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Public Opinion Background Note 39
(produced 26th October 1980)

1. Introduction

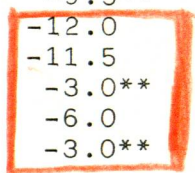
The results from our latest Gallup tracking study are the same as the results of the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday 23rd October 1980. The survey which was conducted from October 15th to October 20th found a 3% Labour lead compared with 6% in our previous unpublished 'tracking' study - conducted 9/14 October. The sharp increase in support for the Liberals to 20% we noted in our 9/14 October unpublished study has not been confirmed by the results of the latest study which found the Liberals having the support of 14% of the electorate - a figure in line with the trend in support for them over recent months.

2. Voting Intention

Details of the trend in support for the main political parties are shown in the table below and in the attached graph.

VOTING INTENTION

	<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	43.5	12	2.5	-1.5
<u>1980</u>					
4/9 June	39.5	43	15.5	2	-3.5
11/16 June	40.5	45	11.5	3	-4.5**
18/23 June	39	43	15	3	-4.0
25/30 June	37	45	15	3	-8.0
2/7 July	37.5	44.5	14.5	3.5	-7.0
10/14 July	40	43.5	14	2.5	-3.5*
16/21 July	37	44.5	15	3.5	-7.5
23/28 July	33.5	49	14	3.5	-15.5
30 July/4 August	38.5	42.5	16	3	-4.0
6/11 August	40	43.5	13.5	3	-3.5
13/18 August	38.5	44	14.5	3	-5.5**
20/26 August	37.5	45.5	13.0	4	-8.0
27 August/1 September	37	49	11.5	2.5	-12.0
2/8 September	36.5	48.5	12.5	2.5	-12.0
10/15 September	35.5	45	16.5	3	-9.5**
17/22 September	35	47	14	4	-12.0
25/29 September	35.5	47	15	2.5	-11.5
1/6 October	40	43	13.5	3.5	-3.0**
9/14 October	35.5	41.5	20.0	3	-6.0
15/20 October	40	43	14	3	-3.0**



* First Gallup post-election survey
** Published polls

3. Government Record

The results from the latest tracking study found a further improvement in the approval of the Government's record - 34% of the electorate approve of the Government's record to date (32% 9/14 October) and 54% disapprove (55% 9/14 October). Among Conservative voters 77% approved (12% disapproved) among Labour voters 86% disapproved (6% approved) and among Liberals 15% approved (69% disapproved).

For full details of the results from this tracking question over recent weeks please see table below and attached graph.

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>			
7/9 June	35	54	11
11/16 June	35	52	13
18/24 June	33	55	12
25/30 June	31	56	13
2/7 July	31	56	13
10/14 July	33	54	13
16/21 July	35	52	13
23/28 July	31	58	12
30 July/ 4 August	34	53	13
6/11 August	34	55	11
14/18 August	35	53	12
20/26 August	35	53	12
27 August/ 1 September	31	56	13
2/8 September	31	58	11
10/15 September	29	57	13
17/22 September	30	59	12
25/29 September	27	60	13
1/6 October	30	57	13
9/14 October	32	55	13
15/20 October	34	54	12

* first Post Election survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Almost no change in Mrs Thatcher's popularity over recent weeks. Given Mr Callaghan's resignation the improvement in his standing can be safely ignored.

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4. Popularity of Political Leaders (continued)

For full details please see table below and attached graph.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
4/9 June	40	55	5	50	38	12	59	19	22
11/16 June	43	52	5	48	37	15	57	18	25
18/23 June	40	55	6	44	42	13	57	20	23
25/30 June	39	55	5	45	41	13	55	20	25
1/7 July	38	56	6	45	42	13	61	19	20
10/14 July	41	52	7	46	41	13	53	24	23
16/21 July	39	54	7	49	35	16	55	18	27
23/28 July	35	57	8	52	35	13	55	18	27
30 July/ 4 August	40	54	6	47	38	15	55	20	25
6/11 August	39	55	6	47	38	15	54	20	25
14/18 August	41	54	5	52	34	14	58	18	24
20/26 August	41	53	6	47	38	15	52	21	28
27 Aug / 1 Sept	38	56	6	48	37	15	50	21	29
2/8 September	35	59	6	51	34	15	57	18	25
10/15 September	37	58	5	48	39	13	59	19	22
17/22 September	35	59	5	50	36	14	59	17	25
25/29 September	33	60	6	45	40	16	60	18	22
1/6 October	38	56	5	48	39	13	56	20	25
9/14 October.	37	58	5	46	41	13	60	16	24
15/20 October	38	56	6	51	35	14	57	20	24

5. Issues

Almost no change over recent weeks in approval/disapproval of the Government's policies in certain key areas. Please see over for details.

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ISSUES

	<u>10/14</u> July	<u>16/21</u> July	<u>23/28</u> July	<u>30 July</u> - 4 Aug	<u>6/11</u> Aug	<u>14/18</u> Aug	<u>20/26</u> Aug	<u>27 Aug</u> -1 Sep	<u>2/8</u> Sep	<u>10/15</u> Sep	<u>17/22</u> Sep	<u>25/29</u> Sep	<u>1/6</u> Oct	<u>9/14</u> Oct	<u>15/20</u> Oct
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister</u>															
More favourable	30	28	26	29	28	29	26	26	25	25	23	24	26	25	30
Less favourable	45	41	47	43	47	43	43	46	47	48	47	47	47	47	46
No difference	24	29	25	26	21	26	30	26	26	26	28	28	26	27	23
Don't Know	1	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1
<u>The Government's Taxation Policy</u>															
More favourable	27	24	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	31	27	25	27	27
Less favourable	43	42	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	43	36	40	43	44	46
No difference	21	22	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	17	19	18	16	16
Don't Know	9	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	16	14	14	13	12
<u>The Government's Policy on Trade Union Reforms</u>															
More favourable	45	43	44	46	46	48	47	47	44	47	45	45	45	47	48
Less favourable	30	29	27	24	28	25	26	28	30	27	26	29	27	28	27
No difference	11	12	11	13	11	11	11	10	11	11	14	11	12	11	10
Don't Know	14	16	18	16	16	16	16	15	15	15	15	15	16	14	14
<u>Public Spending Cuts</u>															
More favourable	27	23	24	28	28	25	26	25	23	27	24	23	23	27	28
Less favourable	57	60	59	56	58	56	58	60	61	55	57	61	61	57	59
No difference	11	11	10	11	9	12	10	10	9	12	11	9	11	8	8
Don't Know	5	7	7	6	6	7	7	5	7	6	8	7	6	7	5
<u>The Cost of Living</u>															
More favourable	11	8	10	8	11	11	11	10	8	10	10	6	9	13	12
Less favourable	69	70	68	65	67	64	64	67	70	69	66	66	67	63	63
No difference	17	19	19	21	17	22	21	19	17	17	21	25	21	27	20
Don't Know	3	3	3	5	5	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4

6. Published Polls(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph October 23rd 1980)

The Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on October 23rd and conducted 15/20 October 1980 as well as the standard voting intention, government record and popularity of leaders questions also included a series of questions on attitudes to the Labour leadership battle and the problems facing the country.

Gallup asked the electorate about each of the candidates for the Labour leadership and found two in three (64%) of respondents thinking Mr Healey would be a good successor to Mr Callaghan, 23% had the same opinion of Mr Foot, 22% of Mr Shore and 18% Mr Silkin. Although Mr Benn has not put himself forward as a candidate, 15% considered him a good potential leader. Among Labour supporters Gallup found a similar pattern - 68% of them thought Mr Healey would be a good successor to Mr Callaghan, 30% Mr Foot, 24% Mr Shore, 21% Mr Benn and 19% Mr Silkin.

Despite a 3% Labour lead in this poll, we lead Labour by 3% in terms of having the best policies and by 6% in having the best leaders - details below:-

Taking everything into account
which Party has (a) the best
policies and (b) the best leaders

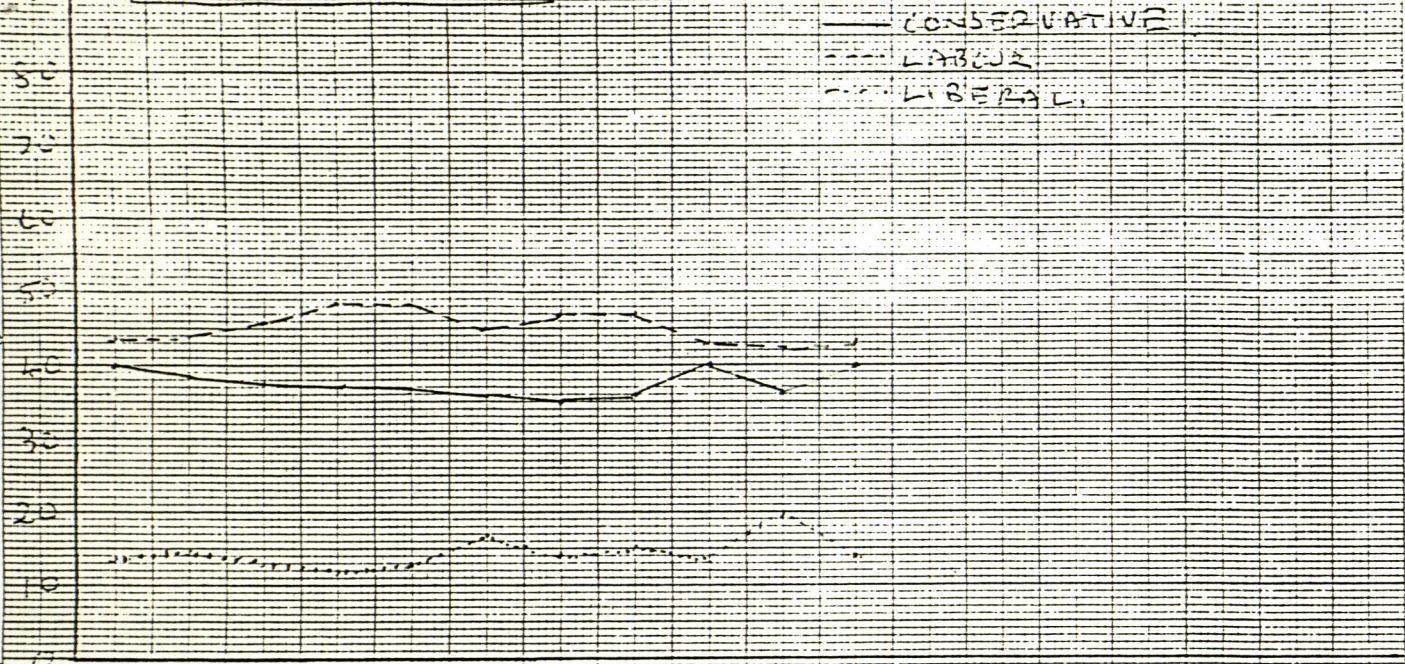
	<u>Policies</u>		<u>Leaders</u>	
	<u>Oct. 1980</u>	<u>Jan. 1980</u>	<u>Oct. 1980</u>	<u>Jan. 1980</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	38	37	39	36
Labour	35	36	33	34
Liberal	9	11	10	12
Other	2	0	1	0
Don't Know	16	16	17	18

In terms of the standard most important issue question - 68% of the electorate (64% in September thought unemployment was the most important issue facing the country. Only 16% thought inflation was the most important issue. Among Conservative supporters 22% thought inflation was the most important issue and 56% unemployment, among Labour voters 12% inflation and 77% unemployment.

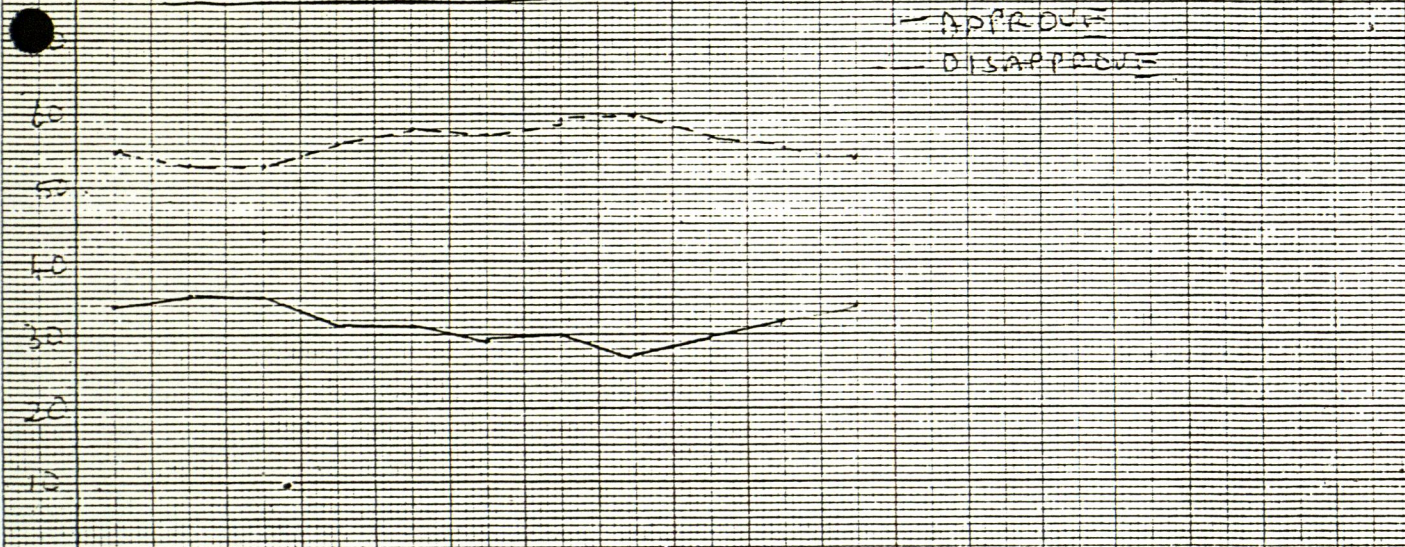
(b) N.O.P. (The Observer 26th October 1980)

An N.O.P. poll conducted on 16th October 1980 and published in the Observer on 26th October 1980 found the British electorate evenly split over the future of the House of Lords. N.O.P. found that only 16% of the electorate want to abolish the House of Lords, 37% wanted to see some reforms and 36% said they would be happy for things to remain unchanged. Among Labour voters N.O.P. found 26% in favour of the abolition of the Lords, 38% for reform and 22% for no change.

VOTING INTENTION



GOVERNMENT RECORD



POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

