

Box

Conservative Research Department

32 Smith Square Westminster SW1P 3HH Telephone 01-222 9511
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Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Derek Howe
10 Downing Street
London SW1

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16th November 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Derek,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 90

The results of our latest Gallup 'tracking' study conducted from 4th to 9th November shows no significant change in the level of unprompted support for the parties. The survey found 28½% of the electorate claiming they will vote Social Democrat, 28½% Labour, 26½% Conservative and 14½% Liberal.

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 90

(produced 16th November 1981)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted from 4th to 9th November. The survey found almost no change in the level of support for the three main parties when compared with the results of our previous study conducted from 28th October to 2nd November. This latest study found 26½% of the electorate claiming they will vote Conservative (26½% - 28 Oct/2 Nov), 28½% claiming they will vote Social Democrat (29½% - 28 Oct/ 2 Nov), 28½% Labour (29% - 28 Oct/2 Nov) and 14½% Liberal (13% - 28 Oct/ 2 Nov). The combined level of support for the Liberals and Social Democrats now stands at 43% compared with 42½% in the previous study (28 Oct/ 2 Nov).

Details of the trend in support for the main parties on the standard Gallup unprompted voting intention question from both our unpublished 'tracking' studies and Gallup's published polls are shown in the table below:

	VOTING INTENTION						LIBERAL + SOCIAL DEMOCRAT
	CON	LAB	LIB	SOCIAL DEMOCRAT	OTHER	LEAD	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>							
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0	13.8
13/18 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0	13.0
<u>1980</u>							
3/8 June	31.0	40.0	14.0	12.5	2.5	-9.0	26.5
9/15 June	29.5	37.5	18.0	12.5	2.5	-8.0**	30.5
16/22 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 August	27.0	36.0	15.0	18.0	4.0	-9.0	33.0
12/17 August	28.0	38.5	13.0	19.0	1.5	-10.5**	32.0
19/24 August	29.0	34.0	17.0	18.0	2.0	-5.0	35.0
26/31 August	26.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	2.0	-15.0	31.0
1/7 September	25.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	-16.0	31.0
9/14 September	32.0	36.5	11.5	17.5	2.5	-4.5**	29.0
16/21 September	25.0	36.5	16.0	19.0	3.5	-11.5	35.0
23/28 September	24.5	33.5	16.5	24.0	1.5	-9.0	40.5
30 Sept/5th October	26.0	38.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-12.0	33.0
7/12 October	27.0	31.0	12.5	26.5	3.0	-4.0	39.0
14/19 October	28.5	34.0	12.5	22.0	3.0	-5.5	34.5
21/25 October	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

*First Gallup post-Election survey
Published Polls

Our latest study did not include any 'prompted' questions on voting intention for the Alliance parties but we will have from late November information on the level of support for the Alliance based on a new prompted voting intention question that takes account of the existence of the Alliance.

2. Government Record

The latest study found a sharp ~~improvement~~ in the level of approval of the record of the Government. 27% approve of our record but 64% disapprove. 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
<u>1981</u>			
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
5/10 August	23	64	13
12/17 August	23	66	11
19/24 August	26	64	10
26/31 August	23	64	13
1/7 September	23	65	13
9/14 September	26	63	11
16/21 September	21	67	11
23/28 September	21	66	13
30th Sept/5th Oct	21	70	10
7/12 October	20	68	12
14/19 October	24	65	12
21/26 October	24	62	13
28 October/2 November	23	66	10
4/9 November	27	64	9

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Small increase in popularity of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Steel, almost no change in popularity of Mr Foot. Details are given below:

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1981</u>									
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
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
5/10 August	30	65	5	27	56	17	62	18	21
12/17 August	28	66	6	23	57	20	61	18	21
19/24 August	33	61	6	25	51	24	63	19	19
26/31 August	28	66	6	29	52	20	60	20	21
1/7 September	28	67	5	29	52	19	63	18	19
9/14 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
30th Sept/5th Oct	27	68	6	31	49	20	60	20	20
7/12 October	26	68	6	28	50	22	62	19	18
14/19 October	31	62	7	31	50	20	64	15	21
21/26 October	33	62	5	27	54	19	64	20	16
28 Oct/2 Nov	29	65	6	25	59	16	64	19	17
19 Nov	32	64	3	24	62	3	68	16	16

4. Published Polls

(a) M.O.R.I. (Sunday Times 15th November 1981)

An M.O.R.I. poll published in the Sunday Times on 15th November and conducted between November 7th and 9th looked at attitudes to some aspects of the Government's economic policies.

Half of these M.O.R.I. interviewed thought the country's economic condition was going to get worse over the next 12 months, although 27% believed it would get better.

When asked about policies, 32% thought Labour had the best policies to deal with unemployment, compared with 16% respectively seeing the Conservatives or the SDP/Liberal Alliance as having the best policies. On inflation 30% saw the Conservatives having the best policies, 28% Labour and 14% Liberal-SDP. When asked about which parties had the best policies for managing the economy, MORI found Conservatives and Labour neck and neck, each supported by 28% of those questioned, while Liberal-SDP support was well behind.

52% of the electorate thought it was wrong for governments to borrow money to pay for their spending - only 33% did not think it wrong.

M.O.R.I. also asked:-

Q. Are you in favour of or opposed to these measures?

	<u>For</u> %	<u>Against</u> %
Raising the level of income tax	13	83
Increasing prescription charges	14	83
Raising pensions by less than increase in prices	18	79
Raising taxes on the goods you buy	20	76
Raising benefits to the unemployed by less than increase in prices	27	64
Cutting spending on universities	30	60
Cutting student grants	29	58
Charging parents for nursery education	42	52
Cutting spending on defence	42	52

Q. Are you in favour or opposed to the following?

	<u>For</u> %	<u>Against</u> %
Local people being asked to vote on whether or not rates should be raised above a limit set by the government before local councils are allowed to do so	65	24
Spending more on investment projects in inner city areas	65	22
Spending more on providing jobs for young people	80	15

Q. Which would be the best for Britain

	%
Cut taxes and cut government spending	45
Cut taxes and increase government spending	16
Leave things as they are now	15
Raise taxes and cut government spending	9
Raise taxes and raise government spending	5
Don't know	6

(b) N.O.P. (Observer 15th November 1981)

An N.O.P. poll published in the Observer on 15th November and conducted on 26/27 October looked at attitudes to the police.

N.O.P. found 87% of respondents claiming to have 'a fair amount' or 'great confidence' in the police and only 11% said they had little confidence or none. The majority of electors do not approve of issuing the police with either C.S. gas (54%) or plastic bullets (59%). Electors overwhelmingly (80%) support the idea of the water-cannon to deal with rioters. There is also strong support (92%) for giving police flame proof shields.

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When asked about qualities associate with police officers, N.O.P. found:-

- only 30% considered police honest
- less than half thought them fair
- only 17% thought them well-educated
- only 50% thought police treated the coloured population equally.

There is huge support (88%) for proving more local 'bobbies on the beat'. A narrow majority (47% for, 41% against) thought extra control of the police through local police councils with some power would be a good idea. Less than half the sample were happy with the way complaints against the police were dealt with.