

# Conservative Research Department

Box

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

KB/sg

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

DEREK A HOWE ESQ

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON  
SW1

INTERNAL  
P 000  
HOWEH00032

LJ

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*New News,*

## PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 93

The interviewing for our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted in the period 25th to 30th November. Most of the interviews will have been completed after the Crosby by-election but before the Chancellor's statement.

This particular background note, in addition to the results of our regular Gallup 'tracking' study, includes details of some recent published polls.

I would particularly draw your attention to the results of the MORI poll conducted for BBC Radio on attitudes to nuclear weapons and the MORI poll conducted for BBC Panorama on attitudes to aspects of trade union reform.

D. K. Britto

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 93  
(produced 5th December 1981)

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study in the period 25th to 30th November. Most of the interviewing will have been conducted after the Crosby by-election.

The survey found no significant change in the level of support for the main parties when compared with the results of the previous 'tracking' study conducted from 18th to 23rd November. The Social Democrats continue to lead both the Conservative and Labour Parties with 30% of the electorate claiming they will vote Social Democrat (32% 18/23 Nov) and a further 15½% (14% 18/23 Nov) Liberal. 25% of the electorate claimed they would vote Conservative (25½% 18/23 Nov) and 26½% Labour (26% 18/23 Nov). In early June (3/8th) 40% of the electorate claimed they would vote Labour, 31% Conservative, 14% Liberal and 12½% Social Democrat. Support for both the Labour and Conservative parties has dropped as S.D. support has built up. The table below and the attached graph shows details of the trend in support for the main parties since early June.

VOTING INTENTION

(unprompted question)  
(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>LIBERAL +</u> <u>SOCIAL DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>							
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0	13.8
13/16 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0	13.0
<u>1981</u>							
3/8 June	31.0	40.0	14.0	12.5	2.5	-9.0	26.5
15 June	29.5	37.5	18.0	12.5	2.5	-8.0**	30.5
18/22 June	32.0	37.0	15.5	13.0	2.5	-5.0	28.5
24/30 June	29.0	40.0	17.0	12.0	2.0	-11.0	29.0
1/6 July	30.5	39.5	14.0	13.0	3.0	-9.0	27.0
8/13 July	30.0	40.5	14.5	12.0	3.0	-10.5**	26.5
15/20 July	29.0	36.0	16.0	17.0	2.0	-7.0	33.0
22/27 July	26.0	38.0	13.0	21.0	2.0	-12.0	34.0
29 July/3 Aug	25.5	40.0	11.5	20.5	2.5	-14.5	32.0
5/10 Aug	27.0	36.0	15.0	19.0	4.0	-9.0	33.0
12/17 Aug	28.0	38.5	13.0	19.0	1.5	-10.5**	32.0
19/24 Aug	29.0	34.0	17.0	18.0	2.0	-5.0	35.0
26/31 Aug	26.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	2.0	-15.0	31.0
1/7 Sept	25.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	-16.0	31.0
9/14 Sept	32.0	36.5	11.5	17.5	2.5	-4.5**	29.0
16/21 Sept	25.0	36.5	16.0	19.0	3.5	-11.5	35.0
23/28 Sept	24.5	33.5	16.5	24.0	1.5	-9.0	40.5
30 Sept/5 Oct	26.0	38.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-12.0	33.0
7/12 Oct	27.0	31.0	12.5	26.5	3.0	-4.0	39.0
14/19 Oct	28.5	34.0	12.5	22.0	3.0	-5.5	34.5
21/25 Oct	29.5	28.0	13.5	26.5	2.5	+1.5**	40.0
28 Oct/2 Nov	26.5	29.0	13.0	29.5	2.5	-2.5	42.5
4/9 Nov	26.5	28.5	14.5	28.5	2.0	-2.0	43.0
11/16 Nov	26.5	29.0	15.0	27.0	2.5	-2.5**	42.0
18/23 Nov	25.5	26.0	14.0	32.0	2.5	-0.5	46.0
25/30 Nov	25.0	26.5	15.5	30.0	3.0	-1.5	45.5

\* First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published Polls

As part of our 'tracking' exercise, Gallup asked respondents 'If an election were to take place tomorrow and the following candidates were standing in your constituency, how would you vote? They found:-

	<u>11/16 Nov</u> 1981 %	<u>18/23 Nov</u> 1981 %	<u>25/30 Nov</u> 1981 %
Conservative	25½	25	25½
Labour	28	25	25½
SDP/Liberal Alliance	43	48	49
Some other party	3½	2	0

As in the unprompted question, this prompted question found almost no change in the level of support for the parties.

## 2. Government Record

For the third week running we found almost no change in the level of approval for the record of the Government - 22% approved, 65% disapproved and 14% did not answer. Details are shown below:-

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't know</u> %
<u>1979</u> 13/18 June	34	41	25
1/7 September	23	65	13
9/14 September	26	63	11
16/21 September	21	67	11
23/28 September	21	66	13
30 Sept/5 Oct	21	70	10
7/12 October	20	68	12
14/19 October	24	65	12
21/26 Oct	24	62	13
28 October/ 2 November	23	66	10
4/9 November	27	64	9
11/16 November	23	66	11
18/23 November	22	66	12
25/30 November	22	65	14

### 3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest study found no change in the popularity of Mrs Thatcher or Mr Foot and a slight decline in the popularity of Mr Steel. 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>									
1/7 September	28	67	5	29	52	19	63	18	19
14 September	32	62	6	28	54	18	56	21	23
16/21 September	27	68	5	28	52	20	64	16	20
23/28 September	28	67	5	25	57	18	64	17	19
30 Sept/ 5 Oct	27	68	6	31	49	20	60	20	20
7/12 Oct	26	68	6	28	50	22	62	19	18
14/19 Oct	31	62	7	31	50	20	64	15	21
21/ 26 Oct	33	62	5	27	54	19	64	20	16
28 Oct/ 2 Nov	29	65	6	25	59	16	64	19	17
4/9 Nov	32	64	3	24	62	14	68	16	16
11/16 Nov	28	66	6	16	67	17	64	17	19
18/23 Nov	29	66	5	18	68	14	69	15	16
25/30 Nov	29	65	5	18	68	15	67	15	18

### 4. Published Polls

#### (a) MORI (BBC Radio - 1981 Reith Lectures)

As background for the 1981 Reith Lectures, MORI conducted for the BBC between October 23rd and 29th a major study of attitudes to nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. MORI found the British people are opposed to unilateral nuclear disarmament, in favour of maintaining our financial and military contribution to NATO, in favour of Britain having its own nuclear deterrent but opposed to allowing American nuclear weapons to be based in Britain. MORI asked 'I am going to read out some suggestions people have made regarding defence policies of this country. Please tell me whether, on balance, you think Britain should or should not do each one'.

Britain Should or Should Not

	<u>All</u>	<u>15-24</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	%	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters
	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Be prepared to play a military role in the Middle East if British interests are threatened</u>					
Should	55	49	69	48	55
Should not	29	32	19	34	30
Don't know	10	19	12	18	15
<u>Develop a West European Defence policy independent of American</u>					
Should	52	46	48	50	58
Should not	31	34	38	29	29
Don't know	17	20	13	21	13
<u>Have its own nuclear deterrent independent of America</u>					
Should	52	48	58	45	51
Should not	37	44	32	42	39
Don't know	11	8	10	13	10
<u>Reduce expenditure on defence</u>					
Should	32	44	17	44	33
Should not	62	49	81	47	62
Don't know	6	6	3	9	5
<u>Allow America nuclear weapons to be based in Britain</u>					
Should	31	24	52	20	29
Should not	59	67	36	72	63
Don't know	9	8	11	9	8
<u>Get rid of all nuclear weapons in Britain, even if other countries keep theirs</u>					
Should	23	29	9	35	23
Should not	69	62	86	56	69
Don't know	8	9	5	9	8

55% of respondents wanted Britain to 'be prepared to play a military role in the Middle East if British interests are threatened'. 29% thought we should not get involved and 10% did not have a view. Just over half (52%) thought Britain should 'develop a West European defence policy independent of America' - 31% thought we should not and 17% did not have a view. 52% thought Britain should 'have its own nuclear deterrent independent of America', 37% thought we should not have an independent nuclear deterrent and 11% did not have a view. Among the 15-24 age group MORI found 48% in favour of an independent nuclear deterrent for Britain, 44% against and 8% not having a view. 58% of Conservative supporters claimed to be in favour of a British nuclear deterrent (32% against), 45% of Labour supporters were in favour (42% against) and 57% of Alliance supporters claimed to be in favour (39% against).

62% of the electorate (including 81% of Conservatives, 47% of Labour supporters and 62% of Alliance supporters) were against any reduction in expenditure on defence.

59% of the electorate were against allowing American nuclear weapons to be based in Britain, 31% claimed to be in favour of the idea and 9% did not have a view.

52% of Conservative supporters thought we should allow American nuclear weapons to be based in Britain (36% were against the idea), 72% of Labour supporters and 63% of Alliance supporters claimed to be against the idea of basing American nuclear weapons in Britain (20% of Labour supporters and 29% of Alliance supporters in favour of the idea).

Among the 15-24 age group 67% claimed to be against the idea of American nuclear weapons in Britain, 24% were in favour.

MORI found only 23% of respondents in favour of unilateral disarmament for Britain, they found 69% against the idea. Even among the 15-24 age group 62% were against the idea of unilateral nuclear disarmament. Among Conservative supporters, MORI found 86% against the idea, 9% in favour, among Labour supporters 56% against and 35% in favour and among Alliance supporters 69% against (23% in favour).

MORI asked respondents 'As you may know, Britain is a member of NATO that means that it shares a defence policy with America and its Western Allies. Which of the following most nearly describes your own views of British membership of NATO'. They found 8% thought 'Britain's financial and military contribution to NATO should be increased', 52% 'Britain's financial and military contribution to NATO should be maintained at its present level', 18% 'Britain's financial and military contribution to NATO should be reduced and 9% 'Britain should withdraw from NATO completely'.

MORI also asked 'Do you think the fact that Britain itself has nuclear weapons increases or decreases the risk of a nuclear attack on this country'. 33% thought they increased the risk, 35% decreased, 25% had no effect and 6% did not have a view.

(b) MORI (BBC Panorama 30th November)

MORI conducted on 26th November for the Panorama programme a study of attitudes to trade unions and various aspects of trade union reform. MORI asked whether respondents agreed or disagreed with a range of statements about trade unions. They found:-

(please see next page for table)

AGREE/DISAGREE

	<u>All</u>	<u>Trade Unionists</u>	<u>Non-Trade Unionists</u>
	%	%	%
<u>Everyone who works should have to belong to a trade union</u>			
Agree	30	45	22
Disagree	58	43	66
Neither/don't know	12	11	11
<u>Trade Unions have too much power in Britain today</u>			
Agree	69	58	75
Disagree	22	31	17
Neither/don't know	9	10	7
<u>Trade Unions are essential to protect workers' interests</u>			
Agree	73	85	66
Disagree	15	5	20
Neither/don't know	12	9	13
<u>The Trade Unions closed shop is a threat to individual liberty</u>			
Agree	67	69	70
Disagree	18	27	14
Neither/don't know	15	13	16
<u>Bad management is more to blame than trade unions for Britain's economic problems today</u>			
Agree	43	55	38
Disagree	26	16	30
Neither/Don't know	32	29	32
<u>Most Trade Unions are controlled by a few extremists and militants</u>			
Agree	60	55	63
Disagree	22	29	18
Neither/don't know	18	15	19

MORI found 58% of respondents disagreed with the idea that 'everyone who works should have to belong to a trade union' - 30% agreed and 12% did not have a view. 45% of trade unionists, 22% of non-trade unionists, agreed with the idea and 43% of trade unionists, 66% of non-trade unionists disagreed,

MORI found 69% of respondents agreed that 'trade unions have too much power in Britain today' - 22% agreed and 9% did not have a view. 58% of trade unionists and 75% of non-trade unionists agreed.

73% agreed that 'trade unions are essential to protect workers' interests' 67% agreed that 'the trade union closed shop is a threat to individual liberty' (This included 60% of trade unionists and 70% of non-trade unionists'. 43% agreed that 'bad management is more to blame than trade unions for Britain's economic problems today' - 26% disagreed and 32% did not have a view.

MORI found 60% of the electorate agreed with the idea that 'most trade unions are controlled by a few extremists and militants' - 22% disagreed and 18% did not have a view. Among trade unionists, 55% agreed, 29% disagreed and 15% did not have a view. Among non-trade unionists 63% agreed, 18% disagreed and 19% did not have a view.

In addition to these questions, MORI also included a range of questions on attitudes to various proposals for the reform of trade unions. They asked 'Here are some suggestions for changing the law on trade unions. Could you tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each one?'

AGREE/DISAGREE

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Trade Unionists</u> %	<u>Non-Trade Unionists</u> %
<u>There should be regular secret ballots of the workers concerned as to whether an existing closed shop should continue or not</u>			
Agree	79	77	81
Disagree	11	15	9
Neither/don't know	10	8	10
<u>Unions should have to pay substantial compensation (which could be over £20,000) to workers sacked for refusing to join a closed shop which has not been voted for by at least 80% of the workforce</u>			
Agree	60	54	62
Disagree	23	33	20
Neither/don't know	16	13	16
<u>A company should be able to sue a union for compensation if it loses money because of strike action called over a dispute which has nothing to do with the company - such as sympathy strikes or political strikes</u>			
Agree	70	61	74
Disagree	17	25	14
Neither/don't know	13	14	12
<u>A union should pay compensation to companies which lose money through unlawful picketing or 'blacking' by union members which the union does not repudiate</u>			
Agree	66	60	68
Disagree	18	25	16
Neither/don't know	15	13	16
<u>Contracts which insist that a contractor uses only union labour in carrying out the work should not be allowed</u>			
Agree	49	48	49
Disagree	32	39	29
Neither/don't know	18	12	21
<u>No strikes to be called without postal ballot of workers, to be paid for by the government</u>			
Agree	65	68	63
Disagree	18	20	16
Neither/don't know	18	12	20
<u>Companies should be allowed to sack employees they regard as union troublemakers</u>			
Agree	57	45	63
Disagree	30	44	22
Neither/don't know	13	10	14

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Trade Unionists</u> %	<u>Non-Trade Unionists</u> %
<u>Companies should be able to sue unions which have broken agreements</u>			
Agree	78	70	79
Disagree	12	19	10
Neither/don't know	12	11	11
<u>Would you agree or disagree with unions taking industrial action to protest against the recent government proposals on trade union laws?</u>			
Agree	33	45	28
Disagree	43	36	46
Neither/don't know	23	18	25

MORI found 79% of respondents agreed with the view 'there should be regular secret ballots of the workers concerned as to whether an existing closed shop should continue or not' - 77% of trade unionists also agreed as did 81% of non-trade unionists.

60% of respondents agreed with the proposal that 'unions should have to pay substantial compensation (which could be over £20,000) to workers sacked for refusing to join a closed shop which has not been voted for by at least 80% of the workforce' 23% disagreed with the idea. Among trade unionists 54% agreed with the idea and 33% disagreed.

70% of respondents (including 61% of trade unionists and 74% of non-trade unionists) agreed with the idea that 'a company should be able to sue a union for compensation if it loses money because of strike action called over a dispute which has nothing to do with the company - such as sympathy strikes or political strikes'.

66% of respondents (including 60% of trade unionists and 68% of non-trade unionists) agreed with the idea that 'a union should pay compensation to companies which lose money through unlawful picketing or 'blacking' by union members which the union does not repudiate'.

49% of respondents (including 48% of trade unionists and 49% of non-trade unionists) agreed with the idea that 'contracts which insist that a contractor uses only union labour in carrying out the work should not be allowed' 32% disagreed, including 39% of trade unionists and 29% of non-trade unionists.

On the question of postal ballots, 65% agreed with the idea that 'no strikes should be called without a postal ballot of workers, to be paid for by the government'. This included 68% of trade unionists and 63% of non-trade unionists. Only 18% of the electorate (20% of trade unionists and 16% of non-trade unionists) disagreed.

57% of respondents (45% of trade unionists and 63% of non-trade unionists) agreed that 'companies should be allowed to sack employees they regard as union troublemakers'.

76% of respondents (70% of trade unionists and 79% of non-trade unionists) agreed that 'companies should be able to sue unions which have broken agreements'.

43% of respondents disagreed with the view that unions should take industrial action to protest against the recent government proposals on union laws. Among trade unionists 45% wanted industrial action to protest against the legislation and 36% did not want such protests.

(c) Opinion Research and Communication (Guardian 30th November 1981)

The results of an ORAC poll on attitudes towards young employment was published in the Guardian on 30th November 1981. The survey looked at attitudes among:-

- the electorate
- a 'booster' sample of 223 young people between 16 and 20, 25% of whom were jobless and looking for work.
- 112 MP's - 62 Conservative and 50 Labour
- 100 trade union leaders, drawn from 18 unions.

Details of the main findings are shown below:-

Who do you think has the major responsibility for doing something about unemployed young people? (more than one answer accepted).

	Main sample	18-24 group	16-20 sample	All MPs	Con	Lab
Base .....	1015	148	223	112	62	50
Government .....	72	68	71	89	84	96
Local/Education authorities .....	9	9	13	10	11	9
Commerce/industry .....	9	8	4	23	32	11
Trade unions .....	4	5	4	11	18	2
The young themselves...	8	9	12	10	16	2
Other answers .....	5	3	1	15	24	4
Don't know/no answer	5	8	8	—	—	—

(This question was not asked of the trade union respondents)

Do you think this is a problem on which it would be proper for central government to spend large sums of money to deal with it?

	Main	18-24	16-20	All MPs	Con	Lab	TUs
Yes .....	72	71	82	82	73	94	95
No .....	19	22	12	12	19	2	3
Don't know/no answer .....	9	7	7	6	8	4	2

Do you think it's up to the Government alone to find an answer to the problem, or do you think the unions have some responsibility to help?

	Social Class (main sample)							
	Main	18-24	16-20	AB	C1	C2	D2	TU
Base .....	1015	148	223	155	226	319	299	160
Gov't alone .....	23	25	27	20	18	23	30	47
TUs also .....	69	63	62	70	76	63	63	54
Don't know/no answer .....	8	7	11	10	6	9	7	1

(This question was not put to MPs)

Do you agree or disagree with the idea that school leavers should have up to two years' training to give them the skills and crafts for industry?

	Social class (main sample)							
	Main	18-24	16-20	AB	C1	C2	DE	TU
Base .....	1015	148	223	156	228	319	299	100
Agree .....	81	78	76	82	73	82	81	88
Disagree .....	14	16	18	12	19	14	13	8
Don't know .....	5	6	6	5	6	4	5	6

Would you still agree if they were paid a lower rate than the normal rate for ordinary unionised labour?

	Main	18-24	16-20	AB	C1	C2	DE	TU
Agree .....	55	52	45	63	55	54	61	42
Disagree .....	26	25	32	19	24	29	27	49
Don't know .....	19	23	22	17	21	18	22	9

Various solutions have been put forward. I am going to read you a list of ideas and would like you to say whether you favour each one or not.

Reintroduction of conscription, whereby 18-year-olds would serve one or two years in the armed services.

	Main	18-24	16-20	All MPs	Con	Lab	TUs
Base .....	1015	148	223	112	62	50	100
In favour .....	59	41	32	14	24	2	9
Not in favour .....	38	51	62	83	76	91	83
Don't know .....	5	7	6	3		6	3

Introduction of national service for young people so that they spend a year or two years in the armed forces, commerce or industry.

	Main	18-24	16-20	All MPs	Con	Lab	TUs
Base .....	1015	148	223	112	62	50	100
In favour .....	70	63	52	35	52	13	17
Not in favour .....	25	31	40	57	45	74	80
Don't know .....	5	6	8	8	3	13	3

The riots and disturbances during the summer at Toxteth, Brixton, Manchester and other places were a great shock to most people. What do you think were the causes of these incidents? (More than one answer accepted).

	Main	18-24	25-44	45+
Base .....	1015	148	346	511
Unemployment .....	48	58	53	41
Boredom/boredom among youth .....	25	24	24	25
Race prejudice/race relations .....	11	13	12	10
Rioters/the kids themselves/troublemakers .....	10	18	7	10
Police harassment/poor police relations .....	10	20	10	7
Bad Housing/living conditions .....	10	13	12	7
Outside organisers/political agitators .....	9	5	10	11
Lack of parental control .....	9	4	8	12
Immigrants/concentration of immigrants in areas etc .....	9	6	4	12
Frustration/feelings of injustice .....	8	11	10	6
Lack of discipline .....	6	1	6	8

GALLUP PROMPTED VOTING INTENTION

\_\_\_\_\_ CONSERVATIVE  
 - - - - - LABOUR  
 ..... SDP/LIB ALLIANCE

