

Conservative Research Department

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KB/sgc

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Derek Howe
10 Downing Street
London SW1

9th March 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Derek,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 55

We have recently received the results from our latest Gallup tracking study conducted from February 25th to 2nd March. This survey, completed well before the Budget, found a 4½% Labour lead compared with 6% in the previous week. The survey also included our standard questions on likelihood of supporting either a Social Democratic Party or a Social Democratic/Liberal alliance. These questions, for the fourth week, showed almost a constant level of support for such a new party or alliance.

D.K. Britto

Enc.

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 55

(produced 7th March 1981)

1. Introduction

The results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study conducted from February 25th until 2nd March show a 4½% Labour lead compared with the previous study conducted in the period 18th to 23rd February which found a 6% Labour lead. The level of support Gallup found for either a Social Democratic Party or a Social Democratic/Liberal alliance for the fourth week showed almost no change - they found 21% of the electorate saying they would vote for a Social Democratic candidate and 35% saying they would vote for a Social Democratic/Liberal candidate. Details are given below.

VOTING INTENTION

(including don't knows)

	<u>Standard Voting Intention</u>				<u>Voting Intention if Social Democratic Candidate</u>				<u>Voting Intention if Social Democratic/Liberal Candidate</u>			
	<u>3/9 Feb</u>	<u>10/16 Feb</u>	<u>18/23 Feb</u>	<u>25 Feb 2 March</u>	<u>3/9 Feb</u>	<u>10/16 Feb</u>	<u>18/23 Feb</u>	<u>25 Feb 2 March</u>	<u>3/9 Feb</u>	<u>10/16 Feb</u>	<u>18/23 Feb</u>	<u>25 Feb 2 March</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	31	32	30	28	21	23	24	22	21	22	23	20
Labour	35	31	35	32	25	23	25	25	24	22	23	24
Liberal	18	17	19	19	11	12	11	13	-	-	-	-
Others	7	8	8	9	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1
Social Democratic Party	-	-	-	-	22	21	22	21	-	-	-	-
Social Democratic/Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33	36	34	35
Don't know/ it depends	9	12	9	12	19	16	17	14	19	18	20	20

N.B. This note normally excludes don't knows (figures are recalculated). It should be noted that this table includes don't knows as a separate category.

2. Voting Intention

Liberal support as shown by the standard voting intention question remains high with 21½% of the electorate saying they would vote for the Liberals if an election was held tomorrow - in early January 1981 (7/12) only 15% of the electorate supported the Liberals. The gap between the parties has shown very little change in our latest study with Labour having a 4½% lead over us.

For full details please see table on following page and attached graph.

2. Voting Intention (continued)

	<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>					
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**
21/26 Jan	35.5	43.0	17.0	4.5	-7.5**
28 Jan/ 2 Feb	32.0	40.0	21.5	6.5	-8.0
3/9 Feb	34.0	39.0	20.0	7.0	-5.0
10/16 Feb	36.0	35.5	20.0	8.5	+0.5**
18/23 Feb	32.5	38.5	21.0	8.0	-6.0
25 Feb/ 2nd March	31.5	36.0	21.5	11.0	-4.5

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published polls

3. GOVERNMENT RECORD

Marginal fall in popularity of Government - from 29% approving of our record in the week 18/23 February to 26% in the latest study conducted 25th February/ 2nd March.

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>			
1/6 Oct	30	57	13
8/14 Oct	32	55	13
15/20 Oct	34	54	12
22/27 Oct	29	60	11
29 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/1 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
21/26 Jan	28	58	14
28 Jan/2 Feb	26	62	12
3/9 Feb	27	60	13
10/16 Feb	29	60	11
18/23 Feb	29	59	12
25 Feb/ 2nd March	26	62	12

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Almost no change in the popularity of the leaders of the three main parties. Please see below for details.

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>	
	%	<u>sat.</u>	<u>Know</u>	%	<u>Not</u>	<u>Know</u>	%	<u>Not</u>	<u>Know</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
<u>1980</u>										
1/6 Oct	38	66	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/1 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	
21/26 Jan	34	61	5	23	43	34	57	19	21	
28 Jan/2 Feb	32	63	6	21	46	33	62	17	21	
3/9 Feb	35	60	6	24	49	27	60	19	21	
10/16 Feb	34	60	6	22	49	30	64	16	20	
18/23 Feb	33	62	5	20	52	28	58	18	24	
25 Feb/2nd March	32	62	6	23	50	27	57	22	20	

5. Published Polls

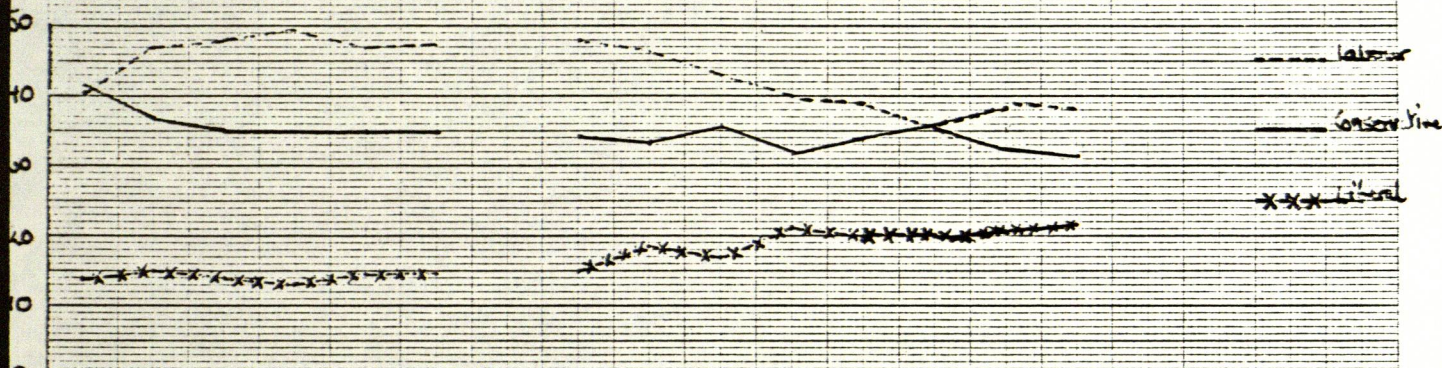
Marplan (Guardian 2nd March 1981)

A Marplan poll published in the Guardian looked at attitudes among senior members of City organisations to our economic policies. They conducted 512 telephone interviews at senior manager, director or partner level in the various City banks, money market institutions (discount houses and money brokers), institutional investors (pension funds, unit banks etc.), insurance companies and brokers, building societies and financial service groups. Of the 512 interviews, 98 were in banks, 28 in the money market, 57 in the stock market, 57 in investment institutions, 151 in insurance, 52 in building societies and 77 in investment services.

Marplan found a very high level of support for our broad economic policies in the City but a degree of criticism of our public relations. They found 79% of those interviewed in favour of our general economic policies and only 19% wanting major changes. When asked what changes they would like to see made there was considerable demand for lower interest rates (27% mentioned) and cuts in government spending (33%).

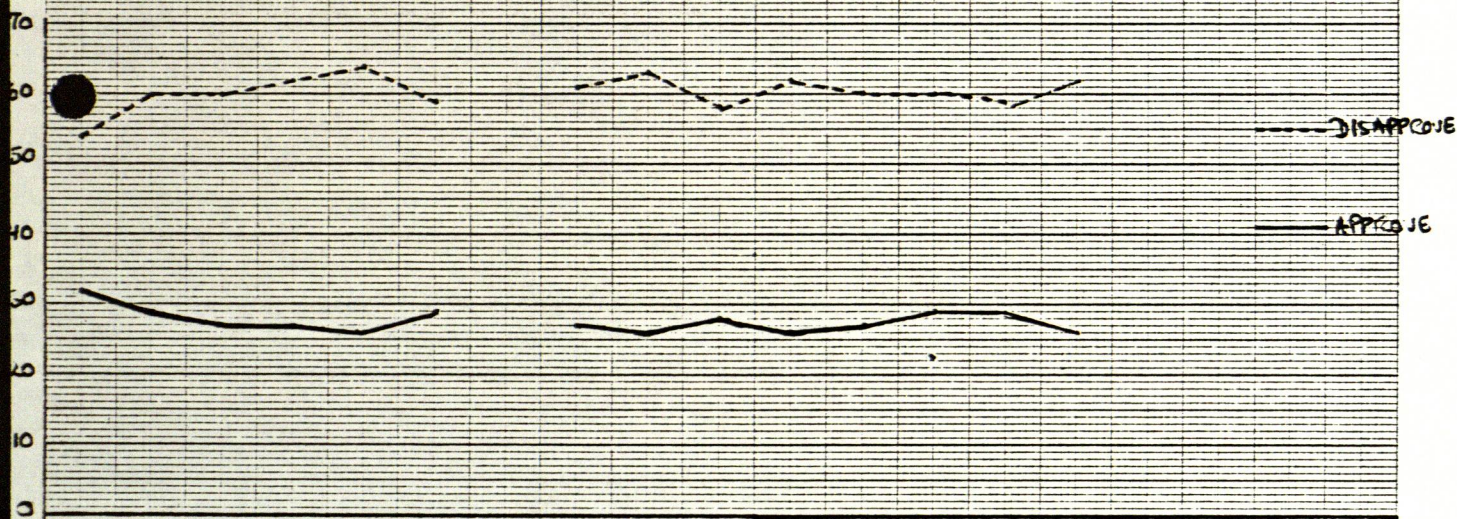
BACKGROUND GRAPHS

VOTING INTENTION



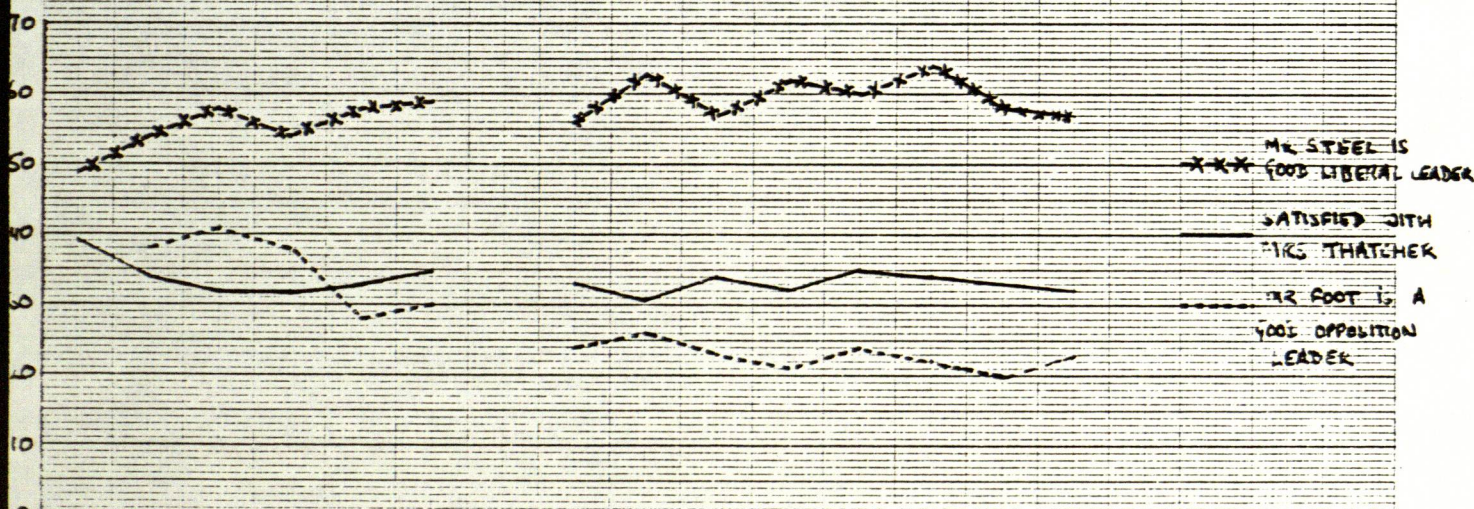
5/10	12/17	19/24	26 NOV	3/8	10/15	7/12	14/20	21/26	28 JAN	5/9	10/16	18/25	25 FEB	FIELDWORK DATES
NOV	NOV	NOV	1 DEC	DEC	DEC	JAN	JAN	JAN	2 FEB	FEB	FEB	FEB	2 MAR	
1980						1981								

GOVERNMENT RECORD



5/10	12/17	19/24	26 NOV	3/8	10/15	7/12	14/20	21/26	28 JAN	5/9	10/16	18/25	25 FEB	FIELDWORK DATES
NOV	NOV	NOV	1 DEC	DEC	DEC	JAN	JAN	JAN	2 FEB	FEB	FEB	FEB	2 MAR	
1980						1981								

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS



5/10	12/17	19/24	26 NOV	3/8	10/15	7/12	14/20	21/26	28 JAN	5/9	10/16			FIELDWORK DATES
NOV	NOV	NOV	1 DEC	DEC	DEC	JAN	JAN	JAN	2 FEB	FEB	FEB			
1980						1981								