in the period 21/26 April to 40% in the latest study (28 April/ 3 May). The level of disapproval fell from 55% to 47%. Details 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

## 3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest study found a further improvement in Mrs Thatcher's popularity to the highest level we have found in any tracking study this year - 41% claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister (37% in the week 21/26 April).

The popularity of both Mr Foot and Mr Steel fell over the same period. Details are shown below:-

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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	28	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

4. Published Polls

(a) MORI (Daily Star 6th May 1982)

The Daily Star on 6th May included the results of an MORI survey conducted between April 22nd and 26th. The survey completed two days before the interviewing was started for our latest 'tracking' study found 35% claiming they will vote Labour, 31% Conservative and 31% for the Alliance.

MORI found that more people think the general economic situation of the country will improve (37%) than think they will get worse (33%).

The Daily Star on 6th May, in addition to the MORI survey, also included the results of a 'poll' conducted by the newspaper itself on reactions to the Falkland Islands dispute.

The survey found:-

- Should the Falkland Islands be left in the hands of the Argentinians while we go to the United Nations and withdraw the Task Force?  
Yes 23.3%, No 72.7%, Don't know 4%
- Should we carry on as we are?  
Yes 60.8%, No 36.3%, Don't know 2.9%
- Should we step up our operations by invading the Falklands?  
Yes, 49.2%, No 45.7%, Don't know 5.1%
- Should we go further and bomb the Argentinian mainland air bases to stop the bombing of the Fleet?  
Yes 31.6%, No 64.2%, Don't know 4.2%
- Should we bring the Task Force home, leaving the Falklands to Argentina?  
Yes 12.4%, No 85.1%, Don't know 2.5%

The Star conducted the poll on May 5th but gives no details of how the sample of 1,000 was selected - the results need to be treated with caution.

(b) MORI (The Economist 8th May 1982)

The Economist on 8th May included the results of an MORI poll conducted between 3rd to 5th May. The survey was based on a re-interview of 526 electors previously interviewed by MORI.

MORI found 71% of the sample claiming they are satisfied with Mrs Thatcher's handling of the confrontation with Argentina - this compares with 76% satisfied in the previous week. The survey found a drop of 5% points in Conservative support - down to 38% claiming they would vote Conservative - compared to 43% in the MORI survey conducted 30th April. The interviewing for the survey was bisected by the news of the sinking of HMS Sheffield.

The proportion of the electorate favouring landing British troops on the Falklands has increased from 67% April 14th, 65% April 21st to 72% May 3/5th.

The proportion of the electorate in favour of allowing the U.N. to take over administration of the Falklands has changed slightly - 45% approved April 14th, 42% April 21st and 49% May 3/5th.

When asked about bombing Argentine military and naval bases 28% thought we should on April 14th, 34% April 21st and 38% May 3/5th.

MORI found 53% thought the issue of Falkland Islands sovereignty was worth the loss of British service lives - 58% too this view April 21st and 44% April 14th.

On the sinking of the General Belgrano, 46% of the sample were in favour and 44% against. However, 81% approved of the bombing of Port Stanley airport.

The proportion satisfied with the Labour Party's reaction to the Government's handling of the crisis has fallen from 40% (April 14th) to 26% (3/5th May) and the proportion dissatisfied has increased from 39% to 62%

(c) MORI (Scotsman 4th May 1982)

The Scotsman on 4th May included the results of an MORI poll conducted between 22nd and 28th April in Scotland.

The survey found 20% of the Scottish electorate claiming they would vote Alliance, 22% Conservative, 36% Labour, 17% SNP and 5% for 'other' parties.

When MORI asked 'It has been suggested that the present system of local rates should be replaced by a local income tax. Which would you prefer?' They found 36% preferring rates, 38% a local income tax and 26% did not have a view.

(d) ORC (Weekend World 9th May 1982)

Weekend World on 9th May included the results of an ORC poll on attitudes to the Falkland Islands dispute.

The interviewing took place on Friday 7th May and the sample size was 1,046. The results of the main questions are:-

- Q.1 How do you feel about the Government's policy of trying to regain the Falkland Islands by diplomatic means backed by the threat of the use of force?
- |                              | %  |
|------------------------------|----|
| Strongly support it          | 59 |
| Quite strongly support it    | 19 |
| Neither support or oppose it | 8  |
| Quite strongly oppose        | 6  |
| Strongly oppose it           | 7  |
- Q.2 Should Britain refuse to agree to a ceasefire until the Argentinians agree to withdraw their troops from the Islands.
- |                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Should refuse     | 75 |
| Should not refuse | 22 |
| Don't know        | 3  |
- Q.3 Do you support or oppose the idea that the U.N. should administer the Falkland Islands for an interim period during which Britain and Argentina negotiate about the future of the Islands?
- |            |    |
|------------|----|
| Support    | 76 |
| Oppose     | 19 |
| Don't know | 5  |
- Q.4 Should the British Government continue to insist that the 1800 Falkland Islanders should be free to have a major say in their own future, even if that means that the conflict with Argentina goes on?
- |            |    |
|------------|----|
| Yes        | 85 |
| No         | 11 |
| Don't know | 5  |
- Q.5 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?
- |              |    |
|--------------|----|
| Satisfied    | 24 |
| Dissatisfied | 63 |
| Don't know   | 13 |
- Q.6 If the Argentinian Government refuses to compromise and the British Government decides that a longterm blockade of the Islands is too risky, what should the British Government do? Should they....
- |                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Launch an invasion on the Islands | 70 |
| Abandon its claim to the Islands  | 18 |
- Q.7 Do you think that the recovery of the Falkland Islands is worth the loss of more British servicemen's lives if that should prove to be necessary ?
- |            |    |
|------------|----|
| Yes        | 55 |
| No         | 38 |
| Don't know | 7  |

8. Do you believe that the casualties which have occurred all ready were a price worth paying?

	%
Yes	53
No	38
Don't know	8

9. If many Falkland Islanders seemed likely to be killed in military action to regain the Islands, would you regard that as a price worth paying?

Yes	46
No	45
Don't know	9