

PR Minute 4
This material was sent on by Sir K. Joseph. Tommy
Thompson is now giving
the PR advice which is recommended

AT 14/c

MR TURNBULL

14 June 1984

THE COAL DISPUTE - PUBLIC OPINION

The opinion survey of late May (sample 1069) was carried out 2-3 weeks later than the one in our earlier minute. Opinions have changed very little.

There is a strong feeling that the strike is a serious problem for the country (85%). 45% have some sympathy with the miners on strike although 69% consider that Arthur Scargill's motives are mainly political. 77% disapprove of the use of mass pickets and 73% consider that the miners are not within their rights in using these tactics.

There is strong recognition that the Government has not become directly involved, although opinion is divided as to whether this is the right approach.

73% consider that it is sensible to close uneconomic pits. Arthur Scargill's claims that Ian MacGregor plans to cut the number of pits to 100 and to get rid of 70,000 jobs receive little support (22%).

There is overwhelming support for the police (92%), although 52% are in favour of the Government bringing in tougher laws to limit picketing.

← || Only 12% think that Arthur Scargill will win the dispute and 25% would like this outcome. There is also a general feeling that the strike is not benefiting anybody and that the longer it continues the more jobs will be lost and the more damaged will be the coal industry.

Although Ian MacGregor has a higher credibility rating than Arthur Scargill, 27% consider that neither is speaking the truth. Most people seem to understand what the strike is about and there is a strong view (86%) that the NUM should have held a secret ballot.

24% consider that other unions and workers should support the miners. There is strong support for the view that loss of coal supplies will endanger the future of Ravenscraig and that it is wrong for miners to picket power stations.

Opinion is reasonably divided on whether employers should seek civil injunctions. There is a strong view that the Government would be unwise to bring in troops.

DAUAAC

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Conclusion

These results are encouraging. Nevertheless, the NCB Board are not natural communicators and it is precisely at this point in the dispute that the presentation of the NCB case needs to be most skilfully managed.

We consider that the Board should make maximum use of professional public relations advisers and ensure that they are fully in touch with the views of both moderate and militant miners.

DLP

DAVID PASCALL

DAUAAC

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Andrew Turnbull.

Here is the letter from Tommy
Thompson, ORC, with opinion results
for the PM to see.

Kenn Joseph
5.6.64

I have acknowledged.

N Pascale
This was sent on by S. K. Joseph. It is
not as it simply a refinement of treated
survey (It is slightly different but remarkably
similar). If it is different are there any
significant changes.

AK
5/6

● Opinion Research & Communication

~~6816~~

~~DP 616184~~

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~~AT~~
141 6184

1st June

Dear Keith,

Some very interesting findings in the full General Public survey. Please use it discreetly.

Bad mistake I am not attending talks. It will be construed as a victory for Scargill and is likely further to harden the unions' attitudes and make them believe militancy pays off. Please call me if I can help.

Kind regards



TOTAL SAMPLE
= 1069 RESPONDENTS

Good morning/afternoon/evening. We are carrying out a large survey of public attitudes towards the country's present problems. We would like your opinion as a taxpayer, citizen and member of the General Public.

Q1. First of all could you tell me how well or badly you think things are going for Britain at the moment?

BASE ALL
%
1
30
37
29
3

Very well
Quite well
Not very well
Badly
Don't know

Q2a. Next can I ask you what you, yourself, feel are the most important problems that the Government should do something about. Anything else?

%
72
11
10
9
6

UNEMPLOYMENT

HEALTH SERVICE

MINER'S STRIKE

VIOLENCE / CRIME / HODLIGANISM / LAW & ORDER

HIGHER PENSIONS / MORE HELP FOR OAP'S

Q2b. And what do you think should be done about the biggest and most serious problem facing the country at the moment? (PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS).

THOSE SAYING UNEMPLOYMENT: Base 770	THOSE SAYING HEALTH SERVICE Base 122	THOSE SAYING MINER'S STRIKE Base 109
CREATE MORE JOBS 25%	SPEND MORE MONEY 9%	GOVT. SHOULD TAKE A LEAD 14%
SPEND MORE MONEY 11%	HAY NURSES MORE 2%	HOLD A SECRET BALLOT 5%
MORE MD TO INDUSTRY/INVESTMENT 7%		
START NEW INDUSTRIES / NEW TECHNOLOGY 6%	DONT KNOW 82%	DONT KNOW 49%
LOWER RETIREMENT AGE 6%		

Q3. Next I would like to ask you how well you think nationalisation has worked in this country. Do you think it has been successful or not successful?

BASE ALL
%
29
56
15

Successful
Not successful
Don't know

SHOWCARD A

Q4. Here is a list of the most important nationalised industries.

a. Which TWO do you think are the best run and the most efficient?

b. And which TWO do you think are the most profitable?

	Q4a Best run	Q4b Most profitable
	<u>BASE ALL</u>	<u>ALL</u>
	%	%
National Coal Board	5	4
British Steel	9	6
Central Electricity Generating Board	65	74
British Rail	7	7
British Gas	65	76
British Leyland	12	7
National Bus Company	19	5
Don't know	8	9

Q5

Q5. I would now like to ask you about some of the problems associated with nationalised industries which are currently causing concern both inside and outside these organisations.

First of all I would like to ask you about the miners strike. How serious a problem do you think this is for the country?

	%
Very serious	54
Quite serious	31
Not very serious	11
Not at all serious	3
Don't know	1

Q6a

Q6b

IF VERY/QUITE SERIOUS, ASK:

Q6a. Why do you say that? (PROBE FOR DETAILS)

	BASE 908
AFFECT ON OTHER INDUSTRIES / EVERYONE	19
WILL CAUSE UNEMPLOYMENT / UNSPEC	14
COULD SPREAD & HOLD UP WHOLE COUNTRY / NATIONAL STRIKE	13
AFFECT ON STEEL INDUSTRY	6

Q7

IF NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL SERIOUS

Q6b. Why do you say that? (PROBE FULLY)

	BASE 146
PLENTY OF COAL STOCKS	25
NO EFFECT ON IDUSTRY SO FAR	14
DISPUTE WILL BE SETTLED BEFORE LONG	10
HAVE OTHER SOURCES OF POWER	4

Q7

<p>Q7. How much in sympathy are you with the miners who are on strike? Would you say you are (READ OUT)</p>	<p>%</p>	<p>Q8</p>
<p>Completely in sympathy In sympathy to some extent Neither for nor against them Opposed to the miners on strike to some extent Completely opposed to the miners Don't know</p>	<p>14 31 11 18 25 1</p>	
<p>Q8. Some people think that Mr Scargill has brought the miners out on strike to safeguard miners jobs. Others think that his main reason is political and that he is using the miners to try to bring down Mrs Thatcher's Government and change society in Britain. Which of those two views do you think is nearer to the truth?</p>	<p>%</p>	<p>Q9a</p>
<p>To safeguard jobs Reason is political Don't know</p>	<p>23 69 8</p>	
<p><u>SHOWCARD B</u></p>		
<p>Q9a. Mr Scargill and his colleagues are using mass pickets to try to persuade those miners still working to join the strike. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of these methods?</p>	<p>%</p>	<p>Q9b</p>
<p>Strongly approve Approve to some extent Disapprove to some extent Strongly disapprove Don't know</p>	<p>8 14 20 57 1</p>	
<p>Q9b. Do you think the miners are within their rights in trying to bring other miners out by mass picketing tactics?</p>	<p>%</p>	<p>Q10a</p>
<p>Are Are not Don't know</p>	<p>22 73 5</p>	
<p>Q10a. How well do you think the Government has handled the strike so far?</p>	<p>%</p>	<p>10b</p>
<p>Very well Fairly well Not very well Not at all well Don't know</p>	<p>11 26 25 27 11</p>	<p>10c</p>
		<p>11a</p>

<p><u>IF VERY WELL OR FAIRLY WELL</u></p>	<p>BASE 395</p>	<p>11a</p>
<p>Q10b. Why do you say that? (PROBE)</p>	<p>1</p>	
<p><u>BY NOT GETTING INVOLVED / NOT INTERFERING / KEEPING OUT OF IT</u></p>	<p>63</p>	
<p><u>BY HOLDING OUT AGAINST MINERS</u></p>	<p>14</p>	
<p><u>BY KEEPING LAW & ORDER / SUPPORTED POLICING</u></p>	<p>12</p>	
<p><u>IF NOT VERY WELL OR NOT AT ALL WELL</u></p>	<p>BASE 554</p>	<p>11a</p>
<p>Q10c. Why do you say that? (PROBE)</p>	<p>1</p>	
<p><u>HAVEN'T GOT INVOLVED / ENTERED DISCUSSIONS / STOOD BACK ETC.</u></p>	<p>68</p>	
<p><u>CRITICISM OF POLICE</u></p>	<p>9</p>	
<p><u>MRS. THATCHER WILL NOT COMPROMISE</u></p>	<p>5</p>	
<p><u>ASK ALL</u></p>		
<p>Q11a. I would now like to ask you one or two questions about the Police. In general do you think the police in Britain do a good or a bad job of maintaining law and order?</p>	<p>1</p>	
<p>Very good</p>	<p>55</p>	<p>Q12</p>
<p>Quite good</p>	<p>37</p>	
<p>Not very good</p>	<p>6</p>	
<p>Bad job</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Q11b</p>
<p>Don't know</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Q12</p>
<p><u>ASK ALL SAYING NOT VERY GOOD OR BAD JOB AT Q11a</u></p>	<p>BASE 82</p>	<p>Q12</p>
<p>Q11b. Why do you think that? (PROBE)</p>		
<p><u>BAD ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE</u></p>	<p>15</p>	
<p><u>TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO TRAFFIC OFFENCES / NOT ENOUGH TO SERIOUS CRIME</u></p>	<p>15</p>	
<p><u>NOT ALLOWED TO BE TOUGH ENOUGH</u></p>	<p>9</p>	
<p><u>NOT ENOUGH ON BEAT</u></p>	<p>7</p>	

ASK ALL

Recently the police have been a lot in the news in connection with two major national problems, the siege at the Libyan Embassy in St James Square and in connection with the mass pickets of miners.

Q12a. Dealing with the Libyan Embassy first could you tell me whether you think the police have handled it well or badly. Would you say they handled it ... (READ OUT)

Very well	54
Fairly well	33
Fairly badly	5
Very badly	3
Don't know	5

Q13

Q13. And the control of the mass pickets. Do you think the police have handled the mass pickets in Nottinghamshire and other mining areas well or badly? Would you say (READ OUT)

Very well	45
Fairly well	36
Fairly badly	8
Very badly	8
Don't know	4

Q14

Q14. Under recent legislation mass picketing of places other than your own place of work is illegal. Would you say that in respect of recent mass picketing:-

- the Government should have taken tougher action
 - OR - the Government were right to take the attitude they did
 - OR - the Government should have taken less tough action than they did
- Don't know

%
35
39
16
11

Q15

Q15. Would you say that Mr Scargill and the other leaders of the NUM are right or wrong to do the following things

READ OUT

a. Use mass pickets in Nottinghamshire and Lancashire to persuade those miners still working to join the strike

%

Right	Wrong	Don't know
19	77	4

b. Use mass pickets to try to prevent more than a limited amount of coal reaching the British Steel works at Ravenscraig, Scunthorpe, and Llanwern steel works

%

15	80	5
----	----	---

c. Use mass pickets to stop coal reaching the Central Electricity Generating Board's power stations

%

15	81	4
----	----	---

d. Try to bring about a national coal strike without having a secret ballot on the issue first as the Nottinghamshire miners want

%

10	86	5
----	----	---

Q15a. Going through those items again would you say for each whether it will help the miners' cause or harm it?

READ OUT

	Help	Harm	Don't know	
a. Use mass pickets in Nottinghamshire and Lancashire to persuade those miners still working to join the strike	16	77	6	(55)
b. Use mass pickets to try to prevent more than a limited amount of coal reaching the British Steel works at Ravenscraig, Scunthorpe, and Llanwern steel works	14	79	7	
c. Use mass pickets to stop coal reaching the Central Electricity Generating Board's power stations	15	79	7	
d. Try to bring about a national coal strike without having a secret ballot on the issue first as the Nottinghamshire miners want	9	83	8	Q16

Q16. Some people think that as a result of the mass pickets by miners in the present dispute the Government will bring in tougher laws to limit picketing. Would you be in favour or opposed to such a law?

Favour	52	Q17
Opposed	38	
Don't know	11	

Q17. Who do you think is going to win the miners strike - Mr Scargill and the NUM leadership or the National Coal Board and the Government?

Scargill	12	Q18
NCB	51	
Don't know/neither	36	

Q18. Which of them do you want to win?

Scargill	25	Q19a
NCB	51	Q20
Don't know/neither	24	

IF SCARGILL AT Q18

Q19a. How strongly do you want Mr Scargill and the NUM to win?

	<u>BASE 262</u>
<u>Scargill</u>	
Very strongly	54
Quite strongly	35
Not very strongly	9
Not at all strongly	2
Don't know	1

Q19b. How strongly do you want the NCB and Government to win?

	<u>BASE 550</u>
<u>NCB/Government</u>	
Very strongly	40
Quite strongly	40
Not very strongly	6
Not at all strongly	1
Don't know	12

SHOWCARD C

Q 20. Looking at this card which of these statements is nearest to your own view?

In the end the Coal Board will win because they hold most of the cards and miners will not be able to afford to stay out for months.

%
25

In the end the miners will win because they have a just cause and whatever it costs they will hold out until the Coal Board gives in.

12

Nobody will win. The longer the strike goes on the more jobs will be lost and the more damaged will be the coal industry.

60

don't know

3

Q 21. There are so many statements being made on television and in the newspapers by Arthur Scargill and Ian MacGregor, Chairman of the Coal Board that many people are confused.

Which of them, Arthur Scargill or Ian MacGregor would you say is speaking most of the truth?

Arthur Scargill	16
Ian MacGregor	37
Neither is speaking the truth	27
Don't know	20

%
16
37
27
20

Q22a Many people do not understand what the miners strike is about. Do you feel that you understand what is is about?

<u>Yes</u>	70
No	13
Not sure	18

%
70
13
18

ASK ALL SAYING 'YES' AT Q22a

Q 22b Could you tell me in your own words what you believe the strike is really about? (PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS)

	BASE 746
PIT CLOSURES	66
LOSS OF JOBS	46
WAGES/MONEY	18
POLITICAL REASONS (UNSPEC)	12
SCARGILL'S ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THE GOVT.	11
PRESTIGE FOR SCARGILL	5

Q23. Here is a list of some of the things which have been printed in the newspapers or said by the NUM or the National Coal Board leadership over the last few weeks. Would you say for each one whether you agree with it or not?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
A. Most miners are in favour of the strike and if a national ballot was held the result would be to show that a majority of miners are behind Arthur Scargill	% 39	49	11
B. The NUM should have a secret ballot on whether to strike or not rather than trying to pressure everybody into a national strike by backdoor methods	% 86	10	4
C. The strike is not mainly about miners jobs: it is really a political strike by Arthur Scargill and other left wing union leaders who want to use the miners to bring down the Tory Government	% 63	25	12
D. The longer the strike goes on the more jobs will be lost	% 82	11	7
E. The Coal Board is telling the truth when they say that only 20,000 jobs will be lost in the next 12 months	% 35	24	41
F. Arthur Scargill is wrong when he says that they plan to cut the industry to 100 pits with a loss of 70,000 jobs	% 35	26	39
G. Whatever Arthur Scargill says the worn out and loss making pits will have to close if the majority of jobs are to be protected and the coal industry is to become efficient and profitable	% 77	11	12
H. There is no way that the miners can win this strike because the power stations have six months stocks and Mrs Thatcher will not give in as the last Tory Government did	% 64	18	17
I. The redundancy pay offered to miners whose jobs are going is very generous compared with other industries	% 60	7	34

Q24. SHOWCARD D

Here are two different views which have been put forward about what Mr MacGregor and the Coal Board are planning to do. Would you say which of them is nearer to the truth?

- a. Ian MacGregor plans to butcher the coal mining industry by reducing the number of pits to 100 and getting rid of 70,000 jobs
- b. The Coal Board is going to cut out 4% of uneconomic coal production and get rid of 20,000 jobs by voluntary redundancy and generous redundancy pay so as to make the industry highly efficient, low cost and highly paid

Don't know

%

22

56

22

Q25a. SHOWCARD E

Using one of the phrases on this card, would you say how much support you think the miners strike will get from

READ OUT

		<u>A great deal</u>	<u>Quite a lot</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The dockers	%	11	38	38	6	7
Steel workers	%	4	18	46	28	4
Railwaymen	%	10	38	39	8	6
Electricity supply workers	%	3	12	41	36	8
The seamen	%	6	22	37	26	10
Lorry drivers and haulage workers	%	4	16	41	32	7

Q25b. Thinking of these groups again would you say whether, in your opinion, each of these groups of workers should or should not support the miners strike?

READ OUT

		<u>Should</u>	<u>Should not</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The dockers	%	25	65	10
Steel workers	%	24	66	10
Railwaymen	%	25	65	10
Electricity supply workers	%	25	65	10
The seamen	%	23	67	10
Lorry drivers and haulage	%	24	65	11

Q26	<p>The Steel unions are worried that if the miners pickets stop coal going into the huge Ravenscraig Steel complex and Scunthorpe the end result will be that Ravenscraig already in serious trouble, will close with the loss of some thousands of jobs. Do you think this is a serious possibility or not?</p>	<p>Serious possibility Not serious Don't know</p>	<p>✓ 85 11 4</p>	Q27	
Q27	<p>Do you think that the miners should ignore this possible threat to Ravenscraig in the interests of winning their own fight or do you think it is right for them to let coal trains into Ravenscraig and Scunthorpe to safeguard steelworkers' jobs?</p>	<p>Should ignore threat Let coal trains in Don't know</p>	<p>✓ 9 86 5</p>	Q28	
Q28	<p>Another possibility is that miners pickets will try to bring the Power stations to a halt by blockading their supplies of coal and oil.</p>	<p>Do you think it right or wrong for miners pickets to do this?</p>	<p>Right Wrong Don't know</p>	<p>✓ 16 79 5</p>	Q29
Q29	<p>And what effect do you think such blockading would have on jobs in the electricity supply industry? Do you think it will put a lot of jobs at risk, a certain number, only a few or none?</p>	<p>A lot A certain number A few None Don't know</p>	<p>✓ 31 28 19 17 5</p>	Q30	
Q30	<p>And what about the railways? If the railway workers refuse to let coal trains operate do you think that the loss of freight business involved will or will not put railwayworkers jobs at risk?</p>	<p>Will Will not Don't know</p>	<p>PUNCHER : START CARD 2 DUP 1-9 ✓ 10/② 65 27 7</p>	Q31	
Q31	<p>Some railwaymen have been taking sympathetic action to support the miners strike. Do you think they should or should not do this?</p>	<p>Should Should not Don't know</p>	<p>✓ 25 63 12</p>	Q32	

Q32. There are various things which could be done to stop the coal blockade of steel works and power stations. So far they have not been tried because of the fear of inflaming the strike, angering other unions and perhaps turning the dispute into a General Strike. Keeping that danger in mind do you think it would be wise or unwise to try the following:

READ OUT

	<u>Wise</u>	<u>Unwise</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
A. The Government to bring in troops, to see the coal is moved to the steelworks in serious danger, and to electricity power stations threatened with shutdown, due to lack of coal	/ 23	70	7

B. British Steel Corporation to seek a court injunction against the NUM and the rail unions and possibly get very heavy damages from the union	/ 39	46	15

C. The Central Electricity Board to seek a court injunction against the NUM and the rail unions to ensure that coal continues to reach power station	/ 47	40	13

D. British Rail to seek a court injunction against the rail unions and some railway workers who are badly damaging their business by paralysing the movement of coal trains	/ 40	45	15

Q33. The Coal Board is currently producing about 4 million tons of coal a year for which there is no market. They are planning to remedy this by closing about 20 uneconomic high cost pits and getting rid of 20,000 jobs by voluntary redundancy. Do you think this is sensible or do you think they should keep the collieries open and let the taxpayer subsidise the losses involved?

Sensible to close uneconomic pits

Not sensible, should keep pits open and taxpayer subsidise

Don't know

/
73
17
10

Q34

Q34. Mr Scargill says that the miners strike will force the Coal Board to abandon its plan and not have any pit closures. Do you think he will or will not succeed in forcing the Coal Board to abandon its plan?

Will
Will not
Don't know

/
12
71
17

Q35