

# Conservative Research Department

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KB/SEN

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr. Richard Ryder,  
10 Downing Street,  
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24th June 1980

*Dear Richard,*

## Public Opinion Background Note 21

I attach a copy of the latest note on public opinion drawing on material from our Gallup tracking study. The results from this tracking study are the same as those published in the Daily Telegraph on June 19th.

The form of presentation of this particular note has been revised and includes a series of graphs showing the trends in the various tracking questions over recent weeks.

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Public Opinion Background Note 21  
(Produced 22nd June 1980)

1. Introduction

Our latest Gallup "tracking" study conducted between 11th and 16th June 1980 was the same as the Gallup Poll figures published in the Daily Telegraph on June 19th. The survey found a 4½% Labour lead which is in line with the trend in our private unpublished Gallup "tracking" studies. Details of the trends in our various tracking questions - voting intention, government record and popularity of political leaders are shown on the attached graphs.

Labour's 4½% lead in the latest Gallup poll can be compared with the 21½% they had in July 1971 at approximately an equivalent point into the 1970-74 Conservative Government. This lead fell to 4½% in August 1971 but increased to 19% in September 1971.

2. Voting Intention

Full details of the trend in support for the main parties in recent weeks from both the published Gallup polls and our unpublished Gallup "tracking" studies are shown both in the table below and in the attached graphs.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> %
May 1979 (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June 1979*	42	43½	12	2½	-1½
<u>1980</u>					
11/17 March	37	49	11½	2	-12½
20/24 March	38	45½	13½	2	-7½
27/21 March	40	43	14	3	-3
2/8 April	39	45	13	3	-6
10/14 April	36½	45	15	3½	-8½**
16/21 April	41	43	14½	1½	-2
23/28 April	39	44	14	3	-5
30/6 May	39	42	17	2	-3
7/12 May	40	45	13	2	-5
15/9 May	39	43½	15½	2	-4½**
21/27 May	40	43	13½	3½	-3
28/2 June	36	46	15	4	-10
4/9 June	39½	43	15½	2	-3½
11/16 June	40½	45	11½	3	-4½**

\*First Gallup post-election survey

\*\* Published polls

It is tempting to attribute significance to the drop in Liberal support from 15½% in our previous unpublished study to 11½% in the published survey - but as with any change in trend in our "tracking" Study, we need to wait at least a couple of weeks before attempting to draw any major conclusions from the change.

3. Government Record

The level of support for the Government as measured by the standard Gallup tracking question "Do you approve or disapprove of the Government's record to date" has remained almost constant for the past three weeks. Please see the table below and the attached graphs for details.

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't know</u> %
13/18 June 1979*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
11/17 March	30	59	11
20/24 March	32	56	12
27/31 March	38	49	13
2/8 April	36	51	13
10/14 April	36	52	12
16/21 April	38	50	12
23/28 April	34	54	12
30 April/ 5 May	36	51	13
7/12 May	37	50	13
15/19 May	37	52	11
21/27 May	37	51	12
28/2 June	34	55	11
4/9 June	35	54	11
11/16 June	35	52	13

\*First post-election survey.

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest published Gallup figures show a small increase in Mrs. Thatcher's popularity - almost back to the level in the previous published figures (43% satisfied with Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister). Slight drop in popularity of both Callaghan and Steel in latest figures.

The latest Gallup study found 43% of the electorate claiming to be satisfied with Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister, in July 1971 only 32% of the electorate claimed to be satisfied with Mr. Heath as Prime Minister (37% in August 1971 and 32% in September 1971).

Details of trends in popularity of the three main political leaders are shown in the table below and on the attached graphs.

	<u>Mrs. Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr. Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dissat.</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dissat.</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dissat.</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
11/17 March	38	59	6	53	35	12	60	19	21
20/24 March	40	56	5	51	34	15	60	18	22
27/31 March	41	49	7	53	35	12	60	18	22
2/8 April	41	54	5	56	31	12	55	19	26
10/14 April	41	54	5	55	33	12	60	19	21
16/21 April	43	51	7	52	34	14	59	17	25
23/28 April	40	54	6	52	33	14	57	18	25
30/6 May	45	51	5	53	32	15	57	17	26
7/12 May	44	49	6	57	31	13	59	20	21
15/19 May	44	51	5	51	36	13	61	19	20
21/27 May	43	51	7	50	37	14	57	18	24
28/2 June	41	54	5	51	35	15	58	17	25
4/9 June	40	55	5	50	38	12	59	19	22
11/16 June	43	52	5	48	37	15	57	18	25

5. Most Important Issues facing the Country

The latest published Gallup study conducted from June 11th to June 16th included some details of the standard Gallup issue question - "What do you regard as the most urgent problems facing the Country". Gallup found as previously, inflation and unemployment topping the list of problems. However these latest figures do show a slight decline in public concern about inflation and a rise in concern about unemployment. In the DE Group (semi-skilled, unskilled, pensioners and people on social security) unemployment is almost equal to inflation as the main issue (in the DE Group 35% regarded inflation as the most urgent problem and 33% unemployment). No issue apart from inflation and unemployment was mentioned by more than 10% of the electorate as being an urgent problem facing the country.

6. Issues

In recent tracking studies we have been asking our respondents for their views on a range of current issues in terms of whether they feel the issues make them more favourably inclined towards the Government, less favourably inclined or they make no difference. The issues we include in this question are based on the answers to our standard open ended tracking question "Over the last 7 days have you seen or heard anything that has made you feel more favourably or less favourably inclined towards the Government". Details of the answers we have obtained in the past two weeks are shown overleaf:-

ISSUES

	<u>Make more favourable towards the Government</u>		<u>Make less favourable towards the Government</u>		<u>Make no difference</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>	
	<u>4/9 June</u>	<u>11/16 June</u>	<u>4/9 June</u>	<u>11/16 June</u>	<u>4/9 June</u>	<u>11/16 June</u>	<u>4/9 June</u>	<u>11/16 June</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister	30	28	42	43	27	27	2	2
The Government's taxation policy	27	26	44	44	21	23	8	7
The Government's Policy on Trade Union Reform	50	46	27	30	10	12	12	13
The Government's policy on the Olympic Games	30	34	51	49	11	11	8	6
Public Spending Cuts	28	25	56	60	9	9	7	6
The cost of living	8	8	72	72	18	15	3	5
The Government's policy on the Common Market	47	39	35	39	10	12	8	10
The level of unemployment	5	6	71	72	20	17	4	5
The level of rates	9	6	61	61	23	24	8	9
The Government's pay policy	24	25	43	43	18	19	15	14

In our latest private study the only issue area in which we have a lead is with regard to the Government's policy on trade union reform. The lead we had with regard to policy towards the Common Market has been eroded and our latest study found equal numbers on the favourable and less favourable sides.

7. Communication

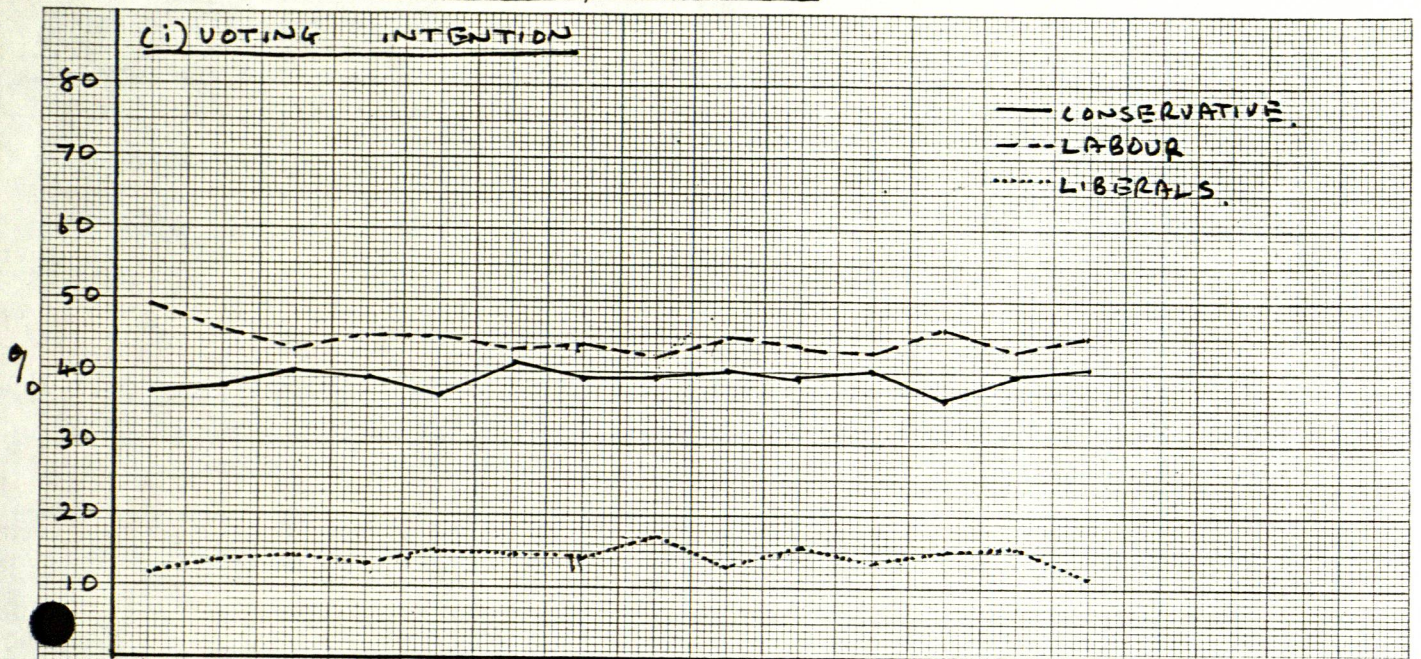
In the period 11th June to 16th June we found 10% of respondents claiming to have seen or heard something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days (15% 4th-9th June) and 18% claiming to have seen or heard something making them less favourably inclined towards the Government (20% 4th-9th June). We asked what issues had influenced this view, on the favourable side 5% mentioned the EEC and on the less favourable side 4% mentioned the cost of living. No other item was mentioned by more than 4%.

It must be noted that this question is totally open ended and respondents are not given a list of issues by the Gallup interviewers.

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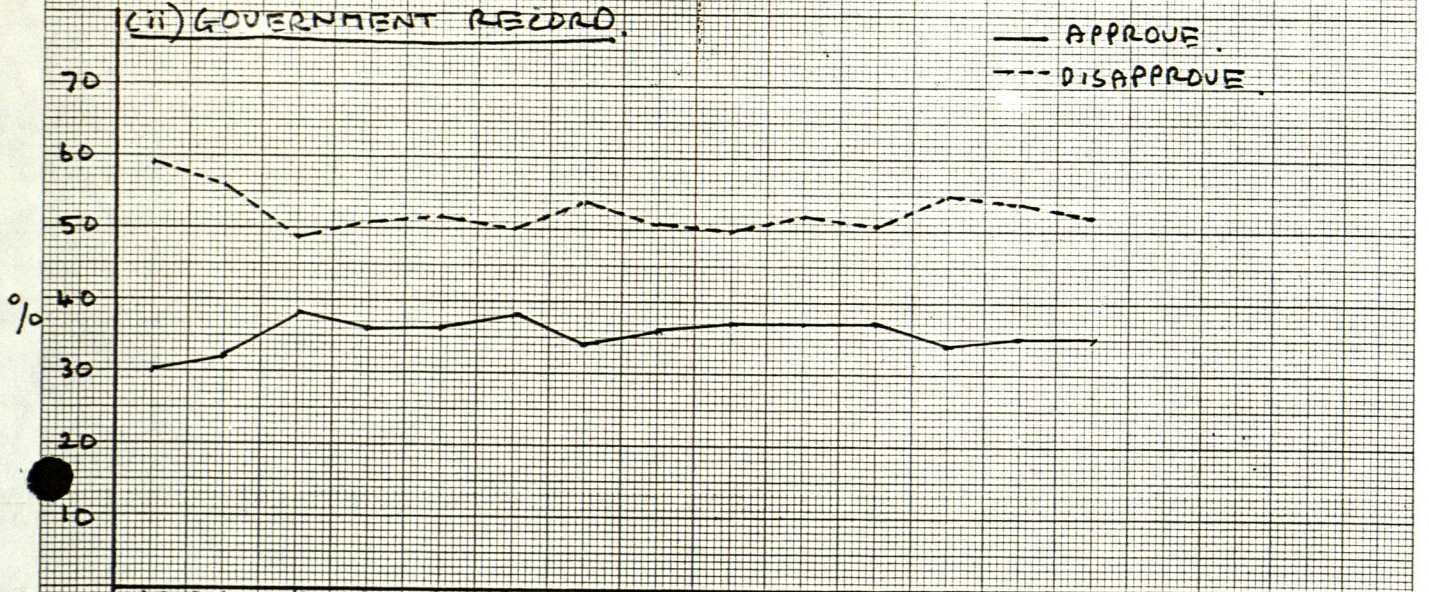
# TRACKING RESULTS

## (i) VOTING INTENTION



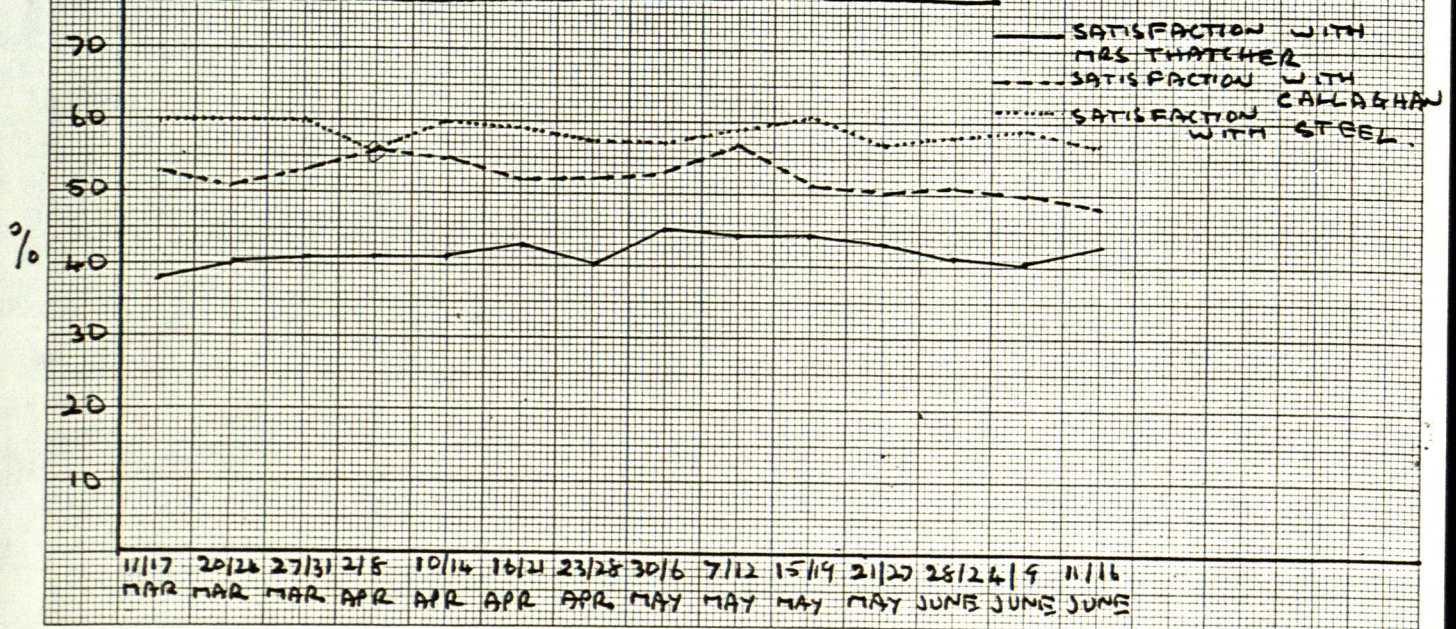
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## (ii) GOVERNMENT RECORD



11/17 20/24 27/31 2/5 10/14 16/21 23/25 30/6 7/12 15/19 21/27 28/2 4/9 11/16  
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## (iii) SATISFACTION WITH POLITICAL LEADERS



11/17 20/24 27/31 2/5 10/14 16/21 23/25 30/6 7/12 15/19 21/27 28/2 4/9 11/16  
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