

Conservative Research Department

BOX

32 Smith Square Westminster SW1P 3HH Telephone 01-222 9511

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Richard Ryder Esq.,
10 Downing Street,
London S.W.1

md

DKB/JMH

8th September 1980

Dear Richard,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 32

I attach a copy of my regular Public Opinion Background Note which includes details of our latest Gallup Tracking study conducted from 27th August to 1st September. This research was conducted after publication of the latest Unemployment figures and showed a further widening of Labour's lead to 12%.

Keith

KEITH BRITTO

CONFIDENTIAL

Public Opinion Background Note 32
(produced 6th September 1980)

1. Introduction

Our Gallup tracking study conducted after the publication of the July unemployment figures on Wednesday 27th August found Labour's lead widening to 12% compared with 8% in the previous week. Our latest tracking study was conducted from 27th August to 1st September and the 12% Labour lead can be compared with the 5½% Gallup found in their last published poll (conducted 14/18 August). The Labour lead in the latest study is the highest since the week immediately after the publication of the June unemployment figures in late July when Labour's lead widened to 15½%.

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Details of the trend in support for the main parties from both published Gallup polls and our unpublished Gallup tracking studies are shown in the table below and in the attached graphs.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

*First Gallup post-election survey

** Published polls

Support for the Conservative Party as shown in the standard voting intention question has remained reasonably constant in recent weeks but with a tendency for a slight downward trend.

Labour's support has increased sharply and now stands at 49% compared with 42½% in the week 30th July/4th August. Labour's increased support would appear to have come in part from the Liberals whose support has dropped from 16% (30th July/4th August) to 11½% in our latest study.

3. Government Record

After having remained about constant throughout August the level of approval for the Government dropped sharply in our later study in which we found only 31% of the electorate approving of the Government's record.

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

* first Post Election Survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

We found a fall in Mrs. Thatcher's popularity in our latest tracking study but this was not matched by a significant rise in Mr. Callaghan's popularity and we found Mr. Steel's popularity continuing to fall.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr. Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>know</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</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	17	27
30 July/ 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
27 Aug/1 Sep	38	56	6	48	37	15	50	21	29

4. Issues

In recent weeks our tracking studies have included a series of questions on public attitudes to a range of current issues in terms of whether our male respondents were favourably inclined towards the Government, less favourably indeed as they made a difference. There is almost no change in attitudes on the range of issues we included in our latest weeks. Please see below for details.

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>Mrs Thatcher</u> <u>as Prime Minister</u>								
More favourable	30	28	26	29	28	29	26	26
Less favourable	45	41	47	43	47	43	43	46
No difference	24	29	25	26	21	26	30	26
Don't Know	1	3	3	2	4	2	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	-	-	-	-	-

ISSUES (continued)

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

6. Published Polls

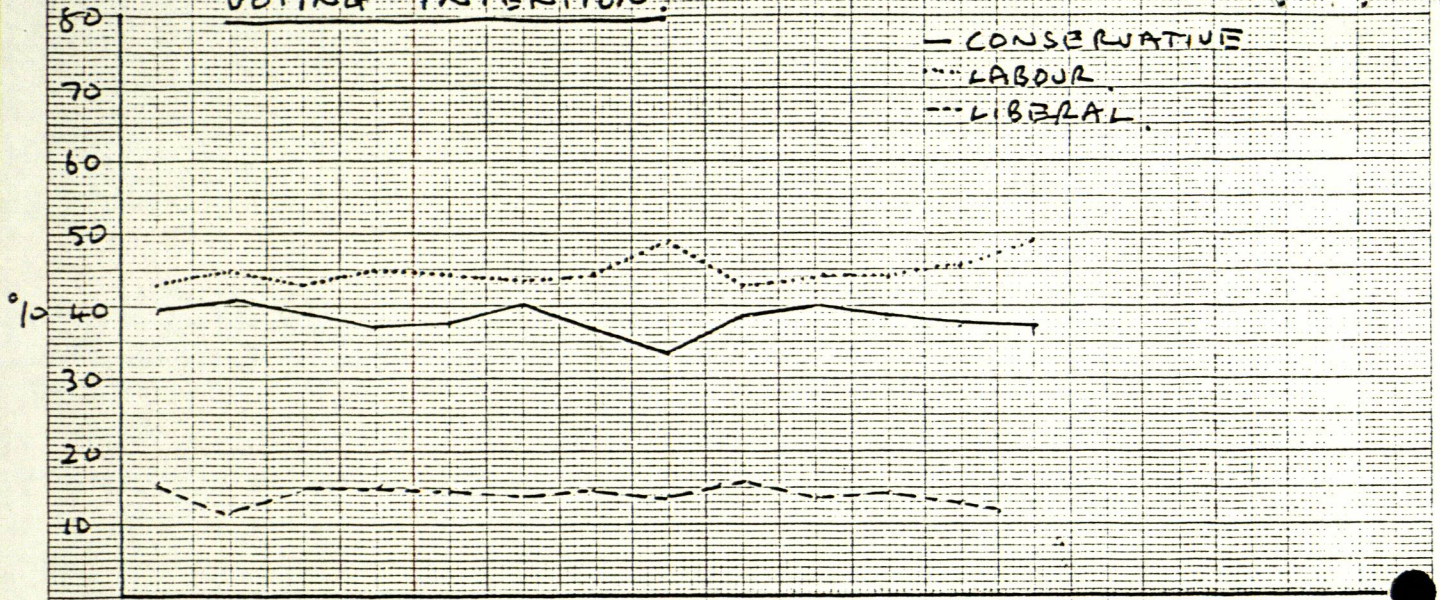
An M.O.R.I. poll published in the Sunday Times (17th September 1980) but conducted between July 24th and 29th looked at public attitudes to a possible change in Labour leadership. The headline ^{on the survey} is based on a M.O.R.I. finding that a majority of voters think Denis Healey would make a better Prime Minister than Mrs. Thatcher ~~and was derived~~. ~~from~~ a type of question posing hypothetical possibilities that opinion researchers always attempt to avoid.

In the area of the Liberals M.O.R.I. found, as our private research has found on a number of occasions :-

- ~~strong~~ Liberal policies fail to register with most voters.
- even Liberal supporters fail to recognise specifically Liberal attitudes.
- the party is generally regarded as impotent compared with its two main rival parties.

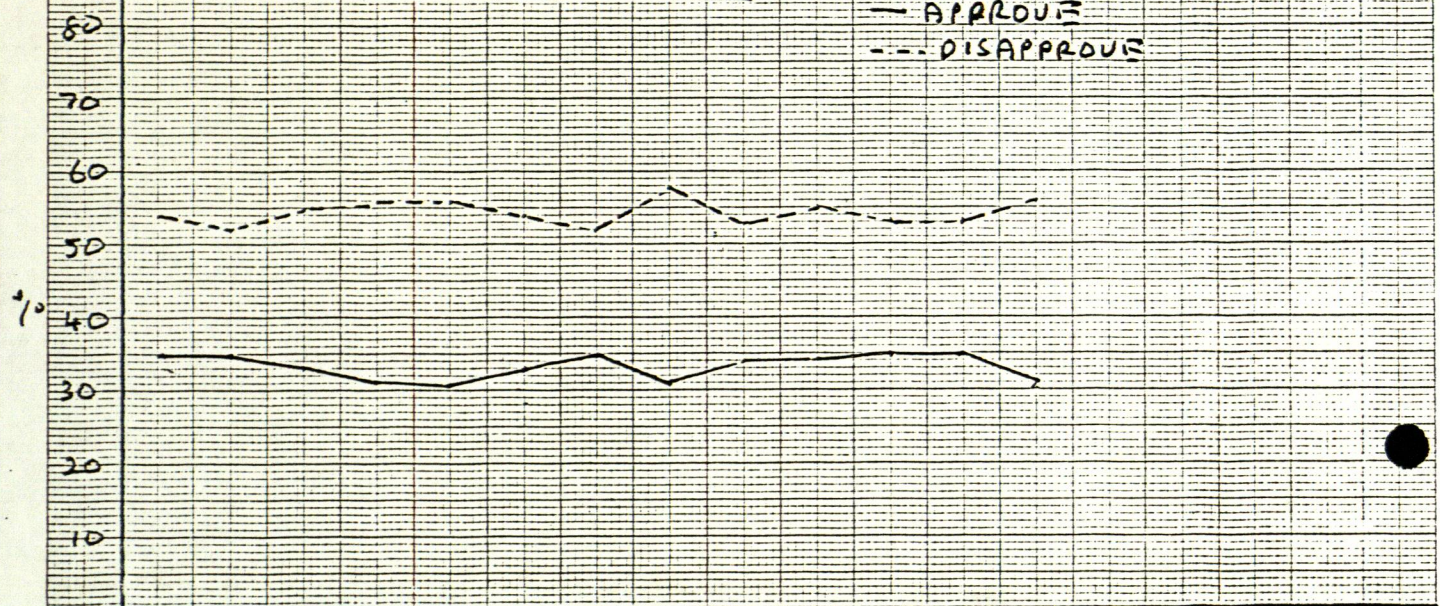
M.O.R.I. also found the Liberals losing support among the young - a group that provided a significant proportion of their support in May 1979.

VOTING INTENTION



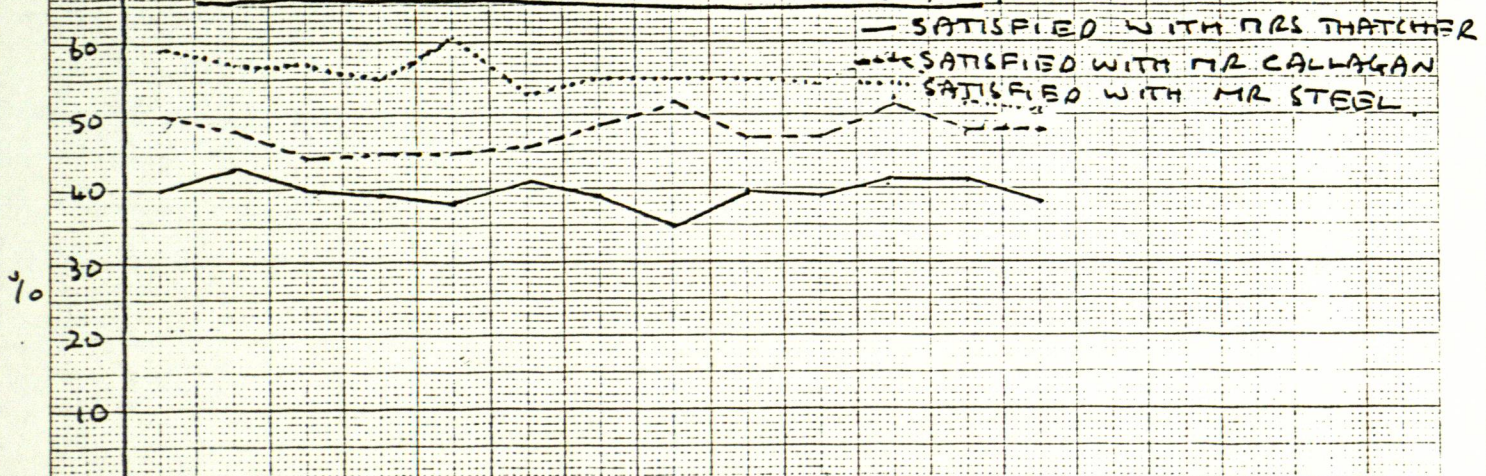
4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30 JUL 6/11 14/18 20/26 27 Aug
 JUNE JUNE JUNE JUNE JULY JULY JULY JULY -4 AUG AUG AUG 1st Sect

GOVERNMENT RECORD



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

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS



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