

Conservative Research Department

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KB/sgc

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Richard Ryder
10 Downing Street
London SW1

6th October 1980

Dear Richard,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 36

I attach a copy of a note giving details of the results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study. Gallup completed the interviews for this study on Monday, 29th September - the first day of the Labour Party Conference. The results from our next tracking study which will be available early next week will be based on a survey conducted largely during the Labour Party Conference.

Yours
Hester

D. K. Britto

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 36

(produced 5th October 1980)

1. Introduction

Our latest Gallup tracking study which was conducted before the Labour Party Conference had really got under way (the research was finished on Monday 25th September) showed almost no change from our previous tracking study. Labour's lead in the week 25/29 September was 11½% compared with 12% in the week 17/22 September - the change is insignificant in opinion poll terms. The situation in our private polls can be compared with the results of the latest published Gallup poll (conducted 10/15 September) which found a 9½% Labour lead.

2. Voting Intention

Details of the trend in support for the main parties from both published Gallup polls and our unpublished tracking studies are shown in the table below and in the attached graph.

	<u>VOTING INTENTION</u>				
	<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	-4.0
25/30 June	37	45	15	3	-8.0
2/7 July	37.5	44.5	14.5	3.5	-7.0
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	-4.0
6/11 August	40	43.5	13.5	3	-3.5
14/18 August	38.5	44	14.5	3	-5.5**
20/26 August	37.5	45.5	13.0	4	-8.0
27 August/ 1 September	37	49	11.5	2.5	-12.0
2/8 September	36.5	48.5	12.5	2.5	-12.0
10/15 September	35.5	45	16.5	3	-9.5**
17/22 September	35	47	14	4	-12.0
25/29 September	35.5	47	15	2.5	-11.5

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published polls

3. Government Record

In the latest Gallup tracking study we found a further decline in approval for the Government as shown in our standard Government record tracking question. In the period 25/29 September we found only 27% of the electorate approving of the record of the Government.

For full details of the results from the question please see below and attached graph.

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
20/26 August	35	53	12
27 August/1st September	31	56	13
2/8 September	31	58	11
10/15 September	29	57	13
17/22 September	30	59	12
25/29 September	27	60	13

* first Post Election survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs Thatcher's popularity is at the lowest level we have recorded since the election - it must however be remembered that this research was completed on the Monday of last week, when the Labour Party Conference had just started. However the survey did find a sharp drop in Mr Callaghan's popularity.

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4. Popularity of Political Leaders (continued)

For full details please see table below and attached graph.

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>
	%	sat	Know	%	sat	Know	%	sat	Know
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	18	27
30 July/ 4 August	40	54	6	47	38	15	55	20	25
6/11 August	39	55	6	47	38	15	54	20	25
14/18 August	41	54	5	52	34	14	58	18	24
20/26 August	41	53	6	47	38	15	52	21	28
27 Aug/1 Sept	38	56	6	48	37	15	50	21	29
2/8 Sept	35	59	6	51	34	15	57	18	25
10/15 Sept	37	58	5	48	39	13	59	19	22
17/22 Sept	35	59	5	50	36	14	59	17	25
25/29 Sept	33	60	6	45	40	16	60	18	22

5. Issues

No significant changes in the electorate's attitudes to the Government's handling of some of the key issues we included in our standard issue questions.

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ISSUES

	<u>10/14</u> July	<u>16/21</u> July	<u>23/28</u> July	<u>30 July</u> - 4 Aug	<u>6/11</u> Aug	<u>14/18</u> Aug	<u>20/26</u> Aug	<u>27 Aug</u> -1 Sep	<u>2/8</u> Sep	<u>10/15</u> Sep	<u>17/22</u> Sep	<u>25/29</u> Sep
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister</u>												
More favourable	30	28	26	29	28	29	26	26	25	25	23	24
Less favourable	45	41	47	43	47	43	43	46	47	48	47	47
No difference	24	29	25	26	21	26	30	26	26	26	28	28
Don't Know	1	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
<u>The Government's Taxation Policy</u>												
More favourable	27	24	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	31	27
Less favourable	43	42	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	43	36	40
No difference	21	22	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	17	19
Don't Know	9	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	16	14
<u>The Government's Policy on Trade Union Reforms</u>												
More favourable	45	43	44	46	46	48	47	47	44	47	45	45
Less favourable	30	29	27	24	28	25	26	28	30	27	26	29
No difference	11	12	11	13	11	11	11	10	11	11	14	11
Don't Know	14	16	18	16	16	16	16	15	15	15	15	15
<u>Public Spending Cuts</u>												
More favourable	27	23	24	28	28	25	26	25	23	27	24	23
Less favourable	57	60	59	56	58	56	58	60	61	55	57	61
No difference	11	11	10	11	9	12	10	10	9	12	11	9
Don't Know	5	7	7	6	6	7	7	5	7	6	8	7
<u>The Cost of Living</u>												
More favourable	11	8	10	8	11	11	11	10	8	10	10	6
Less favourable	69	70	68	65	67	64	64	67	70	69	66	66
No difference	17	19	19	21	17	22	21	19	17	17	21	25
Don't Know	3	3	3	5	5	3	4	4	4	3	3	3

ISSUES (continued)

	<u>10/14</u> July	<u>16/21</u> July	<u>23/28</u> July	<u>30 July</u> -4 Aug	<u>6/11</u> Aug	<u>14/18</u> Aug	<u>20/26</u> Aug	<u>27</u> -1 Sep	<u>2/8</u> Sep	<u>10/15</u> Sep	<u>17/22</u> Sep	<u>25/29</u> Sep
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>The Level of Unemployment</u>												
More favourable	5	6	5	6	6	6	4	5	5	4	6	5
Less favourable	77	71	46	72	74	72	76	77	80	82	76	78
No difference	15	17	15	18	15	19	16	16	12	12	15	14
Don't Know	3	7	4	5	5	3	4	2	3	2	4	2
<u>The Government's Pay Policy</u>												
More favourable	27	29	25	30	32	31	31	32	29	33	31	29
Less favourable	41	38	42	39	42	38	40	37	41	37	36	37
No difference	17	18	17	16	11	16	14	15	15	14	17	17
Don't Know	15	16	16	15	15	15	15	16	15	16	16	17
<u>The Government's Policy on selling Council Houses</u>												
More favourable	-	-	-	51	52	52	53	51	54	51	51	48
Less favourable	-	-	-	23	26	26	24	27	24	27	23	25
No difference	-	-	-	19	14	15	15	16	14	11	20	19
Don't Know	-	-	-	7	8	6	8	7	8	15	6	8

6. Published Polls(a) Marplan (published Sun 3rd October 1980)

A Marplan survey conducted on 29th September and published in the Sun on 3rd October 1980 confirmed the findings of the previous research by finding that the electorate now see unemployment as being the most urgent problem facing the country. When forced to decide between inflation and unemployment as the issue the Government should give priority to - 37% selected inflation (67% Conservative supporters, 16% Labour supporters) and 63% unemployment (33% Conservative supporters, 84% Labour supporters).

(b) N.O.P. (published Daily Mail 6th October 1980)

An N.O.P. survey conducted on September 29th/30th and published in the Daily Mail on 6th October 1980 found a 11% Labour lead - compared with the 11½ Labour lead we found in our unpublished Gallup study conducted 25/29th September. The N.O.P. poll also confirmed the results of Gallup polls conducted over recent months in finding that unemployment is now regarded as the most important issue facing the country rather than inflation.

N.O.P. found that 72% of the electorate - including 62% of Labour voters - said that they would personally accept wage restraint and two thirds of all those questioned felt that earnings should rise at a slower rate than inflation.

(c) Gallup (published Daily Telegraph 6th October)

A Gallup poll conducted between September 25th and 29th and published in the Daily Telegraph on 6th October 1980 looked at public attitudes to a range of issues - including aspects of the Government's economic policies.

When Gallup looked at reactions to the Government's policies they found:-

ISSUES APPROVAL

(a '+' indicates an excess of approves over disapproves and a '-' means the opposite)

	Sept 1980	Oct 1979	June 1979
Defence armaments	+14	+11	+15
Law and order	+ 9	+33	+29
Immigration	-13	+ 8	+ 9
Common Market	-14	-11	-10
Housing	-18	+ 8	+15
Taxation	-19	+ 6	N/A
Roads	-22	-10	-10
Strikes and other labour relations	-25	-14	-12
Old age pensions	-26	+25	+43
Economic and financial affairs	-27	-13	- 8
Health service	-36	-30	+11
Education	-39	-36	+19
Cost of living, prices	-56	-46	-39
Full employment	-62	-14	- 4

Gallup also asked what the electorate regarded as the biggest failures of the present Government and the table over the page shows both the answers

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to the question they asked in September and the answers obtained when the same question was asked in 1978 under Labour.

BIGGEST FAILURES
OF GOVERNMENT

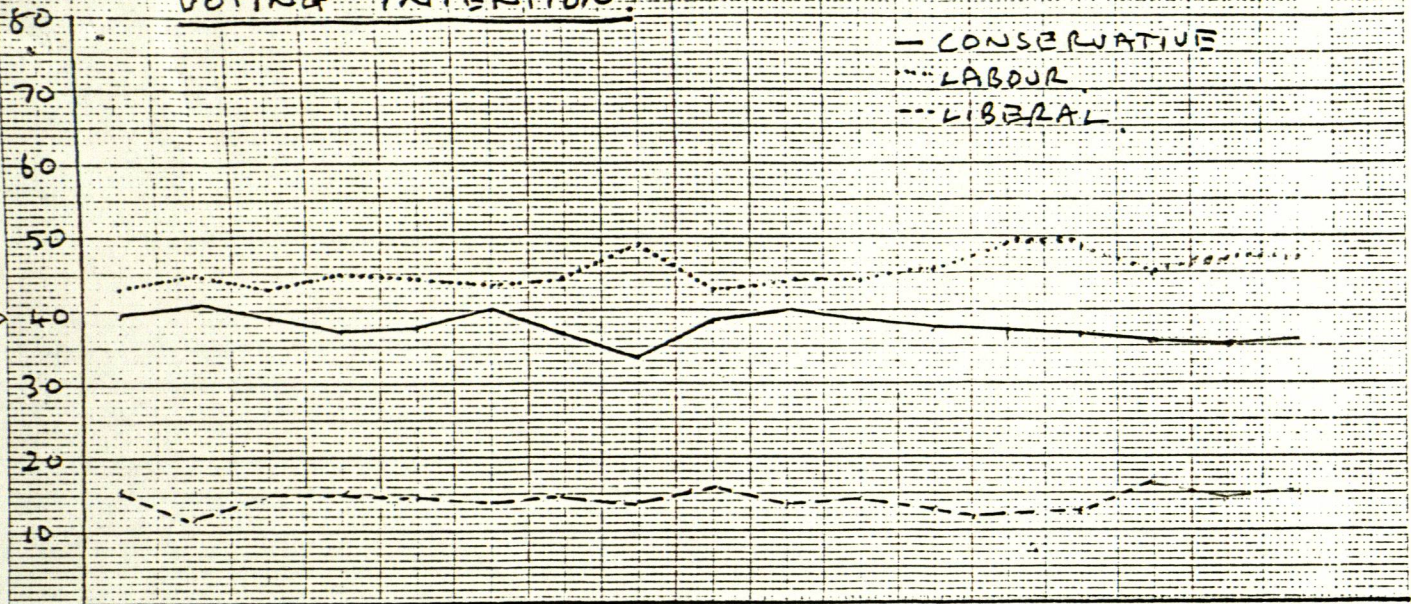
(Which three of four of these items do you think are the biggest failures of the present Government?)

<u>Failure to:</u>	<u>Sept</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>Labour</u> <u>1978</u>
Prevent unemployment rise	66	50
Keep down prices	56	43
Make industry efficient	38	30
Provide an efficient health service	34	29
Develop education system properly	29	28
Stop strikes	25	48
Stop wages rising too fast	23	15
Build enough houses	16	11
Make money easily available to buy one's own home	16	9
Maintain law and order	15	36
Maintain military and naval power	6	21
None of these	4	4

Gallup found 54% of the electorate considering themselves to be worse off than they were a year ago - 18% thought they were better off and 26% saw no change. 58% of the electorate thought the Government does too much for the well-off and 71% too little for the people on small pensions or incomes.

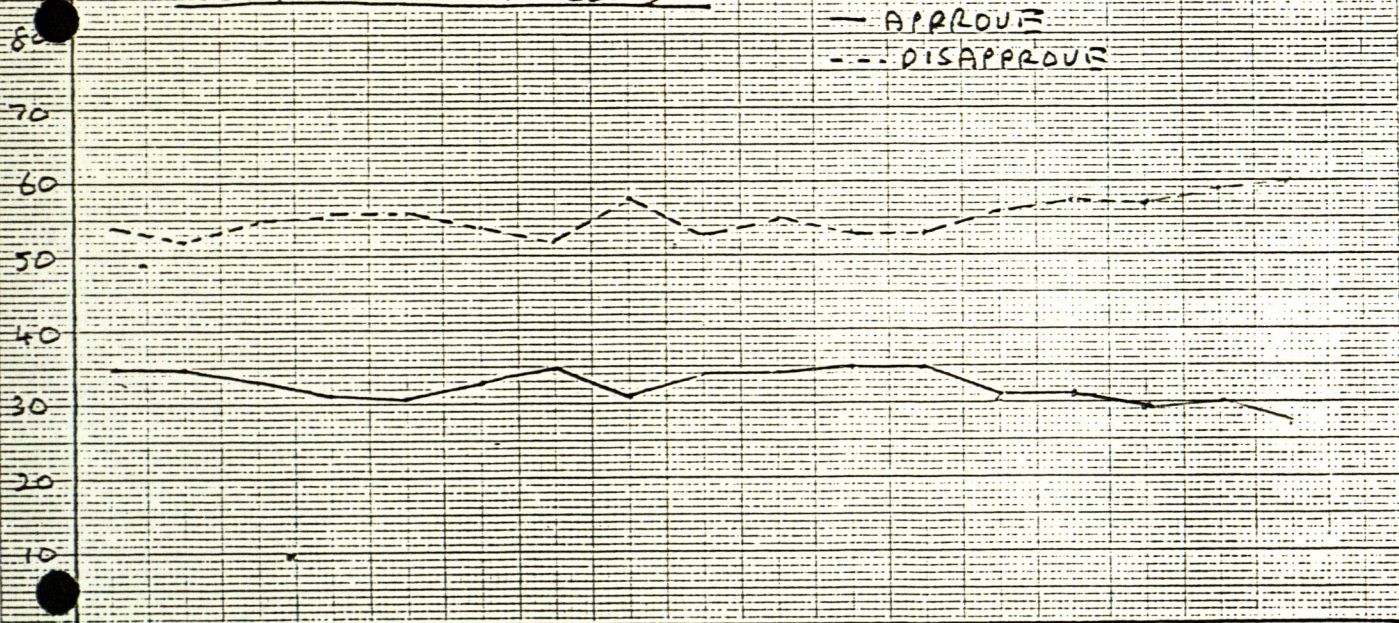
When Gallup asked whether the electorate thought the Conservative Government have been keeping their election promises they found 38% thinking we have, 50% we have not and 11% not answering the question.

VOTING INTENTION



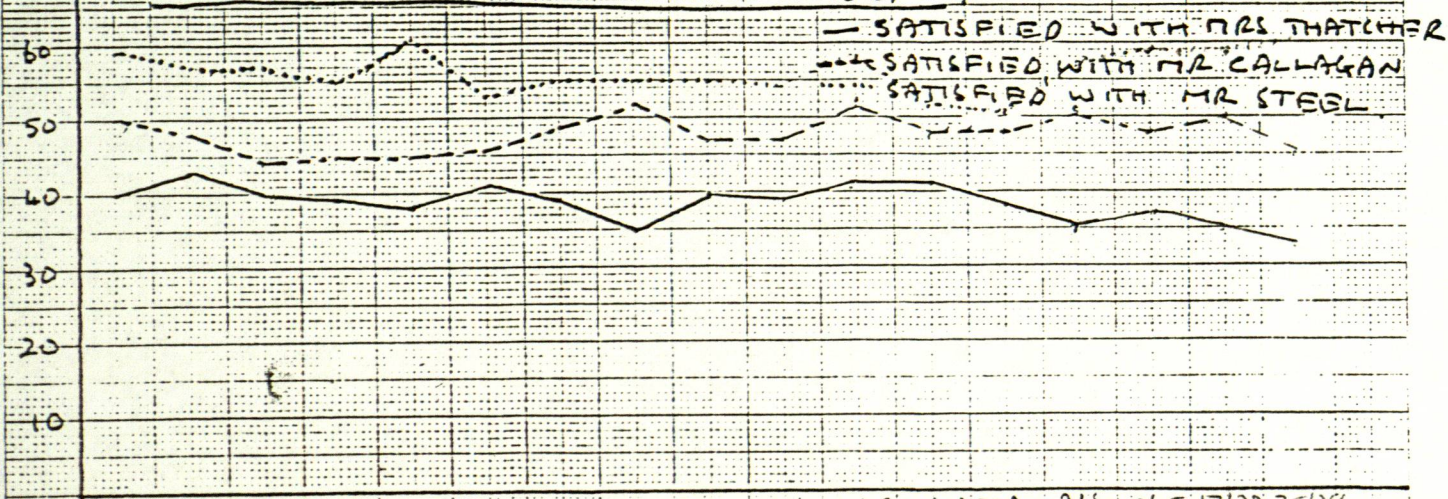
4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30 JUL 6/AUG 14/18 20/26 27 AUG 4/15 11/15 18/23 25/29
 JUNE JUNE JUNE JUNE JULY JULY JULY JULY -4 AUG AUG AUG AUG 1st Sept Sept Sept Sept

GOVERNMENT RECORD



4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30 JUL 6/AUG 14/18 20/26 27 AUG 4/15 11/15 18/23 25/29
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POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS



4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30 JUL 6/AUG 14/18 20/26 27 AUG 4/15 11/15 18/23 25/29
 JUNE JUNE JUNE JUNE JULY JULY JULY JULY -4 AUG AUG AUG AUG 1st Sept Sept Sept Sept