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KB/sgc

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Richard Ryder
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20th January 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Richard,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 48

I attach details of the results from our first Gallup 'tracking' study conducted in 1981. This survey which was conducted from 7th to 12th January found a 14% Labour lead compared with 12½% in the previous Gallup (published) study conducted just before Christmas.

The results of this latest survey confirm the conclusion that the 24% Labour lead MORI found in their survey conducted just before Christmas was the result of a 'rogue' poll.

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Howarth

D. K. Britto

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 48

(produced 18th January 1981)

1. Introduction

We have just received the results from the first of our 1981 Gallup 'tracking' studies. This survey was conducted from 7th to 12th January 1981 and we found a 14% Labour lead over the Conservatives in terms of voting intention. This results compares with the last Gallup survey (published) conducted in 1980 (December 10th -15th) which found a 12½% Labour lead.

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

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published Polls

The 14% 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

The first tracking study of 1981 found almost no change in government popularity as shown in the answers to the standard Gallup question on approval or disapproval of the Government's record to date - the level of approval dropped from 29% (December 10/19) to 27% (January 7/12) a fall which is not significant in opinion poll terms.

For full details see table 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

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest tracking study found almost no change in Mrs Thatcher's popularity - it has been fluctuating around the 32%/33% level since mid-November. Mr Steel's popularity has fluctuated slightly in recent weeks but shows no signs of any upward or downward trend. Mr Foot's popularity continues to decline and is now nearly at the level of making Foot the most unpopular leader of the Opposition Gallup have found in any of their surveys since they started asking this question in the mid 1950's.

For full details see table over the page.

4. Popularity of Political Leaders (continued)POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mr's Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Don't</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>sat</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Not</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	53	13	24
10/15 Dec	35	59	6	30	35	35	59	17	24
<u>1931</u>									
7/12 Jan	33	61	6	24	39	36	56	21	23

5. Published Polls

The 'Weekend World' programme on 18th January 1981 included some details of a survey conducted for them by ORC. The research which was conducted from January 12th to 14th 1981 looked at attitudes to a possible Centre Party. Before asking about attitudes to a Centre Party ORC asked a standard voting intention question and found 36% of those answering saying they would vote Conservative 46%, Labour 14½% and Liberal 3½% for 'other parties'. This 10% Labour lead compares with 14% Gallup found in our unpublished 'tracking' study conducted from 7th to 17th January.

ORC asked about the Centre Party issue in terms of a hypothetical alliance between the Liberals and a Social Democratic Party with the new party being lead by Shirley Williams. When they asked the electorate how they would vote in an election at which candidates for such a party stood they found 24% saying they would vote Conservative, 27% Labour, 31% for the new Liberal and Social Democratic Party, 9% would not vote and 10% said they did not know who they would vote.