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CONFIDENTIAL

10th June 1981

Dear Derek,

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 67

Public Opinion Background Note 67 which is enclosed with this memo includes a review on the results of the two opinion polls conducted in Warrington. The Audience Selection poll conducted by telephone found a clear majority for Shirley Williams as the Liberal/Social Democratic candidate, while the N.O.P. poll conducted using normal opinion research techniques found a sizeable Labour lead if Shirley Williams was the Social Democratic candidate. The telephone interview techniques used by Audience Selection do not take account of those individuals without telephones, and I feel the results of this poll should be treated with a great degree of caution. The findings of the N.O.P. poll provide an overview of attitudes of all electors in Warrington.

Looking at the national picture of public opinion, our latest Gallup 'tracking' study conducted from 26th May to 1st June found no significant change in the level of support for the Social Democrats, although support for the Liberals increased slightly. Full details of the results of this latest tracking study are shown in Public Opinion Background Note 67.

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 67

(produced 7th June 1981)

1. Introduction

We have had in the last week two polls conducted in Warrington - these polls - published in the Sun June 4th - conducted by Audience Selection, and published in the Observer 7th June 1981 - conducted by N.O.P. The Audience Selection Poll was conducted by telephone in Warrington on 2nd June and found that when they asked respondents how they would vote if Shirley Williams was the SDP/Liberal candidate that 55% claimed they would vote for her, 36% Labour and 9% Conservative. The N.O.P. poll was conducted using normal face to face interviewing on 4/5th June in Warrington and found when they asked respondents how they would vote if Shirley Williams was the SDP candidate that 39% claimed they would vote for her, 52% Labour and 8% for the Conservatives. The total contradiction between the results can be explained by the bias in the Audience Selection poll due to the use of telephone interviewing. What is common between the two polls is the low level of support for the Conservative Party - if the result of either poll was duplicated at the by-election it would result in the Conservative candidate losing his deposit.

Turning to the national picture our latest Gallup 'tracking' study conducted from 26th May to 1st June found no significant change in the level of support for the Social Democrats, although support for the Liberals increased slightly. The survey found almost no change in the level of support for the Conservative Party and a slight fall in the level of support for Labour. The net effect of the changes in support for the Labour and Conservative parties was a fall in Labour's lead from 7% (19/26 May) to 6% (26 May/1 June), when don't knows are excluded.

The tables below and graphs included with this note show the trend in support for the main parties from early March for:-

- a. The standard voting intention question (the term Social Democrat is not mentioned in the question).
- b. How the electorate said they would vote if a Social Democratic candidate was standing.
- c. How the electorate said they would vote if a candidate for a Social Democratic /Liberal Alliance stood.

VOTING INTENTION (including don't knows)

	4/9	12/16	18/23	25/30	31 Mar	8/13	15/21	22/27	29 Apr	6/11	13/18	19/26	26 May
	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	6 Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	5 May	May	May	May	1 June
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	27	27	23	27	26	27	26	27	29	29	31	28	28
Labour	32	30	31	27	29	31	34	32	31	32	33	35	33
Liberal	18	16	15	16	15	13	16	13	15	16	16	14	17
Others	3	4	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2
Social Democratic Party	12	12	17	17	17	17	16	14	12	10	10	11	12
Don't know/it depends	8	11	12	12	10	16	9	12	11	9	8	9	9

VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

	<u>4/9</u> Mar	<u>12/16</u> Mar	<u>18/23</u> Mar	<u>25/30</u> Mar	<u>31 Mar</u> 6 Apr	<u>8/13</u> Apr	<u>15/21</u> Apr	<u>22/27</u> Apr	<u>29 Apr</u> 5 May	<u>6/11</u> May	<u>13/18</u> May	<u>19/26</u> May	<u>26 May</u> 1 Jun
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	22	21	18	21	21	22	22	23	25	23	25	23	21
Labour	25	22	22	20	21	24	25	24	25	24	27	26	27
Liberal	12	11	11	10	10	10	11	9	10	11	11	10	12
Others	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	3	2	2	2
Social Demo- cratic Party	25	25	27	29	26	27	22	24	21	21	20	21	20
Social Demo- cratic/Liberal alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/ it depends	16	17	20	20	20	17	19	18	15	18	15	18	17

VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/LIBERAL CANDIDATE

	<u>4/9</u> Mar	<u>12/16</u> Mar	<u>18/23</u> Mar	<u>25/30</u> Mar	<u>31 Mar</u> 6 Apr	<u>8/13</u> Apr	<u>15/21</u> Apr	<u>22/27</u> Apr	<u>29 Apr</u> 5 May	<u>6/11</u> May	<u>13/18</u> May	<u>19/26</u> May	<u>26 May</u> 1 Jun
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	22	20	17	20	20	21	21	22	21	22	24	23	20
Labour	24	21	22	19	20	23	24	24	24	22	25	25	25
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2
Social Demo- cratic Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Demo- cratic/Liberal alliance	36	37	38	37	35	37	34	33	32	32	32	31	33
Don't know/ it depends	17	21	22	22	23	17	20	18	20	22	16	19	19

2. Standard Voting Intention

The Gallup 'tracking' study conducted from 26th May to 1st June found almost no change in Labour's lead and no signs of an upsurge in support for the Social Democrats, although support for the Liberals has increased slightly.

VOTING INTENTION

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>						
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	2.5	-1.5*
<u>1981</u>						
4/9 March	29.5	34.5	20.0	12.5	3.5	-5.0
12/16 March	30.0	34.0	18.0	14.0	4.0	-4.0
18/23 March	26.0	35.0	17.0	17.0	5.0	-9.0
25/30 March	30.0	30.5	18.0	19.0	2.5	-0.5**
31 March/6 April	29.0	32.0	17.0	19.0	3.0	-3.0
8/13 April	30.0	34.5	14.0	19.0	2.5	-4.5**
15/21 April	28.5	37.5	17.5	15.0	1.5	-9.0
22/27 April	30.5	36.5	15.0	15.5	2.5	-6.0
29 April/ 5 May	33.0	35.0	17.0	13.5	1.5	-2.0
6/11 May	32.0	35.5	18.0	11.0	3.5	-3.5**
13/18 May	33.5	36.0	17.0	10.5	3.0	-2.5
19/26 May	31.0	38.0	15.5	12.0	3.5	-7.0
26 May/1 June	30.0	36.0	18.0	13.0	3.0	-6.0

* First Gallup Post-election survey

** Published polls

3. Government Record

Our latest survey found no sign of an improvement in the Government's popularity. 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>1981</u>			
4/9 March	23	65	12
12/16 March	23	67	9
25/30 March	22	69	9
31 March/6 April	26	65	9
8/13 April	24	67	9
15/21 April	25	65	10
22/27 April	27	63	10
29 April/5 May	26	62	12
6/11 May	29	60	11
13/18 May	30	57	13
19/26 May	28	60	12
26 May/ 1 June	27	61	12

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Slight fall in Mrs Thatcher's popularity in the latest study but no improvement in Mr Foot's popularity.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	Mrs Thatcher			Mr Foot			Mr Steel		
	<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>1981</u>									
4/9 March	28	66	6	25	52	23	62	18	20
12/16 March	30	64	6	23	52	26	63	15	22
18/23 March	28	67	5	24	55	24	63	18	19
25/ 30 March	30	66	4	20	55	25	61	19	19
31 March/6 April	31	63	6	24	55	22	64	17	19
8/13 April	30	65	5	21	54	24	60	20	20
15/21 April	31	64	6	24	54	22	62	17	21
22/27 April	34	60	6	21	58	20	66	17	18
29 April/5 May	34	59	7	20	58	22	60	19	21
6/11 May	35	60	5	26	52	23	63	17	21
13/18 May	36	58	6	27	52	22	63	17	21
19/26 May	35	59	6	27	50	23	60	17	23
26 May/ 1 June	32	62	6	27	54	19	62	17	20

5. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph June 1st 1981)

A Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on June 1st and conducted from May 19th until May 26th looked at public attitudes to the Common Market. Gallup found that by a margin of more than two to one that the British electorate think the Common Market is a bad thing.

Gallup asked 'Generally speaking, do you think that British membership of the Common Market is a good thing or a bad thing or neither good nor bad' - they found in May 1981 that 50% of the electorate thought British membership was bad, 21% good and 21% neither good nor bad. Details are given below:

	<u>Membership Common Market Good/Bad</u>		
	<u>May</u> 1981	<u>Oct</u> 1979	<u>June</u> 1979
	%	%	%
Good thing	21	24	37
Bad thing	50	54	34
Neither good or bad	21	17	19
Don't know	8	5	10

The electorate remains sceptical about the unity of the Common Market - the vast majority of them (80%) think the Common Market is divided with the French being regarded as almost solely to blame for this. When Gallup asked 'In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe?' they found.

	<u>May</u> 1981	<u>June</u> 1979
	%	%
For unification - very much	24	25
- to some extent	38	36
Against Unification - very much	10	13
- to some extent	5	7
Don't know	23	19

When asked what they think about the Government's policy on the Common Market the majority of electors (54%) indicated that they thought the Government was not tough enough, 7% thought they were too tough and 26% said the policy was about right.

When asked about the European Parliament only about one in three (31%) claimed to have seen or heard anything about the European Parliament recently. The public's view of a British Europe M.P. has shown little change since 1979. The majority of the electorate (61%) think a British member of the European Parliament should support the interests of Britain all the time, while 31% believe he should give priority support to things that are good for the Community as a whole. Two years ago, the figures were 59% and 31% respectively.

(b) Audience Selection (Sun 1st June 1981)

An Audience Selection poll published in the Sun on 1st June and conducted between May 18th and 22nd looked at attitudes among the unemployed. Audience Selection asked the unemployed 'What do you find is the worst thing about being unemployed' - they found

Worse things about being unemployed

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Men</u> %	<u>Women</u> %
Boring/frustrating	43	43	43
Depressing	38	38	41
No money	23	22	25
Degrading	15	17	11
Time on hands/ lonely	11	11	11
Feel useless/ not contributing	4	5	4

When asked who they blamed for their being unemployed. Audience Selection found:

Blame for Unemployment

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Men</u> %	<u>Women</u> %	<u>16-24</u> %	<u>25-44</u> %	<u>45+</u> %
Mrs Thatcher	42	41	45	45	40	38
World Recession	21	22	17	22	20	23
Bad business management	14	14	13	10	14	22
Themselves	7	5	15	10	7	2
The Trade Unions	6	6	4	4	7	6
High Pay claims	4	5	2	4	5	4
None of these	6	7	5	5	8	5

Audience Selection found that few of the unemployed are cushioned by redundancy cheques - they found that one in three said they got no redundancy pay at all.

Half the unemployed claimed they are prepared to move to other areas to find jobs.

(c) Marplan (June 1st 1981)

A Marplan poll published in the Guardian on 1st June 1981 and conducted on May 23rd looked at attitudes among trade unionists. Marplan asked 'Would further legislation to restrict the power of the Unions in your opinion be a good or a bad thing'. They found:-

	<u>Further Legislation Good /Bad</u>		
	<u>All</u>	<u>Blue</u>	<u>White</u>
	%	Collar	Collar
		%	%
Good	40	38	46
Bad	47	49	41
Don't know	13	13	13

40% of trade unionists are in favour of further legislation and 47% against. When asked about attitudes to the closed shop a majority of trade unionists were against - 56% thought it was a bad thing and only 36% a good thing. A large majority thought the idea of secret ballots before a strike would be a good idea - 80% a good idea, 18% bad idea.

On the question of limiting the number of pickets to six - 55% of unionists favoured the idea and 36% thought there should be no limit.

When asked about opting for pay negotiations in the following terms 'Which of the following would you prefer the Government to do? (a) Allow complete free collective bargaining over wages? (b) set pay limits backed by law (c) discuss and agree pay guidelines with the TUC'. Marplan found:-

	<u>Pay Bargain Options</u>		
	<u>All</u>	<u>Blue</u>	<u>White</u>
	%	Collar	Collar
		%	%
Free collective bargaining	28	29	24
Pay limits backed by law	15	14	20
Pay guidelines agreed with TUC	51	52	49
Don't know	6	5	7

The majority of trade unionists favoured the idea of guidelines agreed with the TUC.

Trade Unionists did not think the TUC would be justified in calling for another nationwide Day of Action against Government policies - 51% were against the idea and 43% in favour.

(d) Audience Selection (The Sun June 4th)

The report of an Audience Selection poll in Warrington was published in The Sun on Thursday June 4th. The interviewing for the survey was conducted by telephone on Tuesday June 2nd. Audience Selection is at present the only opinion research company in the UK to use telephone interviewing techniques for political opinion research. The accepted view in the opinion research industry is that such an approach does not provide a representative sample as it does not take account of the views of electors who do not have telephones.

Audience Selection found in Warrington that when electors were asked 'If there was a by-election tomorrow, how would you vote?' that 50% claimed they would vote Labour, 36% Liberal Social Democratic Alliance and 13% Conservative. Audience Selection also asked electors in Warrington how they would vote if four Social Democrats stood as candidates in a by-election. They found:-

Voting Intention if Named Person
Social Democratic Candidate

	<u>Shirley</u> <u>Williams</u> %	<u>Roy</u> <u>Jenkins</u> %	<u>David</u> <u>Williams</u> %	<u>David</u> <u>Marquand</u> %
Labour	36	46	47	52
Conservative	9	12	13	12
Liberal/Social Democratic Alliance	55	42	40	36

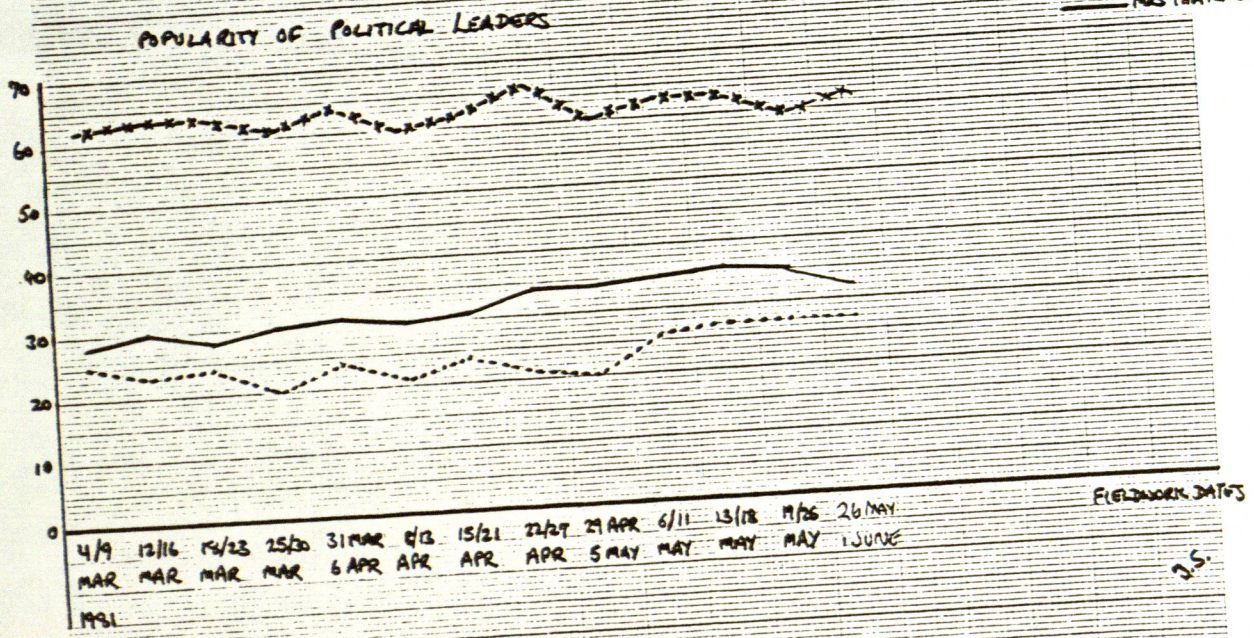
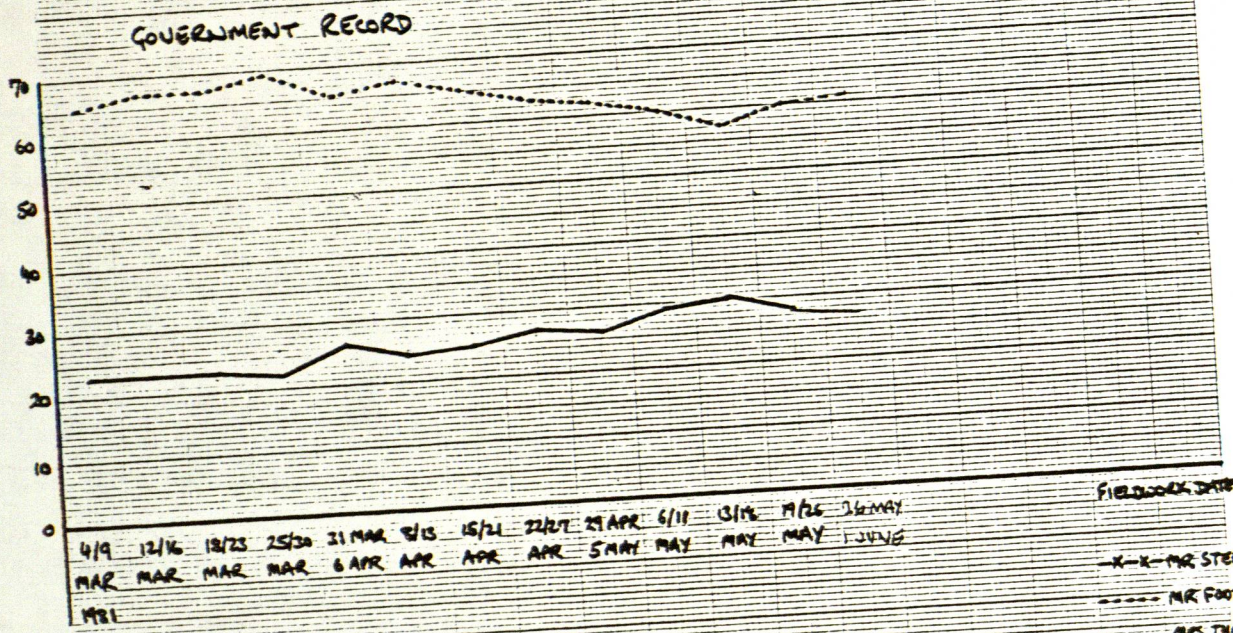
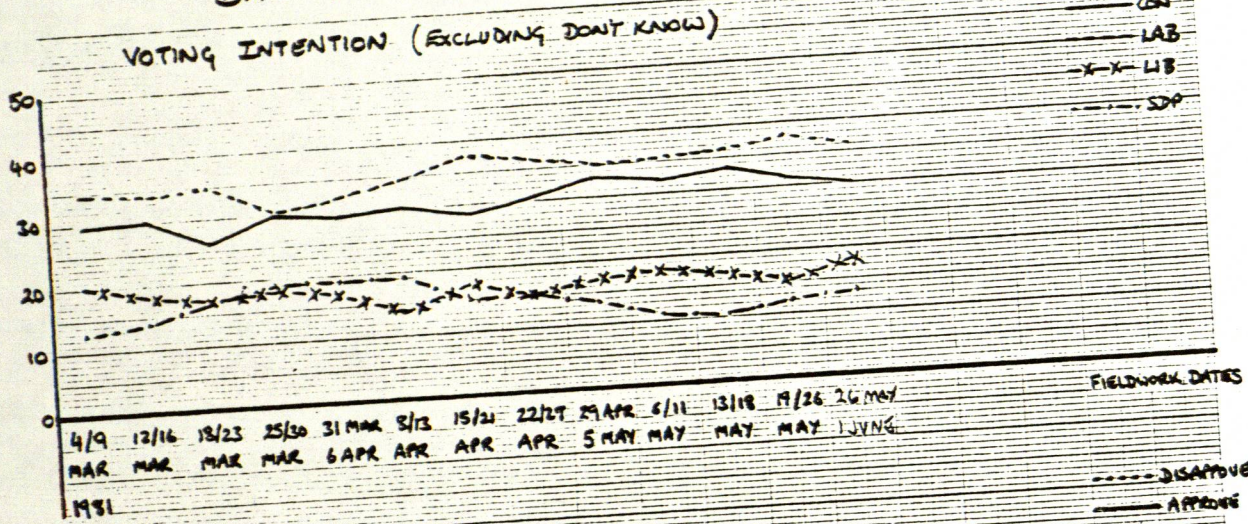
(e) N.O.P. (Observer 7th June)

An N.O.P. poll published in the Observer on 7th June looked at attitudes in Warrington. The survey was conducted on 4/5 June by normal face to face interviewing with a representative sample of electors in Warrington.

In reply to a standard voting intention question as to which party they would vote for in a by-election, N.O.P. found 11% claiming they would vote Conservative, 68% Labour, 4% Liberals and 17% Social Democrats.

N.O.P. then asked respondents how they would vote if a number of leading Social Democrats stood as candidates in the by-election. With Shirley Williams as candidate 39% said they would vote Social Democrat, 52% Labour and 8% Conservatives. With Roy Jenkins as candidate 25% said they would vote Social Democrat, 64% Labour and 10% Conservative. When David Marquand was suggested as candidate 16% said they would vote Social Democrat, 72% Labour and 11% Conservative.

BACKGROUND GRAPHS



BACKGROUND GRAPHS

