

Tommy Thompson

Coal file

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I enclose, for your information, a new survey. I understood from your office that you were on holiday so in view of the urgency I sent it directly to the Prime Minister (since I do not know any of the present Private Office people).

But I wanted to keep you in the picture.

Maybe we might get together for lunch while Parliament is in recess. It would be nice to have a good gossip,

Kind regards,

Mr TURNBULL

Have you seen this?

John 8/9

cc Home Secretary's Office.  
I have taken a copy

AT 10/9



LIFE IN BRITAIN

Based on 1074

Fieldwork 22/33 August 1984

Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

Constituency \_\_\_\_\_ No: 

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Classification: Sex

Male  
Female

Age                      18-24  
                                  25-34  
                                  35-44  
                                  45-54  
                                  55+

Social Class

ABC1  
C2DE

Trade Union Member

Member  
Non member

Working Status

Working full time/part time  
Unemployed, seeking work  
Other

Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am \_\_\_\_\_ (SHOW ID CARD) from the Harris Research Centre. We are carrying out a large survey of public attitudes towards some of the problems the country is facing in the nationalised industries. I would like your views on these matters--who you think is responsible, how well the problems are being handled, and what ought to be done about them.



Q.1 First of all I would like to ask you how well you think nationalisation has worked in this country. Do you think it has been successful or unsuccessful?

20

Successful	26
Unsuccessful	56
Don't know	18

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Q.2 Here is a list of the most important nationalised industries  
SHOWCARD A

Q.2a Which two do you think are the best run and most efficient?

National Bus Company	22
British Steel Corporation	11
<u>National coal Board</u>	<u>7</u>
Central Electricity Generating Board	68
British Rail	11
<u>British Gas</u>	<u>69</u>
British Leyland	8

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Q.2b And which two do you think are the most profitable?

National Bus Company	9
British Steel Corporation	5
<u>National coal Board</u>	<u>6</u>
Central Electricity Generating Board	82
British Rail	7
<u>British Gas</u>	<u>84</u>
British Leyland	4

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Q.3 I would now like to ask you about one of the most serious problems faced by a nationalised industry for many years. The miners strike which has been going on now for nearly six months.

How much in sympathy are you with the miners who are on strike? Would you say that you are (read out)

completely in sympathy	13
in sympathy to some extent	22
neither for them nor against them	10
opposed to the miners on strike to some extent	13
completely opposed to the miners	40
don't know	2

Q.4 Some people think that Mr Scargill has brought the miners out on strike to safeguard miners jobs. Others think that he is using the miners to change Society in Britain. Which of these views do you think is nearest the truth?

To safeguard jobs	21
Reason is political	72
Don't know	7

Q.5 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?

strongly approve	7
approve to some extent	11
disapprove to some extent	13
strongly disapprove	68
Don't know	2



Q.6 Do you think the miners are within their rights in trying to bring other miners out by mass picketing tactics?

Are	19
Are not	77
Don't know	3

Q.7 And do you approve or disapprove of striking miners smashing car windows, setting fire to buses used to carry working miners, and intimidating working miners in order to make them support the strike?

strongly approve	1
approve to some extent	2
disapprove to some extent	3
strongly disapprove	94
Don't know	1

Q.8 In general terms where do your main sympathies lie, with those miners on strike who are trying to bring working miners out or with those miners who want to work and are being threatened and intimidated to get them to join the strike?

With Striking miners	19
With working miners	74
Don't know	7

Q.9 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 job or a bad job of maintaining law and order?

Very good	52
Quite good	37
not very good	6
bad job	4
Don't know	1



Q.10 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	36
fairly well	39
fairly badly	11
very badly	10
Don't know	4

Q.11 And who would you say is responsible  
for the violence at collieries when  
police and mass pickets have clashed?

The police	6
mass picketing miners	61
Both equally	28
Don't know	5

Q.12 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	50
The Government were right to take the attitude they did	24
The Government should have taken less tough action than they did	15
don't know	11

Q.13 Do you think the NUM leadership is right  
or wrong to keep the strike going for  
nearly six months without having a  
national secret ballot to find out what  
miners want to do?

Right	7
Wrong	89
Don't know	3



Q.14 And if the National Union of Miners did hold a secret ballot of its members do you think that the majority of miners would be in favour of continuing the strike or of going back to work?

continuing	17
going back to work	73
don't know	10

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Q.15 Why do you think after more than twenty weeks of being on strike the majority of miners are still out on strike. Do you think it is because most of them support the strike or because they are afraid to go back because of intimidation and threats?

support the strike	22
afraid to go back	72
don't know	6

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Q.16 Do you believe that the situation in working coalfields would have been better, and the rights of individual miners would have been better upheld if the police had not been present to match the strength of the pickets?

better if police had not been present	21
not better if police had not been present	67
don't know	13

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Q.17 Would you say that Mr Scargill and other leaders of the NUM are right or wrong to do the following things.....

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

right	16
wrong	80
don't know	4

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b) Use mass pickets to stop production at British Steel works at Ravenscraig, Scunthorpe, and Llandwern steel works

right	9
wrong	86
don't know	5

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

right	12
wrong	85
don't know	3

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Q.18 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	59
opposed	31
don't know	10

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Q.19 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	11
NCB	53
don't know/neither	36

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Q.20 Which of them do you want to win?

Scargill	21
NCB	58
don't know/neither	21

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Q.21 Would you say that the miners strike is going to help or harm the reputation of the trade union movement with ordinary people and with voters?

help	5
harm	80
have no effect	10
don't know	6

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Q.22 Some unions who have leadership who admit to being on the left politically are trying to widen the miners strike by getting their membership to help the miners in various ways. I would like you to tell me whether you approve or disapprove of these activities by other unions.

approve	17
disapprove	73
don't know	10

Q.23 Thinking of the groups on this list would you say whether in your opinion, each of these groups of workers should or should not support the miners' strike?  
SHOWCARD B

Q23a	The dockers	should	19
		should not	75
		don't know	6

b	The steel workers	should	18
		should not	77
		don't know	5

c	Railwaymen	should	19
		should not	76
		don't know	6

d	Electricity supply workers	should	17
		should not	78
		don't know	5

e	The seamen	should	16
		should not	78
		don't know	5

f	Lorry drivers and haulage	should	19
		should not	76
		don't know	5



Q.24 The trade unions are holding their annual TUC conference at the beginning of September. A number of left wing trade union leaders have said that they are going to try to make the TUC give much stronger support, both in terms of financial help and actual physical support for the miners.

Do you (a) approve or disapprove of this aim

approve	21
disapprove	70
don't know	9

(b) think it would be in the country's interest or against the country's interests for the TUC to give much stronger support to the striking miners:

in country's interest	21
not in country's interest	71
don't know	8

(c) think it would help or damage the reputation of the unions with the general public and the mass of ordinary workers to give much stronger support to the miners?

help reputation	16
damage reputation	72
don't know	12

(d) think it would help or harm the reputation of the Labour Party with ordinary voters or have no effect on its reputation?

help reputation of labour party	9
harm reputation of labour party	50
Have no effect	32
Don't know	9



25  
 Q.25 Some people have said that the TUC conference should only give help to the striking miners if Mr Scargill and his colleagues first held a national secret ballot to show whether a majority of miners supported the strike or not. Do you think this would or would not be sensible attitude for the TUC conference to take?

sensible	82
not sensible	11
don't know	6

Q.26 Welsh miners were recently fined £50,000 for defying the law. Do you think they are justified in defying it to try to win the strike?

should stay within the law	76
are justified in breaking it	18
don't know	7

Q.27 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 the 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?

serious possibility	86
not serious	9
don't know	4

Q.28 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?

should ignore threat	8
let coal trains in	86
don't know	5



Q.29 Another possibility is that miners pickets will try to bring the Power stations to a halt by blockading their supplies of coal and oil. Do you think it right for miners to do this?

right	12
wrong	85
don't know	3

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Q.30 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, or only a few or none

a lot	40
a certain number	30
a few	15
None	11
Don't know	4

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Q.31 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?

Will	75
Will not	18
don't know	7

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Q.32 Some railwaymen have been taking sympathetic action to support the miners strike. Do you think they should or should not do this?

Should	22
Should not	69
don't know	9

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Q.33 The railway unions are threatening to start a national work to rule shortly. The chairman of the British Rail has said that there is no real reason for this and has indicated that the whole aim is to support the miners' strike.

Cont'd



Which do you think is nearest the truth..

that the railway unions have a genuine grievance which justifies a work to rule or ..... 17

that there is no real grievance and it is just a cover by their left wing leadership to give support to the miners? 63

Don't know 20

Q.34 The chairman of British Rail has also said that an unjustified work to rule will damage their business and put a lot of railway workers jobs at risk. Do you think this is true or untrue?

true 74  
untrue 19  
don't know 7

Q.35 Do you approve or disapprove of a railway work to rule at this time?

approve 14  
disapprove 72  
don't know 14

Q.36 There is also a threat of another national dock strike of British Steel go ahead with unloading a ship bringing vitally needed supplies of coal. Would you say that the dockers threatening a national strike have a genuine grievance or do you think this also is just a move to help the miners strike?

genuine grievance 14  
move to help miners 76  
don't know 10







Q.41 How much do you think the miners have to gain or lose by keeping the strike going now?

*would you say* *12-AND OUT*

a great deal to gain	9
a certain amount to gain	9
a certain amount to lose	14
a great deal to lose	62
Don't know	6

Q.42 And, finally, one more question, Do you think the other unions at the TUC conference should or should not now start to look seriously for ways to bring the strike to and end?

should	95
should not	3
don't know	3