

Conservative Research Department

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KB/sgc

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Derek Howe
10 Downing Street
London SW1

17th August 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Derek,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTES 75/76

The results from our latest two Gallup 'tracking' studies conducted in late July and early August confirm the upsurge in support for the Social Democrats we found in the study conducted immediately after the Warrington by-election.

We will of course keep particularly close track of what is happening to support for the Social Democrats over the next months.

Y
Keith.

D. K. Britto

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 75/76
(produced 10th August 1981)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest two Gallup 'tracking' studies^{was} conducted 22/27 July and 29 July/ 3 August. The sharp increase in support for the Social Democrats that we found in our tracking study conducted just after the Warrington by-election has been confirmed by the results of these two surveys. Support for the Social Democrats increased from 11% 8/13 July to 15% 15/20 July (conducted largely after by-election) and has increased further to 19% in our latest two surveys. Support for the Social Democrat Party and for a Social Democrat/Liberal alliance when the possibility of voting for such a party or alliance was specifically mentioned also increased sharply after the Warrington by-election, but declined very slightly in our latest survey conducted 29 July/ 3 August.

Full details of the results of these standard questions, which include don't knows as a specific category, are shown below:-

VOTING INTENTION
(including don't knows)

	<u>31 Mar</u> 6 Apr	<u>8/13</u> Apr	<u>15/21</u> Apr	<u>22/27</u> Apr	<u>29 Apr</u> 5 May	<u>6/11</u> May	<u>13/18</u> May	<u>19/26</u> May	<u>26 May</u> 1 June	<u>3/8</u> June	<u>9/15</u> June	<u>16/22</u> June
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	26	27	26	27	29	29	31	28	28	28	27	29
Labour	29	31	34	32	31	32	33	35	33	36	34	33
Liberal	15	13	16	13	15	16	16	14	17	13	16	14
Others	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	2
Social Democrat Party	17	17	16	14	12	10	10	11	12	11	11	11
Don't know/it depends	10	16	9	12	11	9	8	9	9	10	10	10

	<u>24/30</u> June	<u>1/6</u> July	<u>8/13</u> July	<u>15/20</u> July	<u>22/27</u> July	<u>29 July</u> 3 Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	26	27	27	26	24	23
Labour	35½	35	36	32	35	36
Liberal	15	12	13	14	12	11
Others	2	3	3	3	2	2
Social Democrat Party	10½	11	11	15	19	19
Don't know/it depends	10	11	11	10	9	9

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VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE
(including don't knows)

	<u>31 Mar</u> 6 Apr	<u>8/13</u> Apr	<u>15/21</u> Apr	<u>22/27</u> Apr	<u>29 Apr</u> 5 May	<u>6/11</u> May	<u>13/18</u> May	<u>19/26</u> May	<u>26 May</u> 1 June	<u>3/8</u> June	<u>9/15</u> June
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	22	22	23	25	23	25	23	21	22	23
Labour	21	24	25	24	25	24	27	26	27	27	28
Liberal	10	10	11	9	10	11	11	10	12	9	12
Others	2	1	1	2	4	3	2	2	2	2	1
Social Democrat Party	26	27	22	24	21	21	20	21	20	23	20
Social Democrat/Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/it depends	20	17	19	18	15	18	15	18	17	17	16

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

VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/LIBERAL ALLIANCE

	<u>31 Mar</u> 6 Apr	<u>8/13</u> Apr	<u>15/21</u> Apr	<u>22/27</u> Apr	<u>29 Apr</u> 5 May	<u>6/11</u> May	<u>13/18</u> May	<u>19/26</u> May	<u>26 May</u> 1 June	<u>3/8</u> June	<u>9/15</u> June
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	20	21	21	22	21	22	24	23	20	21	22
Labour	20	23	24	24	24	22	25	25	25	27	17
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1
Social Democrat Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Democrat/Liberal Alliance	35	37	34	33	32	32	32	31	33	32	30
Don't know/it depends	23	17	20	18	20	22	16	19	19	18	19

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

2. Standard Voting Intention

The table below shows the level of support for the main parties when respondents who claimed they did not know how they would vote are excluded. Over the last two surveys support for Labour has increased slightly whilst support for us has fallen. It would appear that our support has moved over to the Social Democrats. The net effect of these movements has been to increase the size of Labour's lead from 7% 15/20 July to 12% 22/27 July to 14½% 29 July/ 3 August.

VOTING INTENTION
(excluding don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</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	-	5.0	-9.0
<u>1981</u>						
31 March/ 6 April	29.0	32.0	17.0	19.0	3.0	-3.0
8/13 April	30.0	34.5	14.0	19.0	2.5	-4.5**
15/21 April	28.5	37.5	17.5	15.0	1.5	-9.0
22/27 April	30.5	36.5	15.0	15.5	2.5	-6.0
29 April /5 May	33.0	35.0	17.0	13.5	1.5	-2.0
6/11 May	32.0	35.5	18.0	11.0	3.5	-3.5**
13/18 May	33.5	36.0	17.0	10.5	3.0	-2.5
19/26 May	31.0	38.0	15.5	12.0	3.5	-7.0
26 May/1 June	30.0	36.0	18.0	13.0	3.0	-6.0
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

* First Gallup Post-Election Survey

** Published Polls

3. Government Record

Our two latest studies have found no change in the level of approval of the Government - fewer than one in four electors at present approve of our record to date.

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GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<u>1981</u>			
31 March/ 6 April	26	65	9
8/13 April	24	67	9
15/21 April	25	65	10
22/27 April	27	63	10
29 April/5 May	26	62	12
6/11 May	29	60	11
13/18 May	30	57	13
19/26 May	28	60	12
26 May/1 June	27	61	12
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

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest two surveys have found a fall in Mrs Thatcher's popularity, a slight improvement in Mr Foot's popularity and a slight fall in Mr Steel's popularity. Details are shown below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs 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>
	%	sat.	Know	%	Not	Know	%	Not	Know
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1981</u>									
31 March/ 6 April	31	63	6	24	55	22	64	17	19
6/13 April	30	65	5	21	54	24	60	20	20
15/21 April	31	64	6	24	54	22	62	17	21
22/27 April	34	60	6	21	58	20	66	17	18
29 April /5 May	34	59	7	20	58	22	60	19	21
6/11 May	35	60	5	26	52	23	63	17	21
13/18 May	36	58	6	27	52	22	63	17	21
19/26 May	35	59	6	27	50	23	60	17	23
26 May/ 1 June	32	62	6	27	54	19	62	17	20
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. Published Polls(a) M.O.R.I. (Daily Star August 6th 1981)

An M.O.R.I. poll published in the Daily Star on 6th August and conducted from 23rd to 27th July found 18% of the electorate claiming they would vote Social Democrat and 43% for a Social Democrat/Liberal alliance. Details below.

Q. How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?

	<u>General Election</u>		
	<u>May '79</u>	<u>June '81</u>	<u>July '81</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	45	31	30
Labour	38	39	36
Liberal	14	16	13
SDP	0	12	18
Other	3	2	3

SDP - LIBERAL ALLIANCE

Q. If there was a General Election tomorrow and the Social Democrats and the Liberals formed an alliance, which party would you vote for?

	<u>June '81</u>	<u>July '81</u>	<u>Net Gain%</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	27	25	- 2
Labour	32	29	- 3
SDP/Liberal alliance	39	43	+ 4
Other	2	3	+ 1

(b) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 3/4 August 1981)

The Daily Telegraph on 3rd and 4th August published the results of a Gallup survey carried out from July 15th to 20th on public attitudes to various aspects of the issue of law and order.

Gallup asked respondents: " Do you think any of these are very serious social problems in Britain today?". They found.

	<u>July '81</u>	<u>May '81</u>	<u>Feb/Mar '81</u>
Crimes of violence	84	83	84
Juvenile crime	76	71	77
Gang warfare	67	52	53
Bad housing	66	58	63
Organised large scale crimes	62	47	52
Rape	62	48	65
Drug taking	61	63	67
Immigrants; coloured persons	56	57	46
Drunkenness	44	36	47
Pornography	40	38	45
Heavy smoking	34	28	41
Gambling	32	25	34
Prostitution	22	20	29
Homosexuality	20	17	22
None of these	1	1	1

(c) Audience Selection (Capital Radio 11th August 1981)

An Audience Selection opinion poll conducted by telephone in Greater London on 8/9th August found 42% of those interviewed claiming they would vote for the SDP/Liberal alliance, 34% Conservative, and 24% Labour. The figures should be treated with caution as the survey was conducted by telephone.