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## Conservative Research Department

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Director: ALAN HOWARTH

24th March 1980

Mr. Richard Ryder,  
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S.W.1.

*Dear Richard,* Public Opinion Background Note 8

I enclose a copy of my latest weekly Public Opinion Background Note. This weeks' tracking figures are the same as those published in the Telegraph last Thursday.

*Yours  
D.K. Britto*

D.K. Britto

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Public Opinion Background Note 8  
(Produced 21st March 1980)

1. Introduction

The results of the latest Gallup "tracking" study are the same as the results of the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph last Thursday (March 20th) and show, with the exception of one week, (22-28 August - 13%) the highest Labour lead Gallup have found since the Election. In May 1971 Labour had a 12% lead over the Conservatives widening to 18% in June 1971 and to 21% in July. The Liberals have fallen to 11½% in the latest poll compared with 14½% in the previous week, 18% 6-11 February and 19½% 12-17 December 1979.

2. Voting Intention

The latest figures show an increased Labour lead despite the fact that our vote remained constant at 37%. See below for details:-

Voting Intention

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
May 1979(GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June*	42	43½	12	2½	-1½
<u>1980</u>					
9/14 Jan	36	45	16	3	-9
17/22 Jan	38	42	17	3	-4
23/28 Jan	40	39½	18	2½	+½
30/4 Feb	37	45	16	2	-8
6/11 Feb	37½	42	18	2½	-4½
13/18 Feb	40	43	15	2	-3
20/25 Feb	38	47	13	2	-9
27/3 March	36	47	14½	2½	-11
5/10 March	37	46	14½	2½	-9
11/17 March	37	49½	11½	2	-12½

\*First Gallup Post-Election Survey.



3. Government Record

Almost no change since last week - up slightly from the nadir of popularity reached a couple of weeks ago - change is not statistically significant.

Government Record

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
13/18 June*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
9/14 Jan	33	53	14
17/22 Jan	32	56	12
23/28 Jan	35	52	13
30/4 Feb	29	58	13
6/11 Feb	30	55	15
13/18 Feb	31	58	11
20/25 Feb	30	57	14
27/3 March	28	58	14
5/10 March	31	56	13
11/17 March	30	59	11

\*First Post-Election Survey (Gallup)

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Almost no change in popularity of Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Callaghan. Slight increase in popularity of Mr. Steel -- increase not statistically significant.

Popularity of Political Leaders

<u>Mrs. Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr. Steel</u>		
<u>Satisfied</u> %	<u>Dissat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is Good Leader</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is Good Leader</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
9/14 Jan 39	54	7	53	35	12	62	19	19
17/22 Jan 38	55	6	47	41	12	58	17	25
23/28 Jan 42	52	6	49	39	12	62	18	20
30/4 Feb 37	56	7	50	38	13	57	19	23
6/11 Feb 37	55	9	50	36	14	60	18	22
13/18 Feb 41	53	5	49	40	11	62	15	21
20/25 Feb 39	54	7	50	37	13	58	18	24
27/3 March 37	56	7	53	33	14	57	18	25
5/10 March 37	57	6	52	34	13	58	17	24
11/17 March 38	56	6	53	35	12	60	19	21



5. Communication

As last week, the majority of the electorate (61%) claimed not have heard anything making them more or less favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days. 10% claimed to have heard something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government and 29% something making them less favourably inclined. Only a few items mentioned as making electors more favourably inclined towards the Government - 4% Mrs. Thatcher, 2% International Affairs, 2% relations with Unions and 2% policies in general. On the less favourably side we found:-

Cost of living 6%, Public Spending Cuts 5%, Mrs. Thatcher 5%, Olympics 5%, Steel Strike 3%, relations with Unions 2%, international affairs 2% and policies in general 2%.

When asked the source of political information we obtained the following pattern of answers (only among those who had seen or heard something making them more or less favourably inclined towards the Government):-

<u>Source of Information</u>		<u>More Favourably Inclined</u>	<u>Less Favourably Inclined</u>
T.V. News	67%	T.V. News	63%
Newspaper	30%	Newspaper	42%
PPB	22%	Radio	16%
Current Affairs Prog.	12%	Current Affairs prog.	9%
Radio	8%	PPB	7%

6. Issues

The published Gallup poll included some interesting material on issues - details are given below. Gallup found that only on two specific key issues out of 14 - law and order and defence - do we have more people approving of our handling of the issue than disapproved.

<u>Issues</u>	
Law and Order	+30%
Defence	+ 7%
Immigration	- 1%
Old Age Pensions	- 5%
Taxation	-16%
The Common Market	-16%
Housing	-18%
Roads	-21%
Strikes and Labour Relations	-27%
Economic and Financial Affairs	-30%
Generally	-35%
The Health Service	-37%
Education	-38%
Full Employment	-38%
Cost of Living and Prices	-56%

\* The score is obtained by subtracting disapproves from approves on each issue.