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Dear Richard,

22nd September 1980

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 34

I attach a copy of the results from our latest 'tracking' study. The findings from this survey are the same as those published in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday September 18th. They show Labour having a lead of 9½% compared with the previous published Gallup poll (conducted 14th/18th August) which had found a 5½% Labour lead and the previous unpublished 'tracking' study (conducted 2nd/8th September) which had found a 12% Labour lead.

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Public Opinion Background Note 34

(produced 21 September 1980)

1. Introduction

The results of our latest Gallup tracking study conducted between September 10th and 15th are the same as the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on September 18th. This latest poll found a 9½% Labour lead compared with 5½% in the previous published Gallup poll (conducted 14/18 August) and 12% in our unpublished private Gallup tracking study (conducted 2/8th September).

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Details of the trend in support for the main parties from both published Gallup polls and our unpublished tracking studies are shown in the table below and in the attached graphs.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	-4.0
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 **

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published polls

Support for the Conservative Party has dropped fairly consistently since early August and our Gallup survey shows an increase in Liberal support to 16½%. As always with the tracking exercise we will need to wait several weeks before drawing any major conclusion with regard to a possible Liberal upsurge. The increase in Liberal support in the latest survey follows the increase in Mr Steel's personal popularity we found in our previous study conducted just after the Liberal Party Conference.

3. Government Record

Approval for the record of the Government showed a further fall in the week 10 - 15th September when Gallup found only 29% of the electorate approving of the record of the Government - the lowest level in published polls since the election.

For full details of trend in answers to the standard tracking question please see table below and attached graph.

	<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>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

* first Post Election Survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs Thatcher's personal record showed a slight improvement from the low level it reached in our previous unpublished survey (3/8th September). This is the lowest level Mrs Thatcher's personal popularity has reached in published polls but it has been lower in our private tracking studies.

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Popularity of Political Leaders (continued)

Almost no change in popularity of Mr Callaghan or Mr Steel. Mr Steel's popularity has not fallen back to the level it was before the Liberal Party Conference.

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>
		<u>sat</u>	<u>Know</u>		<u>sat</u>	<u>Know</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	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

5. Issues

Our weekly tracking questions on public attitudes to a range of current issues found yet again almost no change. When asked about reactions to the Government's taxation policy - an issue that we had not included for some weeks (25% saying it made them more favourably inclined towards the Government 23/28 July) we found very little change (28% saying it made them more favourably inclined towards the Government 10/15 September). We found a similar state of affairs on attitudes to the Government's policy on the Common Market (27% saying it made them more favourably inclined towards the Government 23/28 July) and 27% saying it made them more favourably inclined towards the Government 10/15 September. We included one new topic in our list in our latest study and found 41% of the electorate saying that the Government's policy on defence made them more favourably inclined towards the Government.

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>27 Aug</u> <u>-1 Sep</u> %	<u>2/8</u> <u>Sep</u> %	<u>10/15</u> <u>Sept</u> %
<u>Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister</u>										
More favourable	30	28	26	29	28	29	26	26	25	25
Less favourable	45	41	47	43	47	43	43	46	47	48
No difference	24	29	25	26	21	26	30	26	26	26
Don't Know	1	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	2
<u>The Government's Taxation Policy</u>										
More favourable	27	24	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Less favourable	43	42	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
No difference	21	22	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Don't Know	9	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
<u>The Government's Policy on Trade Union Reforms</u>										
More favourable	45	43	44	46	46	48	47	47	44	47
Less favourable	30	29	27	24	28	25	26	28	30	27
No difference	11	12	11	13	11	11	11	10	11	11
Don't Know	14	16	18	16	16	16	16	15	15	15
<u>Public Spending Cuts</u>										
More favourable	27	23	24	28	28	25	26	25	23	27
Less favourable	57	60	59	56	58	56	58	60	61	55
No difference	11	11	10	11	9	12	10	10	9	12
Don't Know	5	7	7	6	6	7	7	5	7	6
<u>The Cost of Living</u>										
More favourable	11	8	10	8	11	11	11	10	8	10
Less favourable	69	70	68	65	67	64	64	67	70	69
No difference	17	19	19	21	17	22	21	19	17	17
Don't Know	3	3	3	5	5	3	4	4	4	3
<u>The Level of Unemployment</u>										
More favourable	5	6	5	6	6	6	4	5	5	4
Less favourable	77	71	76	72	74	72	76	77	80	82
No difference	15	17	15	18	15	19	16	16	12	12
Don't Know	3	7	4	5	5	3	4	2	3	2
<u>The Government's Pay Policy</u>										
More favourable	27	29	25	30	32	31	31	32	29	33
Less favourable	41	38	42	39	42	38	40	37	41	37
No difference	17	18	17	16	11	16	14	15	15	14
Don't Know	15	16	16	15	15	15	15	16	15	16
<u>The Government's Policy on selling Council Houses</u>										
More favourable	-	-	-	51	52	52	53	51	54	51
Less favourable	-	-	-	23	26	26	24	27	24	27
No difference	-	-	-	19	14	15	15	16	14	11
Don't Know	-	-	-	7	8	6	8	7	8	15

6. Published Polls(a) Gallup Poll (published Daily Telegraph September 18th 1980)

The Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on September 18th included in addition to the standard tracking questions a range of other questions some of which the Telegraph published - Gallup have made all the results (including some the Telegraph did not publish) available to us.

Gallup asked the electorate what they regarded as the most important problem facing the country at present and found 64% of the electorate regard unemployment as the most important problem - only 18% mentioned inflation. This is a complete change from the start of the year when inflation was regarded as the most urgent problem by the majority of electors. The table below shows how attitudes have changed with regard to the most important issue since earlier this year:-

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

	<u>Sept</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>Aug</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>July</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>June</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>May</u> <u>1980</u> %
Inflation	18	25	27	38	41
Unemployment	64	53	49	29	23
Other Economic Problems	5	4	3	6	5

When Gallup showed respondents a list of ten possible causes of unemployment the world recession (46%) and foreign competition (43%) almost tied as the most after chosen reasons. These were closely followed by unjustified wage increases (37%) and Government policies (34%). When Gallup asked what respondents thought was the main single cause of unemployment they found 21% blaming the world recession and 18% Government policies.

Please see below for details:-

MAIN CAUSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

- (a) Which if any, of these would you say have been causes of the present unemployment figures
- (b) And what would you say has been the main cause.

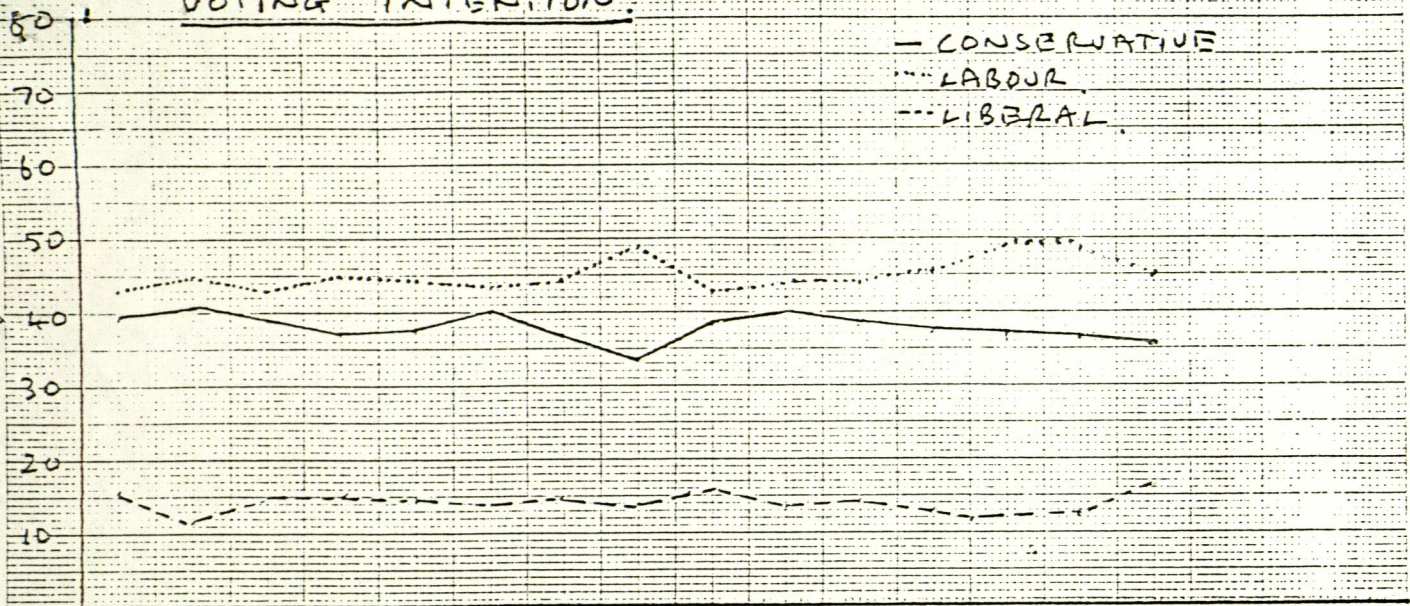
	(a)%	(b)%
World recession	46	21
Foreign competition	43	13
Unjustified wage increase	37	13
Government policies	34	18
High interest rates	32	4
Trade Unions	31	10
Goods from the Common Market	30	8
People not wanting to work	26	6
Strong pound	18	2
Employers	8	1
Others	5	3
Don't Know	1	3

When asked which should have priority in terms of Government action - inflation or unemployed - 33% thought inflation should have priority and 59% unemployment. 73% of the electorate (46% of Conservative supporters, 89% of Labour supporters and 82% of Liberal supporters) believe that the Government is not doing enough to deal with unemployment. 62% of the electorate (26% of Conservative supporters, 86% of Labours supporters and 70% of Liberal supporters) think that Government policies on unemployment should be changed. When asked whether they thought they unemployment situation was worse than in the 1930's - 13% thought it was 'worse', 38% 'better', 21% 'same' and 28% did not answer the question.

(b) Marplan (published Sun September 19th 1980

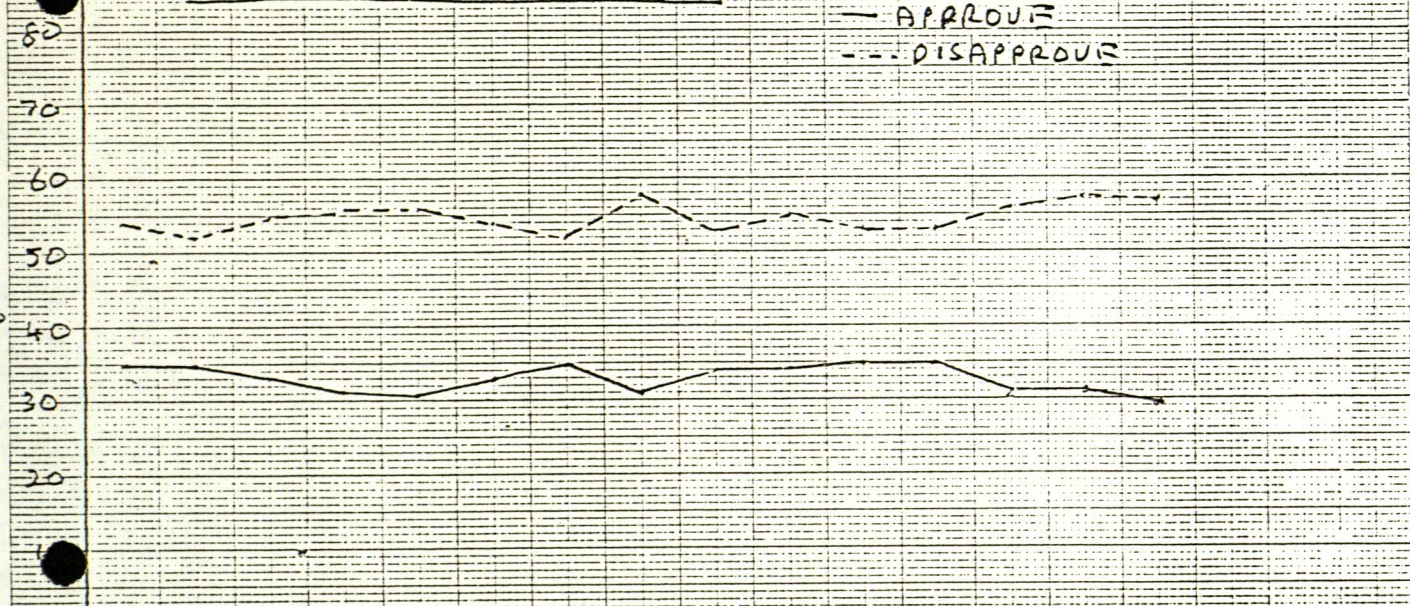
A Marplan survey published in the Sun on September 19th and conducted on September 15th looked at a range of sporting and other issues including attitudes to nuclear power. They found 16% thought nuclear power stations were 'a very serious danger', 30% 'a considerable danger', 41% 'hardly danger at all' and 13% 'no danger at all'. We asked about the Government's programme to build more nuclear power stations - 15% thought we should 'push ahead with it', 55% 'carry on, but tighten security measures', 22% 'suspend further development until we know more' and 8% 'stop the whole programme'.

VOTING INTENTION.



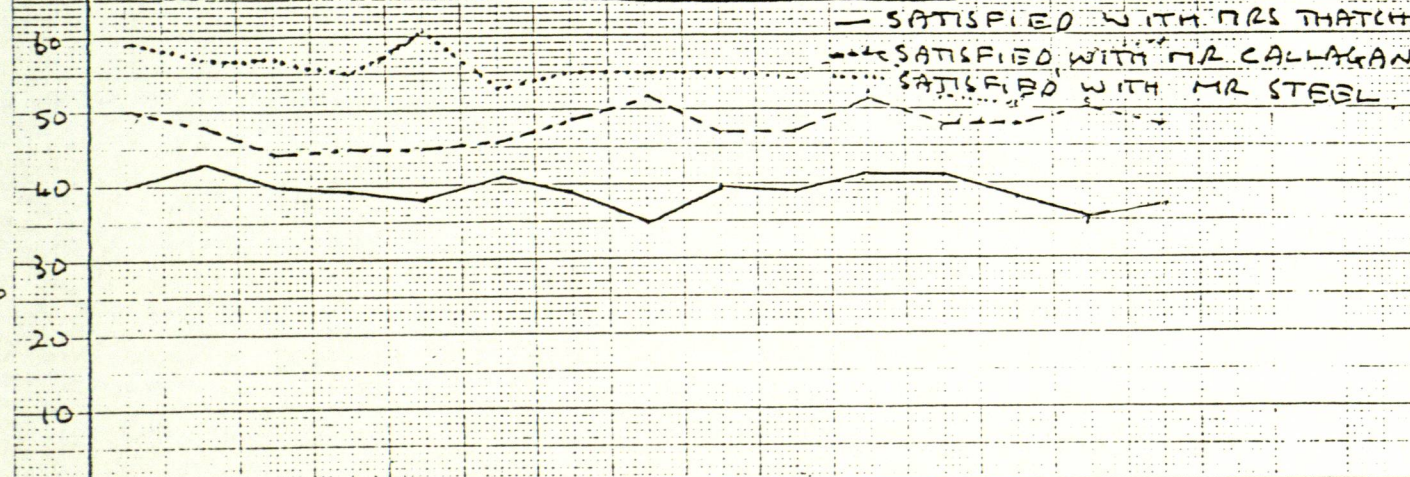
4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30/6/11 14/18 20/26 27 Aug 4/9 11/15
 JUNE JUNE JUNE JUNE JULY JULY JULY JULY -4 AUG AUG AUG 1st Sept 8th Sept

GOVERNMENT RECORD



4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30/6/11 14/18 20/26 27 Aug 4/9 11/15
 JUNE JUNE JUNE JUNE JULY JULY JULY JULY -4 AUG AUG AUG 1st Sept 8th Sept

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS



4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30/6/11 14/18 20/26 27 Aug 4/9 11/15
 JUNE JUNE JUNE JUNE JULY JULY JULY JULY -4 AUG AUG AUG 1st Sept 8th Sept