

Conservative Research Department

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KB/sgc

Mr Richard Ryder
10 Downing Street
London SW1

26th January 1981

Dear Richard,

Public Opinion Background Note 49

I attach a note setting out the results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study. The results from this survey are the same as the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday 22nd January.

In terms of Labour lead, the latest study found no significant change but it is disturbing to note the upward movement in support for the Liberals and the increase in popularity of Mr Steel. We clearly need to monitor carefully public attitudes both to the Liberals and a possible Centre Party.

Yours
Kent

D. K. Britto

Enc.

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 49

(produced 23rd January 1981)

1. Introduction

The results of our latest 'tracking' study are the same as the results of the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday January 22nd. This poll conducted from January 14th to 20th found a 13½% Labour lead compared with 12½% in the previous published Gallup poll (conducted 10/15 December 1980). The survey found 18½% of the electorate saying they would vote Liberal - this compares with 14½% in the previous published poll (10/15 December) and 15% in our last unpublished tracking study (7/12 January). We will need to carefully monitor this tendency to an upward trend in support for the Liberals. In terms of published Gallup polls this latest figure for Liberal support is the highest since the General Election - however it is worth noting that in one of our unpublished tracking studies in each October Liberal support reached 20%.

2. Voting Intention

	<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*	42.0	43.5	13.0	2.5	-1.5
<u>1980</u>					
27 Aug/1 Sept	37.0	49.0	11.5	2.5	-12.0
2/8 Sept	36.5	48.5	12.5	2.5	-12.0
10/15 Sept	35.5	45.0	16.5	3.0	-9.5**
17/22 Sept	35.0	47.0	14.0	4.0	-12.0
25/29 Sept	35.5	47.0	15.0	2.5	-11.5
1/6 Oct	40.0	43.0	13.5	3.5	-3.0**
8/14 Oct	35.5	41.5	20.0	3.0	-6.0
15/20 Oct	40.5	43.0	14.0	2.5	-2.5**
22/27 Oct	37.5	42.0	18.0	2.5	-4.5
29 Oct/3 Nov	34.5	47.5	16.0	2.0	-13.0
5/10 Nov	41.5	40.5	14.0	4.0	+1.0
12/17 Nov	36.5	47.0	15.0	1.5	-10.5**
19/24 Nov	35.0	48.0	14.0	2.0	-13.0
26 Nov/1 Dec	35.0	49.5	13.0	2.5	-14.5
3/8 Dec	35.0	47.0	14.5	3.5	-12.0
10/15 Dec	35.0	47.5	14.5	3.0	-12.5**
<u>1981</u>					
7/12 Jan	34.0	48.0	15.0	3.0	-14.0
14/20 Jan	33.0	46.5	18.5	2.0	-13.5**

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published Polls

Voting Intention (continued)

The 13½% Labour lead in this latest private tracking study compares with a 6% Labour lead in December 1971 and 7½% in January 1972.

3. Government Record

Although the latest published Gallup study shows a drop in Government popularity when compared with the previous published survey, the fall is not significant if we compare it with the previous weekly unpublished results from the same question. 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>1980</u>			
27 Aug/1st Sept	31	56	13
2/8 Sept	31	58	11
10/15 Sept	29	57	13
17/22 Sept	30	59	12
25/29 Sept	27	60	13
1/6 Oct	30	57	13
8/14 Oct	32	55	13
15/20 Oct	34	54	12
22/27 Oct	29	60	11
20 Oct/ 3 Nov	30	59	12
5/10 Nov	32	54	14
12/17 Nov	29	60	11
19/24 Nov	27	60	13
26 Nov/1st Dec	27	62	11
3/8 Dec	26	64	11
10/15 Dec	29	59	12
<u>1981</u>			
7/12 Jan	27	61	12
14/20 Jan	26	63	11

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

In terms of published polls both Mrs Thatcher's and Mr Foot's personal popularity dropped. Mrs Thatcher's popularity is now at the lowest level Mr Heath's popularity fell to in June 1971. In the case of Mr Foot, only Mr Heath in 1967 has been less popular as Leader of the Opposition since Gallup started to keep track

Popularity of Political Leaders (continued)

of the popularity of Leaders on a regular basis in the mid 1950's. Mr Steel's popularity has improved when compared both with the last published poll (10/15 December) and our last unpublished study (7/12 January).

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</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>1980</u>									
27 Aug/1 Sept	38	56	6	-	-	-	50	21	29
2/8 Sept	35	59	6	-	-	-	57	18	25
10/15 Sept	37	58	5	-	-	-	59	19	22
17/22 Sept	35	59	5	-	-	-	59	17	25
25/29 Sept	33	60	6	-	-	-	60	18	22
1/6 Oct	38	56	5	-	-	-	56	20	25
8/14 Oct	37	58	5	-	-	-	60	16	24
15/20 Oct	38	56	6	-	-	-	57	20	24
22/27 Oct	37	57	6	-	-	-	50	34	16
29 Oct/3 Nov	35	58	7	-	-	-	55	18	26
5/10 Nov	39	53	8	-	-	-	49	17	34
12/17 Nov	34	60	6	38	38	24	54	22	23
19/24 Nov	32	63	5	41	37	22	58	20	22
26 Nov/1st Dec	32	63	5	38	39	23	54	18	27
3/8 Dec	33	62	5	28	33	39	58	18	24
10/15 Dec	35	59	6	30	35	35	59	17	24
<u>1981</u>									
7/12 Jan	33	61	6	24	39	36	56	21	23
14/20 Jan	31	63	5	26	42	32	63	19	18

5. Published Polls

In addition to the standard Gallup voting intention, government record and popularity of Leaders question the Gallup poll in the Daily Telegraph on 22nd January also included the results of a series of other questions.

Gallup found 69% of the electorate thinking unemployment is the most important problem facing the country and only 13% that inflation is the most important problem. 69% thought the government should give greater attention to unemployment (when compared with inflation). 11% of those interviewed claimed to be personally affected by unemployment and 15% to have somebody in their family affected.

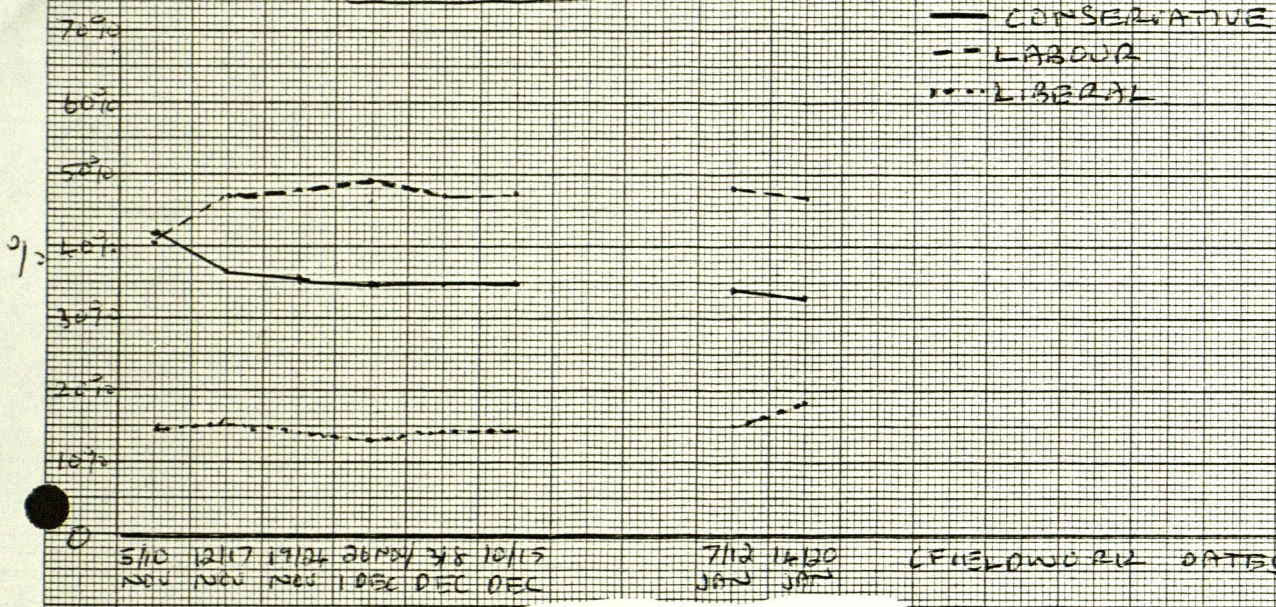
Among those in work 61% thought their present job was safe but 32% thought they had a chance of being unemployed. When Gallup

Published Polls (continued)

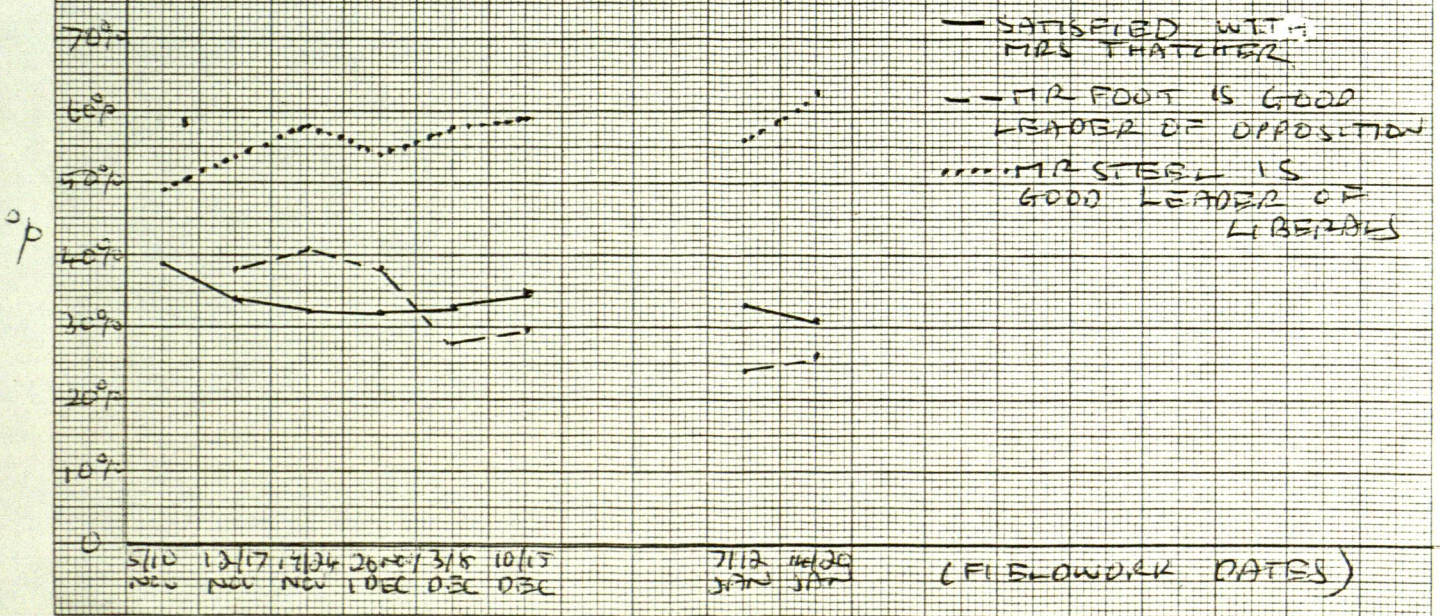
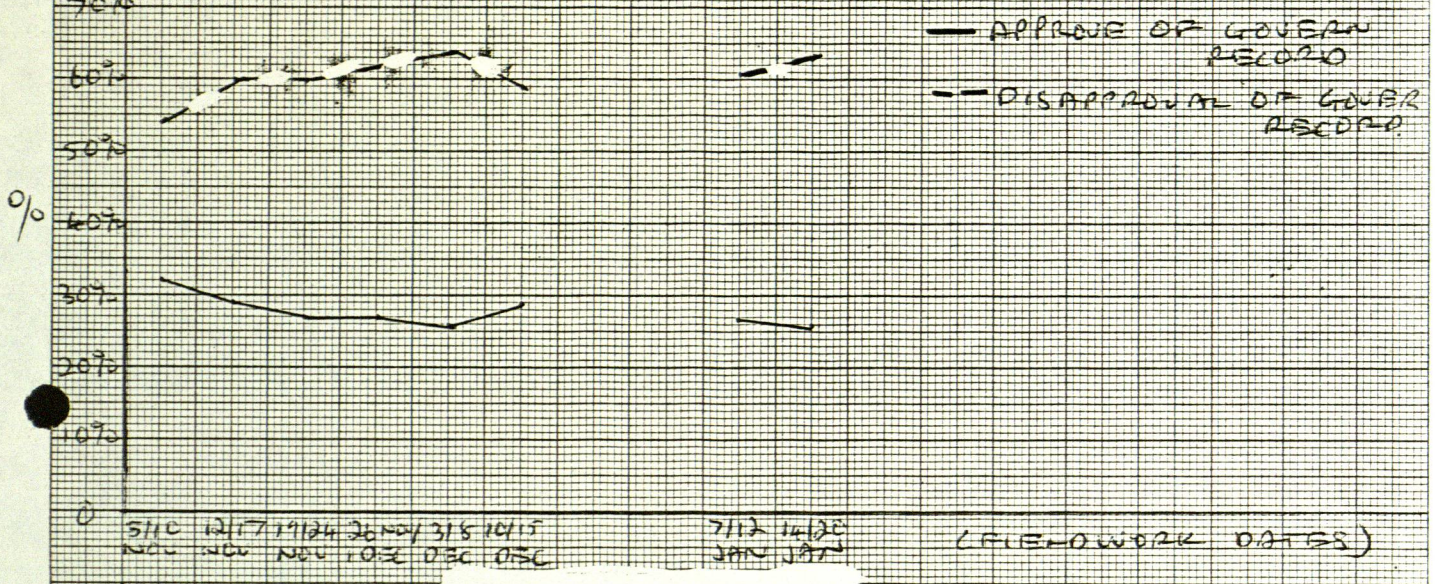
explored the question of whether respondents thought they would face problems in getting a job if they were unemployed 36% thought they would find jobs fairly quickly and 56% thought that it might take some time to get jobs.

BACKGROUND GRAPHS

VOTING INTENTION



APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT RECORD



FIELDWORK DATES