

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 41 - 44

(produced 30th November 1980)

ms

1. Introduction

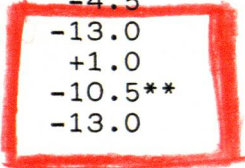
With one exception which was probably due to sampling error our tracking studies in November have shown a sharp increase in Labour's lead over the level this had reached in October. The latest Gallup published poll, conducted 12/17 November (Daily Telegraph 20th November) showed a 10½% Labour lead. Our latest unpublished tracking study found a 13% Labour lead. It should be noted that almost all the interviewing for this research was conducted before Sir Geoffrey Howe's economic statement on Monday 24th November. The tracking study conducted in the week 5/10 November which actually found a 1% Conservative lead is so far out of line with the previous week's survey and the subsequent week's survey that it must be regarded as a 'rouge' survey - it does however provide a reminder about attempting to draw too many conclusions from a single weekly tracking study.

Support for the Liberals has during November stabilised nationally at around the 15% mark. We do have evidence from local government by-election results of significant differences between areas of the country with regard to Liberal support.

2. Voting Intention

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* | 42.0 | 43.5 | 13.0 | 2.5 | -1.5 |
| <u>1980</u> | | | | | |
| 27Aug/ 1 Sept | 37.0 | 49.0 | 11.5 | 2.5 | -12.0 |
| 2/8 Sept | 36.5 | 48.5 | 12.5 | 2.5 | -12.0 |
| 10/15 Sept | 35.5 | 45.0 | 16.5 | 3.0 | -9.5** |
| 17/22 Sept | 35.0 | 47.0 | 14.0 | 4.0 | -12.0 |
| 25/29 Sept | 35.5 | 47.0 | 15.0 | 2.5 | -11.5 |
| 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 | 15.0 | 2.0 | -13.0 |



* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published Polls.

Our current position with regard to voting intention can be compared with approximately an equivalent point (in terms of time) to the

1970-1974 Conservative Government when in December 1971 Labour had a lead of 6% over the Conservatives. In January 1972 this was 7½%, in February 1972 8½% and in March 1972 9%. It must of course be remembered that at this point in the 1970 - 1974 Conservative Government the Liberals had a much lower level of support than now (7½% in December 1971).

3. Government Record

The popularity of the Government has fallen fairly consistently so in November - in the week 5/10 November 32% approved of the Government's record to date compared with our latest survey (completed largely before Sir Geoffrey's measures) which found only 27% of the electorate approving of the Government's record to date. In December 1971 34% of the electorate approved of the record of the 1970-74 Conservative Government.

For details 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> | | | |
| 27Aug/ 1st Sept | 31 | 56 | 13 |
| 2/8 Sept | 31 | 58 | 11 |
| 10/15 Sept | 29 | 57 | 13 |
| 17/22 Sept | 30 | 59 | 12 |
| 25/29 Sept | 27 | 60 | 13 |
| 1/6 Oct | 30 | 57 | 13 |
| 8/14 Oct | 32 | 55 | 13 |
| 15/20 Oct | 34 | 54 | 12 |
| 22/27 Oct | 29 | 60 | 11 |
| 20 Oct/3 Nov | 30 | 59 | 12 |
| 5/10 Nov | 32 | 54 | 14 |
| 12/17 Nov | 29 | 60 | 11 |
| 19/24 Nov | 27 | 60 | 13 |

* First Post-Election Survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs Thatcher's popularity has fallen from early November but it is interesting to note that Mr Foot starts unpopular when compared with Mr Callaghan. At the end of October 50% of the electorate approved of Mr Callaghan as leader of the Labour Party whilst just after Mr Foot's election at a point when he normally would be expected to be popular only 38% thought he would be a good Labour leader. Steel's popularity after falling from early October has improved somewhat from the early part of November onwards.

Please see table below and attached graph for details.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

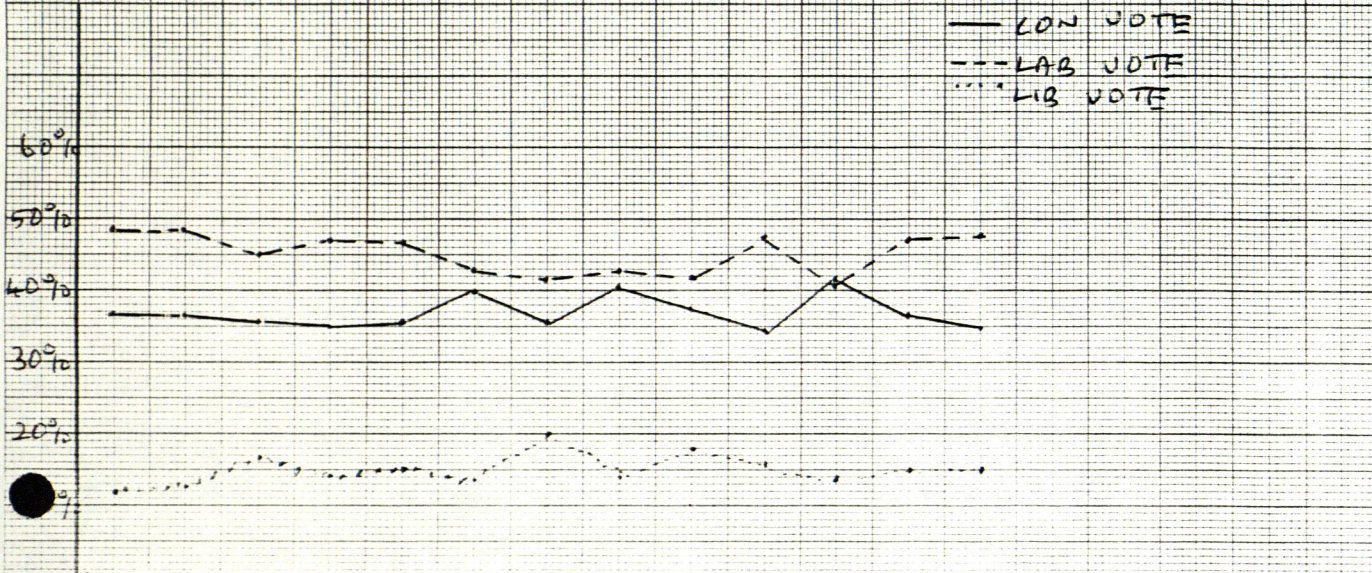
| | <u>Mrs Thatcher</u> | | | <u>Mr Foot</u> | | | <u>Mr Steel</u> | | |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|
| | <u>Sat</u> | <u>Dis-</u> | <u>Don't</u> | <u>Is</u> | <u>Is</u> | <u>Don't</u> | <u>Is</u> | <u>Is</u> | <u>Don't</u> |
| | % | sat | Know | % | Not | Know | % | Not | Know |
| 1980 | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 Aug/1 Sept | 38 | 56 | 6 | - | - | - | 50 | 21 | 29 |
| 2/8 Sept | 35 | 59 | 6 | - | - | - | 57 | 18 | 25 |
| 10/15 Sept | 37 | 58 | 5 | - | - | - | 59 | 19 | 22 |
| 17/22 Sept | 35 | 59 | 5 | - | - | - | 59 | 17 | 25 |
| 25/29 Sept | 33 | 60 | 6 | - | - | - | 60 | 18 | 22 |
| 1/6 Oct | 38 | 56 | 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 |

5. Issues

Our latest tracking study conducted 19/24 November looked at approval for the Government in terms of a number of items and found the following picture.

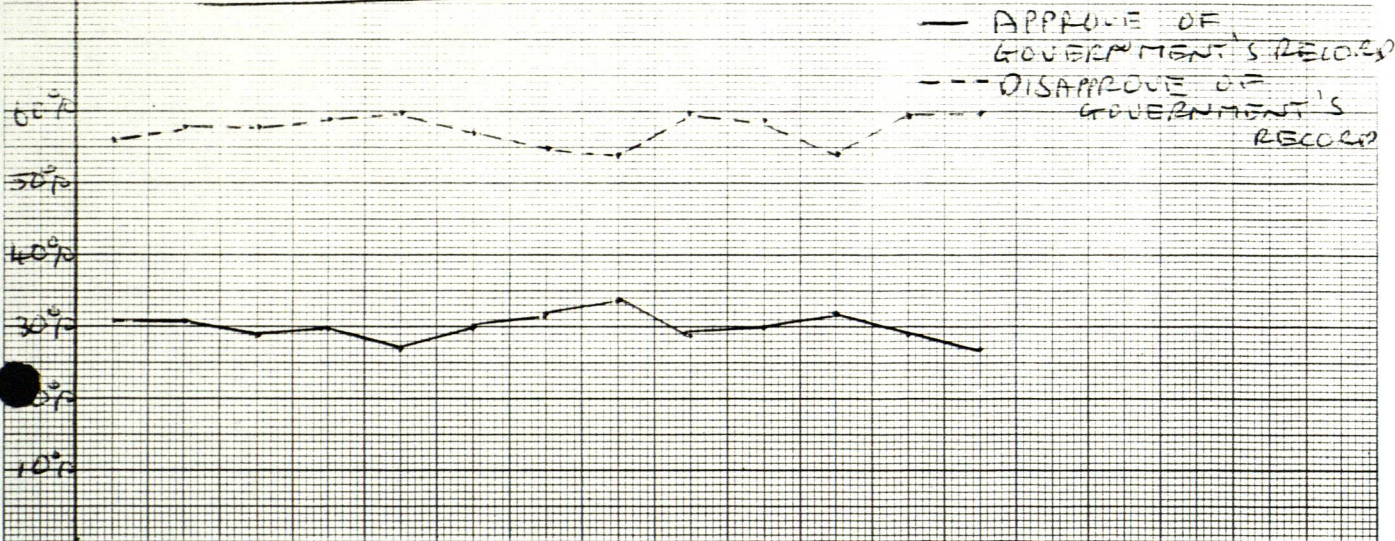
| | Makes Feel More Favourable To Government % | Makes Feel Less Favourable to Government % | No Difference % |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister | 24 | 54 | 21 |
| The Government's policy on selling Council houses | 50 | 27 | 16 |
| The Government's policy on Trade Union Reform | 48 | 25 | 10 |
| Public Spending Cuts | 28 | 56 | 7 |
| The Cost of Living | 11 | 66 | 19 |
| The Level of Unemployed | 2 | 82 | 12 |
| The Government's Pay Policy | 33 | 40 | 13 |
| The Government's policy towards Pensioners | 23 | 47 | 18 |
| The Government's policy towards the NHS | 19 | 60 | 12 |
| The Government's policy towards such groups as the handicapped and disabled | 15 | 50 | 15 |

VOTING INTENTION



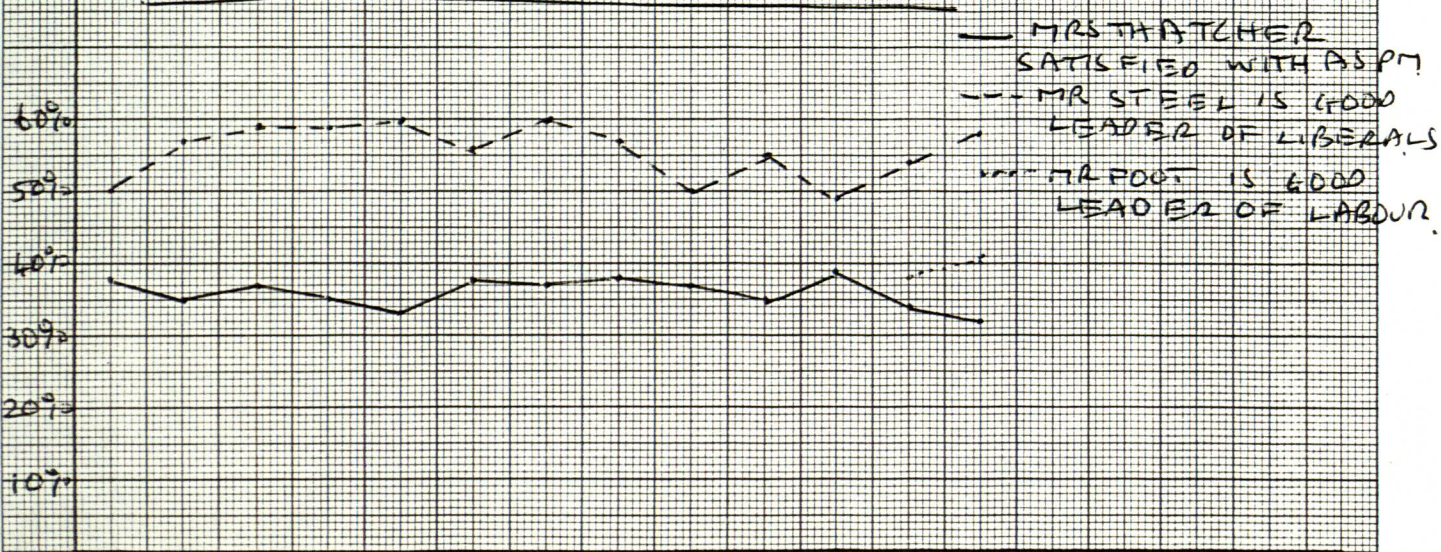
27/04/74 21/5/74 10/1/75 17/2/75 25/4/75 1/6/75 8/1/76 15/2/76 22/7/76 29/10/76 5/11/76 12/1/77 19/2/77
 15 SEPT SEPT SEPT SEPT SEPT OCT OCT OCT OCT 3 NOV NOV NOV NOV

GOVERNMENT RECORD



27/04/74 21/5/74 10/1/75 17/2/75 25/4/75 1/6/75 8/1/76 15/2/76 22/7/76 29/10/76 5/11/76 12/1/77 19/2/77
 15 SEPT SEPT SEPT SEPT SEPT OCT OCT OCT OCT 3 NOV NOV NOV NOV

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS



27/04/74 21/5/74 10/1/75 17/2/75 25/4/75 1/6/75 8/1/76 15/2/76 22/7/76 29/10/76 5/11/76 12/1/77 19/2/77
 15 SEPT SEPT SEPT SEPT SEPT OCT OCT OCT OCT 3 NOV NOV NOV NOV