

Public Opinion Background Note 30  
(produced 22nd August 1980)

*ms*

1. Introduction

The results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are the same as the Gallup poll results published in the Daily Telegraph (21st August 1980) and show a 5½ per cent Labour lead, compared with 3 per cent in the previous published Gallup survey and a 3½ per cent lead in our unpublished tracking study conducted the previous week. The fieldwork for the latest study was conducted from 14th to 18th August - after the publication of the retail price index figures.

2. Voting Intention

Full details of the trend in support for the main parties from both published Gallup polls and our unpublished Gallup 'tracking' studies are shown both in the table below and in the attached graphs.

VOTING INTENTION

	<u>Con.</u>	<u>Lab.</u>	<u>Lib.</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	43.5	12	2.5	-1.5
<u>1980</u>					
4/9 June	39.5	43	15.5	2	-3.5
11/16 June	40.5	45	11.5	3	-4.5**
18/23 June	39	43	15	3	-4
25/30 June	37	45	15	3	-8
2/7 July	37.5	44.5	14.5	3.5	-7
10/14 July	40	43.5	14	2.5	-3.5**
16/21 July	37	44.5	15	3.5	-7.5
23/28 July	33.5	49	14	3.5	-15.5
30 July/4 August	38.5	42.5	16	3	-4
6/11 August	40	43.5	13.5	3	-3.5
14/18 August	38.5	44	14.5	3	<u>-5.5**</u>

\* First Gallup post-election survey

\*\* Published polls.

The 5½% Labour lead in our latest tracking study can be compared with Labour's 18% lead in June 1971, 21½% lead in July 1971, 4½% lead in August 1971 and 19% lead in September 1971.

### 3. Government Record

Almost no change in level of government popularity over recent weeks.

For full details, please see table below and attached graphs.

#### GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
4/9 June	35	54	11
11/16 June	35	52	13
18/24 June	33	55	12
25/30 June	31	56	13
2/7 July	31	56	13
10/14 July	33	54	13
16/21 July	35	52	13
23/28 July	31	58	12
30 July/4 August	34	53	13
6/11 August	34	55	11
14/18 August	35	53	12

\*first Post Election Survey

The 35% of the electorate that approve of our record to date in the week 6/11 August is the same as the previous week and compares very favourably with the 22% of the electorate approving of the then Conservative Government's record in June 1971; this increased to 26% in July 1971, increased further to 35% in August 1971, but fell back to 30% in September 1971.

### 4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest tracking study found 41% of the electorate satisfied with Mrs. Thatcher's record as Prime Minister (39% previous week). This compares with 52% satisfied with Mr. Callaghan as Leader of the Opposition (47% previous week). The latest results also show an improvement in Mr. Steel's personal popularity.

Details of trends in popularity of the three main political leaders are shown in the table on the following page and in the attached graphs.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs. Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr. Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>
	<u>sat.</u>	<u>sat.</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>sat.</u>	<u>sat.</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>sat.</u>	<u>sat.</u>	<u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
4/9 June	40	55	5	50	38	12	59	19	22
11/16 June	43	52	5	48	37	15	57	18	25
18/23 June	40	55	6	44	42	13	57	20	23
25/30 June	39	55	5	45	41	13	55	20	25
2/7 July	38	56	6	45	42	13	61	19	20
10/14 July	41	51	7	46	41	13	53	24	23
16/21 July	39	54	7	49	35	16	55	18	27
23/28 July	35	57	8	52	35	13	55	17	27
30 July/ 4 Aug.	40	54	6	47	38	15	55	20	25
6/11 Aug.	39	55	6	47	38	15	54	20	25
14/18 Aug.	41	54	5	52	34	14	58	18	24

5. Issues

Over recent months our tracking surveys have included questions asking our respondents for their views on a range of current issues in terms of whether the issues make them more favourably inclined towards the Government, less favourably inclined or they make no difference. The issues we include in this question are based on the answers to our standard open-ended tracking question, 'Over the last seven days have you seen or heard anything that has made you feel more favourably or less favourably inclined towards the Government?' Details of the answers we have obtained in the recent weeks are given on the following pages.

ISSUES

	<u>10/14</u>	<u>16/21</u>	<u>23/28</u>	<u>30 July</u>	<u>6/11</u>	<u>14/18</u>
	<u>July</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>4 Aug.</u>	<u>Aug.</u>	<u>Aug.</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Mrs. Thatcher</u>						
<u>as Prime Minister</u>						
More favourable	30	28	26	29	28	29
Less favourable	45	41	47	43	47	43
No difference	24	29	25	26	21	26
Don't Know	1	3	3	2	4	2
<u>The Government's</u>						
<u>Taxation Policy</u>						
More favourable	27	24	25	-	-	-
Less favourable	43	42	44	-	-	-
No difference	21	22	20	-	-	-
Don't Know	9	12	12	-	-	-

	<u>10/14</u> <u>July</u> %	<u>16/21</u> <u>July</u> %	<u>23/28</u> <u>July</u> %	<u>30 July-</u> <u>4 Aug.</u> %	<u>6/11</u> <u>Aug.</u> %	<u>14/18</u> <u>Aug.</u> %
<u>The Government's</u> <u>Policy on Trade</u> <u>Union Reform</u>						
More favourable	45	43	44	46	46	48
Less favourable	30	29	27	24	28	25
No difference	11	12	11	13	11	11
Don't Know	14	16	18	16	16	16
<u>Public Spending</u> <u>Cuts</u>						
More favourable	27	23	24	28	28	25
Less favourable	57	60	59	56	58	56
No difference	11	11	10	11	9	12
Don't Know	5	7	7	6	6	7
<u>The Cost of</u> <u>Living</u>						
More favourable	11	8	10	8	11	
Less favourable	69	70	68	65	67	64
No difference	17	19	19	21	17	22
Don't Know	3	3	3	5	5	3
<u>The Government's</u> <u>Policy on the</u> <u>Common Market</u>						
More favourable	35	34	27	-	-	-
Less favourable	40	37	43	-	-	-
No difference	14	15	15	-	-	-
Don't Know	11	13	16	-	-	-
<u>The Level of</u> <u>Unemployment</u>						
More favourable	5	6	5	6	6	6
Less favourable	77	71	76	72	74	72
No difference	15	17	15	18	15	
Don't Know	3	7	4	5	5	3
<u>The Government's</u> <u>Pay Policy</u>						
More favourable	27	29	25	30	32	31
Less favourable	41	38	42	39	42	38
No difference	17	18	17	16	11	16
Don't Know	15	16	16	15	15	15
<u>The Government's</u> <u>Policy on selling</u> <u>Council Houses</u>						
More favourable	-	-	-	51	52	52
Less favourable	-	-	-	23	26	26
No difference	-	-	-	19	14	15
Don't Know	-	-	-	7	8	6

Almost no change in public attitudes in the range of issues we included in the question when compared with the previous tracking study with our policies on trade union reform and sale of council houses remaining popular.

6. Published Polls

As well as the standard questions on voting intention etc., the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph (21st August 1980) included the standard Gallup question on what the electorate regards as the most important issues facing the country. As in July, unemployment topped the list of issues. Please see below for details:-

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

	<u>Aug.</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>July</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>June</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1980</u>
	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	53	49	29	23
Cost of Living	25	27	38	41
Other Economic Problems	4	3	6	5

