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Public Opinion Background Note 31
(produced 29th August 1980)

1. Introduction

The findings of our latest Gallup tracking study conducted before the publication of the latest unemployment figures on Wednesday, 27th August show a widening of Labour's lead to 8%. This survey which was conducted from 20th to 26th August can be compared with the results from the previous published survey (conducted 14/18 August) which showed a 5½% Labour lead and our earlier unpublished tracking study (6/11 August) which found a 3½% Labour lead .

2. Voting Intention

Details of the trend in support for the main parties from both published Gallup polls and our unpublished Gallup tracking studies are shown in the table below and in the attached graphs.

VOTING INTENTION

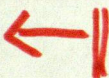
	<u>Con</u> %	<u>Lab</u> %	<u>Lib</u> %	<u>Other</u> %	<u>Lead</u> %
<u>1979</u>					
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June*	42	43.5	12	2.5	-1.5
<u>1980</u>					
4/9 June	39.5	43	15.5	2	-3.5
11/16 June	40.5	45	11.5	3	-4.5**
18/23 June	39	43	15	3	-4
25/30 June	37	45	15	3	-8
2/7 July	37.5	44.5	14.5	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	-5.5**
20/26 August	37.5	45.5	13.0	4	-8.0

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published polls

3. Government Record

No change in government popularity since previous week. 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
20/26 August	35	53	12

* first Post Election Survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest unpublished tracking study found no change in Mrs. Thatcher's popularity when compared with the previous published Gallup poll - 41% of the electorate claiming to be satisfied with Mrs Thatcher's record as Prime Minister. Mr. Callaghan's popularity has fallen as has Mr. Steel's. Details of recent trends in popularity of the three main political leaders are shown in the table below 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- sat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dis- sat.</u> %	<u>Don't know</u> %	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dis- sat.</u> %	<u>Don't 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
30July/ 4 August	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
20/26 Aug	41	53	6	47	38	15	52	21	28

5. Issues

Our tracking study in the week 20/26 August included a series of questions on attitudes on a range of current issues in terms of whether the issues made respondents more favourably inclined towards the Government, less favourably inclined or they made no difference. The latest results show almost no change since the findings from the previous survey (14/18 August) Please see below.

ISSUES

	<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>20/26</u> <u>Aug</u> %
<u>Mrs Thatcher</u> <u>as Prime Minister</u>							
More favourable	30	28	26	29	28	29	26
Less favourable	45	41	47	43	47	43	43
No difference	24	29	25	26	21	26	30
Don't Know	1	3	3	2	4	2	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>The Government's</u> <u>Policy on Trade</u> <u>Union Reform</u>							
More favourable	45	43	44	46	46	46	47
Less favourable	30	29	27	24	28	28	26
No difference	11	12	11	13	11	11	11
Don't know	14	16	18	16	16	16	16
<u>Public Spending</u> <u>Cuts</u>							
More favourable	27	23	24	28	28	28	26
Less favourable	57	60	59	56	58	58	58
No difference	11	11	10	11	9	12	10
Don't know	5	7	7	6	6	7	7
<u>The Cost of</u> <u>Living</u>							
More favourable	11	8	10	8	11	11	11
Less favourable	69	70	68	65	67	64	64
No difference	17	19	19	21	17	22	21
Don't know	3	3	3	5	5	3	4
<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>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>20/26</u> <u>Aug</u> %
<u>The level of Unemployment</u>							
More favourable	5	6	5	6	6	6	4
Less favourable	77	71	76	72	74	72	76
No difference	15	17	15	18	15	19	16
Don't know	3	7	4	5	5	3	4
<u>The Government's Pay Policy</u>							
More favourable	27	29	25	30	32	31	31
Less favourable	41	38	42	39	42	38	40
No difference	17	18	17	16	11	16	14
Don't know	15	16	16	15	15	15	15
<u>The Government's Policy on selling Council Houses</u>							
More favourable	-	-	-	51	52	52	53
Less favourable	-	-	-	23	26	26	24
No difference	-	-	-	19	14	15	15
Don't know	-	-	-	7	8	6	8

6. Published Polls

(i) Marplan (published The Sun August 29th 1980)

The Marplan poll published in the Sun on 29th August had been conducted on August 22nd and covers a range of topics of political and social concern. Marplan asked respondents to rate Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister and found 56% of them rating her as 'very good' or 'good' and 44% as 'poor' or 'very poor' - 83% of Conservative supporters ranked her as 'very good' or 'good' and 20% of Labour supporters. When asked about the reasons for her success Marplan found 40% of respondents selected her leadership qualities, 32% her intelligence, 18% Conservative policies, 6% her personality and 4% the fact that she's a woman.

Marplan also asked about Mrs. Thatcher's policies in terms of whether they have been seen as successful. They found:-

Which of Mrs. Thatcher's policies have been successful

	<u>Electorate</u> % saying successful	<u>Conservatives</u> % saying successful	<u>Labour</u> % saying successful
Foreign Affairs	62	74	45
Taxation Levels	51	67	33
Inflation	44	66	16
Public Spending	44	61	23
Trade Unions	43	58	15
Violence and vandalism	23	29	14
Unemployment	18	30	6

(ii) M.O.R.I. (published Sunday Times 31st August 1980)

The M.O.R.I. poll published in the Sunday Times on 31st August 1980 had clearly been designed as part of the paper's coverage of the T.U.C. Conference - it looked in detail at attitudes amongst the electorate (both trade union members and non-union members) to union reform. The survey which had been conducted from July 24th to 29th found yet again overwhelming support among trade union members for our policies on trade union reform. Among trade union members they found 84% agreeing that 'No strikes should be called until there is a postal ballot of union members concerned' (86% of electorate agreed); 72% agreeing that 'A limit should be placed on the number of pickets allowed at any location' (77% of electorate agreed); 67% agreeing with the idea of a 'ban' on secondary picketing: that is a ban on picketing a company not directly involved in a strike' (76% of the electorate agreed); 62% agreeing with the idea of 'the introduction of postal ballots in the election of union officials; to be paid for by the government (60% of the electorate agreed). There was less support for the idea of social security benefits' to strikers' families being made subject to income tax - 44% of union members agreed with this idea and 51% disagreed (54% of electors agreed and 35% disagreed). On the question of removing the right of those in key industries to strike in return for guaranteed wage increases 39% of union members agreed and 51% disagreed (46% of electors agreed and 37% disagreed).

In addition to these questions M.O.R.I. asked respondents what they thought of trade unions. They found:-

What do Members think of the Unions

	<u>Union Members</u>		<u>Non-Members</u>	
	<u>Agree</u> %	<u>Disagree</u> %	<u>Agree</u> %	<u>Disagree</u> %
Trade unions are essential to protect workers' interests	90	6	65	20
The police should have the power to stop mass picketing	61	31	81	12
The trade union 'closed shop' is a threat to individual liberty.	59	31	73	13
Trade unions have too much power in Britain today.	58	31	77	14
Bad management is more to blame than trade unions for Britain's economic problems	57	23	38	35
Most trade unions today are controlled by a few extremists and militants	55	35	76	14
Trade unions help to approve the efficiency of British industry.	49	33	29	51
The Labour Party should not be so closely linked to the trade unions	46	39	64	19
In the long term the Government's policies will improve the economy	36	55	51	37
Everyone who works should have to belong to a trade union.	36	58	15	74

Although the need for trade unions to protect workers' interests is seen by both unionists and non-unionists there remains very strong support for reform - 61% of trade unionists agree with the idea of the police having the power to stem mass picketing (81% of non trade unionists agree), 59% of trade unionists see the closed shop as a threat to individual liberty (73% of non-unionists take the same view). Trade unions are seen as having too much power - by 58% of trade unions and 77% of the electorate. They are seen as being controlled by a few extremists and militants - 55% of unionists agree with the idea and 76% of the electorate. On the question of the links of the Labour Party with the unions 46% agree with the view 'The Labour Party should not be so closely linked to the trade unions' (64% of the electorate agreed).

(iii) Gallup (published Sunday Telegraph 31st August 1980)

The Gallup eve of T.U.C. Conference poll published in the Sunday Telegraph (31st August 1980) and conducted from August 20 th until August 26th found 50% of trade union members saying they would be willing to accept a wage increase over the next year of about half the rise in the cost of living as a measure to combat inflation.

Gallup found support among both trade unionists and the general public for our trade union reform proposals with overwhelming support for our proposals on postal ballots, secondary picketing and on the closed shop.

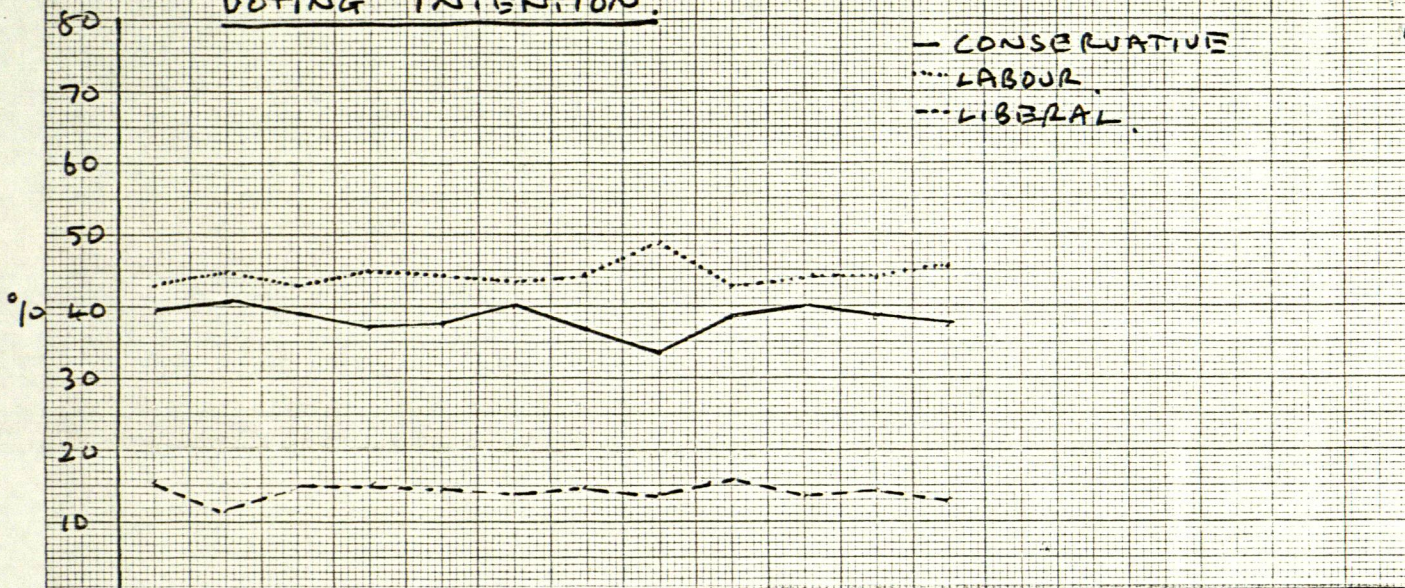
Details of the answers to the key question on wages are given below:-

As a measure to combat inflation would you, yourself be
willing or not to accept

- a) a wage increase over the next 12 months that is about half the rise in the cost of living ? b) No wage increase at all over the next six months?

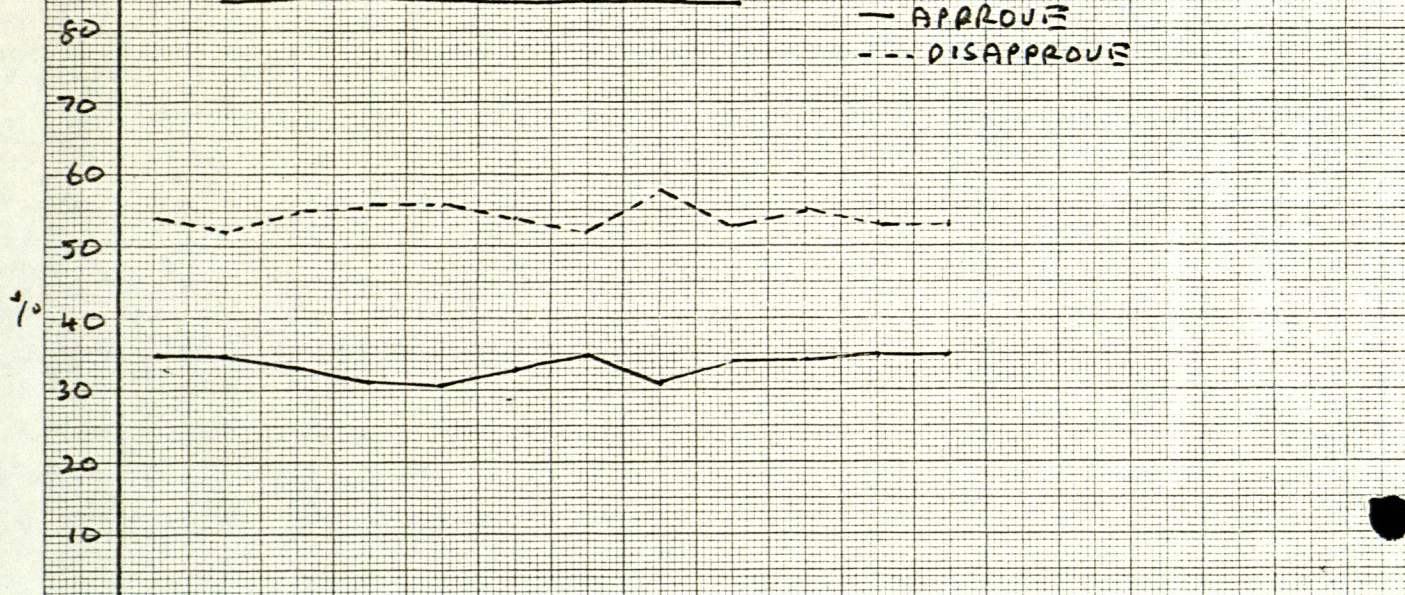
	Electorate %	TU Members %	Electorate %	TU Members %
Yes	47	50	35	38
No	25	31	37	43
If everyone else did	10	11	11	9
Don't know	18	8	17	10

VOTING INTENTION



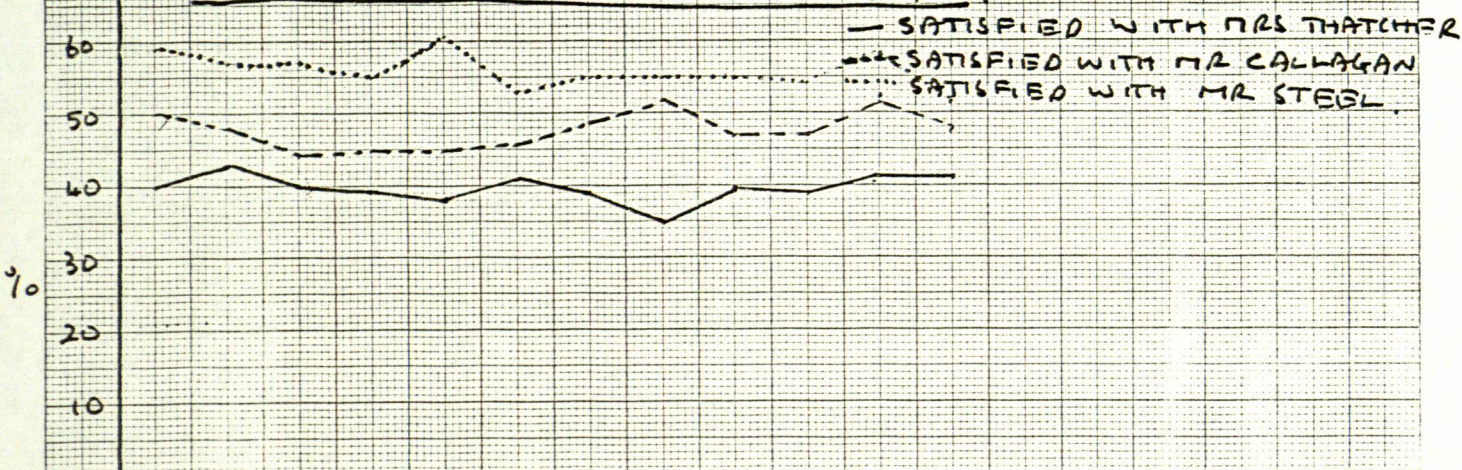
4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30 JUL - 4 AUG 6/11 14/18 20/26
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GOVERNMENT RECORD



4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30 JUL - 4 AUG 6/11 14/18 20/26
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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 - 4 AUG 6/11 14/18 20/26
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