

# Conservative Research Department

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CONFIDENTIAL

*Dear Derek,*

## PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 85

The interviewing for our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted from 30th September to 5th October. It was conducted largely during the period of the Labour Party Conference, although it overlapped slightly with the start of the Social Democrat Conference.

The survey found a sharp jump in support for Labour and a slight increase in support for the Conservatives. It also found a slight fall in support for the Liberals and the Social Democrats.

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## PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 85

(produced 11th October 1981)

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 30th September to 5th October. It was conducted largely during the period of the Labour Party Conference and was completed at the start of the Social Democratic Conference.

2. Voting Intention

The standard voting intention question (unprompted and excluding don't knows) found a marginal increase in support for the Conservatives from 24½% in the previous week (23/28 September) to 26% in the latest study (30th Sept 5th October). Support for Labour jumped from 33½% in the week (23/28 September) to 38% in the week 30th September 5th October. Support for the Social Democrats dropped slightly from 24% (23/28 September) to 21% in the latest study (30th Sept/5th Oct). Liberal support dropped from 16½% (23/28 September) to 12% in the latest study (30th September/5th October).

VOTING INTENTION

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1979						
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0
3/8 June	31.0	40.0	14.0	12.5	2.5	-9.0
9/15 June	29.5	37.5	18.0	12.5	2.5	-8.0**
16/22 June	32.0	37.0	15.5	13.0	2.5	-5.0
24/30 June	29.0	40.0	17.0	12.0	2.0	-11.0
1/6 July	30.5	39.5	14.0	13.0	3.0	-9.0
8/13 July	30.0	40.5	14.5	12.0	3.0	-10.5**
15/20 July	29.0	36.0	16.0	17.0	2.0	-7.0
22/27 July	26.0	38.0	13.0	21.0	2.0	-12.0
29 July/ 3 Aug	25.5	40.0	11.5	20.5	2.5	-14.5
5/10 August	27.0	36.0	15.0	18.0	4.0	-9.0
12/17 August	28.0	38.5	13.0	19.0	1.5	-10.5**
19/24 August	29.0	34.0	17.0	18.0	2.0	-5.0
26/31 August	26.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	2.0	-15.0
1/7 September	25.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	-16.0
9/14 September	32.0	36.5	11.5	17.5	2.5	-4.5 **
16/21 September	25.0	36.5	16.0	19.0	3.5	-11.5
23/28 September	24.5	33.5	16.5	24.0	1.5	-9.0
30th September/5th October	26.0	38.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-12.0

\* First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published Polls

In addition to the standard voting intention question (which forms the basis of the analysis considered above) and does not include specific reference to any of the political parties - our Gallup tracking study includes two additional questions as to how respondents said they would vote if they could support (a) a Social Democrat candidate or (b) a Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance candidate. Details of answers we have obtained in response to these questions are shown below. It should be noted that these particular questions have not been re-calculated to exclude don't knows.

VOTING INTENTION IF

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE  
(including don't knows)

	<u>3/8</u>	<u>9/15</u>	<u>16/22</u>	<u>24/30</u>	<u>1/6</u>	<u>8/13</u>	<u>15/20</u>	<u>22/27</u>	<u>29 July</u>	<u>5/10</u>	<u>12/17</u>
	June	June	June	June	July	July	July	July	3 Aug	Aug	Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	22	23	23	21	22	21	21	18	20	20	20
Labour	27	28	28	31	29	29	28	28	30	27	27
Liberal	9	12	11	11	8	9	11	9	7	8	8
Others	2	1	2	1½	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
Social Democrat Party	23	20	19	19	20	20	23	29	26	25	26
Social Democrat/ Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/it depends	17	16	16	16½	16	18	16	16	15	18	18

	<u>19/24</u>	<u>26/31</u>	<u>1/7</u>	<u>9/14</u>	<u>16/21</u>	<u>23/28</u>	<u>30th Sept</u>
	Aug	Aug	Sept	Sept	Sept	Sept	5th Oct
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	20	19	23	18	18	19
Labour	25	28	29	27	27	23	29
Liberal	11	9	10	7	11	11	8
Others	1	1	2	1	2	1	2
Social Democrat Party	25	24	25	24	27	30	25
Social Democrat/ Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/it depends	16	18	15	18	15	17	17

VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/LIBERAL ALLIANCE

	<u>3/8</u>	<u>9/15</u>	<u>16/22</u>	<u>24/30</u>	<u>1/6</u>	<u>8/13</u>	<u>15/20</u>	<u>22/27</u>	<u>29 July</u>	<u>5/10</u>	<u>12/17</u>
	June	June	June	June	July	July	July	July	3 Aug	Aug	Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	22	24	20	22	20	21	18	20	20	19
Labour	27	27	27	29	28	27	27	27	29	25	27
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1
Social Dem. Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Democrat/ Liberal Alliance	32	30	28	32	28	31	33	37	33	33	33
Don't know/it depends	18	19	19	18	19	19	18	16	16	19	19

	<u>19/24</u>	<u>26/31</u>	<u>1/7</u>	<u>9/14</u>	<u>16/21</u>	<u>23/28</u>	<u>30th Sept</u>
	Aug	Aug	Sept	Sept	Sept	Sept	5th Oct
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	19	20	23	16	18	18
Labour	25	27	28	26	26	23	27
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Social Democrat Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Democrat/ Liberal Alliance	35	31	33	32	40	40	34
Don't know/it depends	18	22	18	18	16	19	19

Changes in support for the parties in answer to these questions closely parallels the changes in support for the parties we found in response to the standard unprompted voting intention question. Details of the answers to the three standard voting intention questions are given below:-

VOTING INTENTION QUESTIONS

	<u>Standard Voting Intention</u>		<u>Voting if Social Democratic Candidate</u>		<u>Voting if Social Democratic/ Liberal Alliance Candidate</u>	
	%		%		%	
	<u>23/28 Sept</u>	<u>30 Sept 5 Oct</u>	<u>23/28 Sept</u>	<u>30 Sept 5 Oct</u>	<u>23/28 Sept</u>	<u>30 Sept 5 Oct</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	22	23	18	19	18	18
Labour	30	33	23	29	23	27
Liberal	15	11	11	8	-	-
Social Democrat	21	19	30	25	-	-
SD/Liberal	-	-	-	-	40	34
Others	2	3	1	2	1	2
Don't know	10	12	17	17	19	19

3. Government Record

Our latest study found no change in the level of approval of the record of the Government - 21% approved, 70% disapproved. Details are shown in the table below:-

3. Government Record

The latest 'tracking' study found no change in the level of approval of the record of the government - 21% approved and 66% disapproved. Details are shown in the table below:-

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<u>1981</u>			
3/8 June	26	60	14
9/15 June	26	63	11
16/22 June	29	59	12
24/30 June	23	67	10
1/6 July	24	63	13
8/13 July	23	66	11
15/20 July	23	66	11
22/27 July	23	66	11
29 July/ 3 August	23	65	12
5/10 August	23	64	13
12/17 August	23	66	11
19/24 August	26	64	10
26/31 August	23	64	13
1/7 September	23	65	13
9/14 September	26	63	11
16/21 September	21	67	11
23/28 September	21	66	13
30th Sept/5th Oct	21	70	10

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

This latest study found almost no change in the level of support for Mrs Thatcher, a sharp improvement in the level of approval for Mr Foot and a slight fall in the level of approval for Mr Steel.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1981</u>									
3/8 June	36	58	6	29	41	21	59	19	22
9/15 June	33	61	6	28	48	24	61	18	21
16/22 June	34	60	6	29	50	21	60	20	21
24/30 June	30	65	5	28	52	21	60	19	21
1/6 July	31	62	7	25	54	21	60	17	23
8/13 July	30	65	5	25	52	23	56	20	24
15/20 July	31	65	4	22	59	19	59	19	22
22/27 July	26	68	6	23	55	22	59	21	21
29 July/ 3 Aug	27	68	5	26	53	20	57	23	20
5/10 August	30	65	5	27	56	17	62	18	21
12/17 August	28	66	6	23	57	20	61	18	21
19/24 August	33	61	6	25	51	24	63	19	19
26/31 August	28	66	6	29	52	20	60	20	21
1/7 September	28	67	5	29	52	19	63	18	19
9/14 September	32	62	6	28	54	18	56	21	23
16/21 September	27	68	5	28	52	20	64	16	20
23/28 September	28	67	5	25	57	18	64	17	19
30th Sept/5th Oct	27	68	6	31	49	20	60	20	20

5. Published Polls(a) Marplan (Guardian 9th October 1981)

The Guardian on October 9th included the report of a Marplan survey conducted among Conservative voters only on October 5th and 6th. Marplan asked:-

Q. Thinking about the economic policies of the Conservative Government, do you think they should (a) pursue the policies more rigorously than at present (b) carry on as now or (c) reverse the policies?

	Total Conservative Voters	ABC1 Conservative Voters	C2 DE Conservative Voters
	%	%	%
Pursue more rigorously	20	23	15
Go on as now	43	47	38
Reverse policies	28	24	35
Don't know	9	7	12

20% of Conservative voters wanted the Government to pursue its economic policies more rigorously, 43% that it should go on as now and 28% reverse policies.

Q. The Government has a maximum of two and a half years left in office; do you think that the state of the country will (a) improve in that time (b) stay in the same state as now or (c) get worse.

	Total Conservative Voters	ABC1 Conservative Voters	C2 DE Conservative Voters
	%	%	%
Get better	42	48	35
Stay the same	25	24	26
Get worse	28	24	32
Don't know	6	4	8

42% of Conservative voters saw things getting better before the next election, 25% thought they would stay the same as now and 28% get worse.

When asked who they would like to see win if there was an election for the Leader of the Conservative Party - 39% of Conservative voters mentioned Mrs Thatcher, 18% Mr Heath, 16% Lord Carrington and 8% Mr Powell.

Marplan also asked Conservative voters 'On the whole, do you think the Conservative Government has been successful or unsuccessful in each of their following aims or policies.' They found:-

	<u>Successful</u>	<u>Unsuccessful</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Tackling Britain's economic problems (%)	42	47	11
Restoring incentives by reducing personal tax liabilities (%)	27	56	17
Improving law and order (%)	46	45	8
Strengthening family life (%)	21	40	40
Strengthening Britain's defence forces (%)	56	31	13
Reforming trade union law (%)	44	39	17

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	<u>Successful</u> %	<u>Unsuccessful</u> %	<u>Don't know</u> %
Rationalising publicly owned industries (%)	42	32	26
Improving Britain's lot in the EEC (%)	58	31	12
Cutting local authority spending (%)	77	23	6
Reducing the size of the Civil Service (%)	58	28	14

When asked whether they saw the Conservative Party as being too right wing or too left wing Marplan found 35% of Conservatives saw the Conservative Party as being too right wing, 8% too left-wing and 45% about right.

(b) MORI (6th October, 8th October and 10th October)

The Times on 6th October, 8th October and 10th October included the results of an MORI survey, conducted among the electorate as a whole (Aug 20th - 2nd Sept) and among young people in the 15-24 age group in Croydon and Newcastle upon Tyne also in the period August 20th to 2nd September. Some of the key findings from the research are summarised below:-

Issues

(1) Q. What would you say is the most important issue facing Britain today?

67% of the electorate mentioned unemployment being the most important issue facing Britain. In the 15-24 age group, 74% mentioned unemployment, in Newcastle 83% mentioned unemployment and in Croydon 65%.

The second most important issue mentioned was inflation, mentioned by 14% of the electorate and 9% of the 15-24 age group nationally.

(ii) Causes of Unemployment

MORI asked respondents 'What do you think are the main causes of unemployment?' - 31% of respondents in the 15-24 age group mentioned the Government (33% in Newcastle, and 29% in Croydon). 15% mentioned the world situation (12% in Newcastle and 18% in Croydon). 10% mentioned immigration (11% in Newcastle and 9% in Croydon).

(iii) Causes of Riots

MORI asked respondents what they thought were the main causes of the recent riots.

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	<u>All</u> 15-24 %	<u>Newcastle</u> 15-24 %	<u>Croydon</u> 15-24 %
Unemployment	62	64	61
Racial tension/Blacks	26	21	32
Police behaviour	17	11	23
Agitators/ militants	12	11	13
Bad housing	8	5	10
Government policies	7	9	5
Breakdown of parental authority	5	2	9
Media coverage	4	2	6
Hot weather	-	0	1
Other	14	11	17
Don't know	9	12	5

(v) Expectations for the Future

MORI asked 'Over the next 12 months, will the country's general economic condition, improve, stay the same or get worse?' They found:-

	<u>All Young</u> People in sample %	<u>Young People</u> in Newcastle %	<u>Young People</u> in Croydon %	<u>All</u> Adults %
Improve	18	10	25	26
Stay the same	24	23	24	25
Get worse	56	65	47	44
Don't know	2	2	4	5

55% of young people claimed they are dissatisfied with their future prospects. 52% saw Britain's prospects as being worse than those in other countries.

(c) MORI (Daily Star 5th October 1981)

The results of an MORI poll conducted in Croydon N.W. on October 1st and 2nd were published in the Daily Star on Monday 5th October 1981.

MORI found 29% of electors claiming they will vote Conservative, 34% Liberal -SDP and 36% Labour. On the question of issues, 61% of electors in Croydon N.W. thought unemployment was the main issue facing Britain today. On the question of which parties are thought to have the best policies on a range of issue, MORI found:-

	<u>CON</u> %	<u>LAB</u> %	<u>LIB</u> %	<u>SDP</u> %
Unemployment	14	41	8	6
Inflation/prices	25	27	7	6
Defence	38	23	5	4
Common Market	28	28	7	5
Public spending	28	30	7	5
Taxation	24	26	7	4
Education	28	29	8	5
Immigration/ Race relations	25	24	8	4
Law and Order	38	19	6	3
Strikes /Industrial relations	27	32	6	4
Housing	17	40	7	4
Public Transport	17	39	4	2

(Don't know and 'None of them' excluded)