

Conservative Research Department

File

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KB/sgc

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Derek Howe
10 Downing Street
London SW1

2nd March 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Peter,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 54

I attach a note setting out the results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study. This survey was conducted from February 18th to 23rd and found a 6% Labour lead. The ½% Conservative lead Gallup found in their published poll (conducted 10th/16th February) was probably just a freak result. Support for either a Social Democratic Party or a Social Democratic/Liberal alliance remains strong but has shown little change over the past three weeks.

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D. K. Britto

Atc.

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 54

(produced 27th February 1981)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest Gallup tracking study was conducted from 18th until 23rd February 1981 and they found a 6% Labour lead. This 6% Labour lead compares with a ½% Conservative lead they found in their published survey (conducted 10/16 February). The level of support for either a Social Democratic Party or a Social Democratic/Liberal alliance showed almost no change according to our tracking questions. Details below:-

VOTING INTENTION

(including don't knows)

	<u>Standard</u> <u>Voting</u> <u>Intention</u>			<u>Voting Intention</u> <u>if Social Democratic</u> <u>Candidate</u>			<u>Voting Intention</u> <u>if Social Democratic/</u> <u>Liberal Candidate</u>		
	<u>3/9</u> Feb %	<u>10/16</u> Feb %	<u>18/23</u> Feb %	<u>3/9</u> Feb %	<u>10/16</u> Feb %	<u>18/23</u> Feb %	<u>3/9</u> Feb %	<u>10/16</u> Feb %	<u>18/23</u> Feb %
Conservative	31	32	30	21	23	24	21	22	23
Labour	35	31	35	25	23	25	24	22	23
Liberal	18	17	19	11	12	11	-	-	-
Others	7	8	8	2	2	2	2	2	1
Social Democratic- Party	-	-	-	22	21	22	-	-	-
Social Democratic- Don't know/ it depends	9	12	9	19	16	17	33	36	34

N.B. This note normally excludes don't knows (figures are recalculated). It should be noted that this table includes don't knows as a separate category.

2. Voting Intention

The ½% Conservative lead Gallup found in their published survey was almost certainly a freak result as our latest results show a return to a 6% Labour lead which is around the level that we have found since late January 1981 onwards. Liberal support remains high.

Please see following page for details.

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2. Voting Intention (continued)

	<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>					
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	14.0	2.0	-13.0
26 Nov/1 Dec	35.0	49.5	13.0	2.5	-14.5
3/8 Dec	35.0	47.0	14.5	3.5	-12.0
10/15 Dec	35.0	47.5	14.5	3.0	-12.5**
<u>1981</u>					
7/12 Jan	34.0	48.0	15.0	3.0	-14.0
14/20 Jan	33.0	46.5	18.5	2.0	-13.5**
21/26 Jan	35.5	43.0	17.0	4.5	-7.5**
28 Jan/ 2 Feb	32.0	40.0	21.5	6.5	-8.0
3/9 Feb	34.0	39.0	20.0	7.0	-5.0
10/16 Feb	36.0	35.5	20.0	8.5	+0.5**
18/23 Feb	32.5	38.5	21.0	8.0	-6.0

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published polls

3. GOVERNMENT RECORD

Yet again almost no change in popularity of Government - 59% of the electorate disapprove of our record to date.

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>			
1/6 Oct	30	57	13
8/14 Oct	32	55	13
15/20 Oct	34	54	12
22/27 Oct	29	60	11
29 Oct/3 Nov	30	59	12
5/10 Nov	32	54	14
12/17 Nov	29	60	11
19/24 Nov	27	60	13
26 Nov/1 Dec	27	62	11
3/8 Dec	26	64	11
10/15 Dec	29	59	12
<u>1981</u>			
7/12 Jan	27	61	12
14/20 Jan	26	63	11
21/26 Jan	28	58	14
28 Jan/2 Feb	26	62	12
3/9 Feb	27	60	13
10/16 Feb	29	60	11
18/23 Feb	29	59	12

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest study found yet again almost no change in Mrs Thatcher's popularity. Mr Foot remains the most unpopular leader of the Opposition Gallup have ever found.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dis- sat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
<u>1980</u>									
1/6 Oct	38	66	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
26 Nov/1 Dec	32	63	5	38	39	23	54	18	27
3/8 Dec	33	62	5	28	33	39	58	18	24
10/15 Dec	35	59	6	30	35	35	59	17	24
<u>1981</u>									
7/12 Jan	33	61	6	24	39	36	56	21	23
14/20 Jan	31	63	5	26	42	32	63	19	18
21/26 Jan	34	61	5	23	43	34	57	19	21
28 Jan/2 Feb	32	63	6	21	46	33	62	17	21
3/9 Feb	35	60	6	24	49	27	60	19	21
10/16 Feb	34	60	6	22	49	30	64	16	20
18/23 Feb	33	62	5	20	52	28	58	18	24

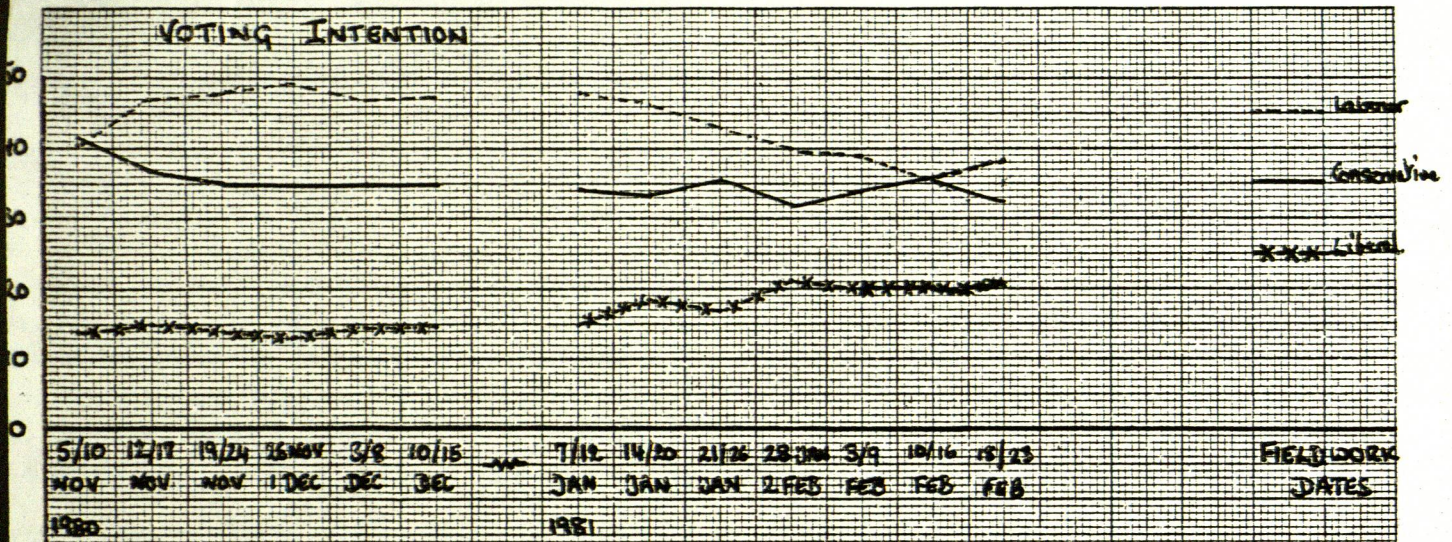
5. Published PollsAudience Selection (Sun February 26th 1981)

An Audience Selection poll published in the Sun on 26th February 1981 and conducted by telephone on February 23rd looked at public attitudes to a range of social and political issues. They found:-

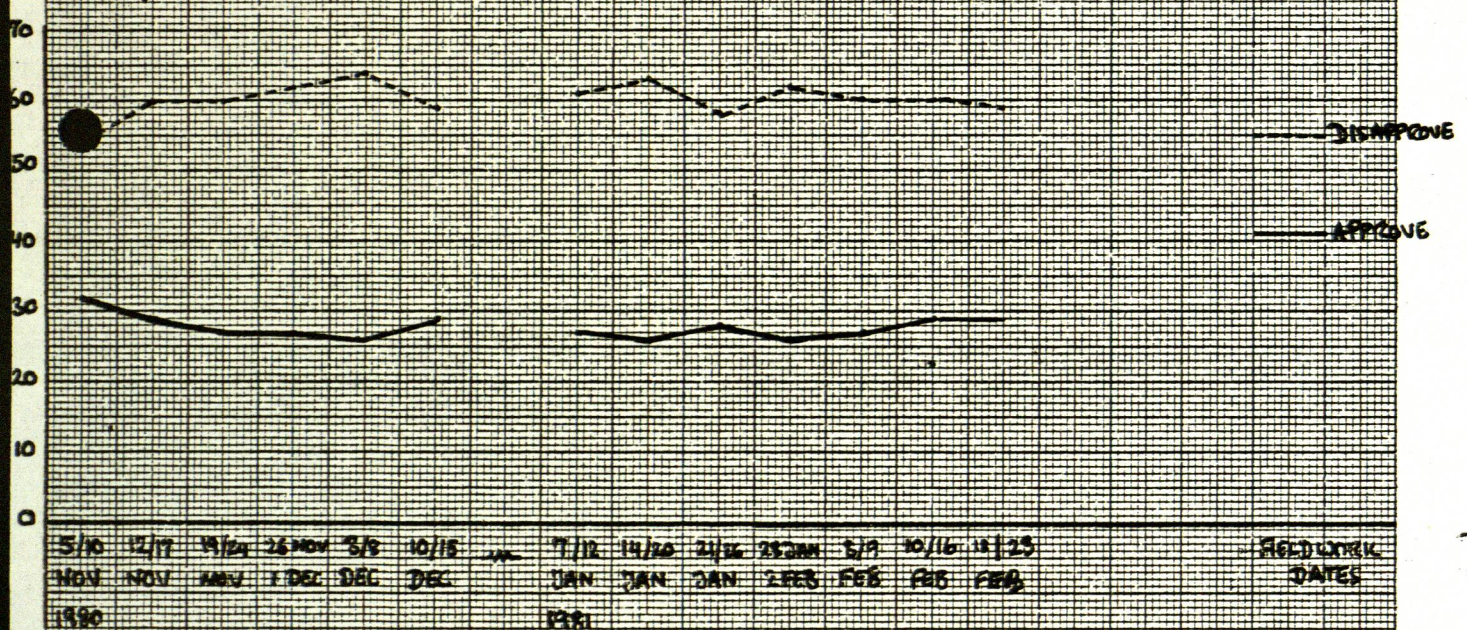
- 65% thinking Sunday football should be allowed.
- 72% thinking shops should be allowed to open on Sundays if they wish.
- 61% thought that Northern Ireland should be united with Eire - 32% taking the view that Northern Ireland should remain part of UK
- 57% thought that we should withdraw our troops from Northern Ireland - 40% that they should stay.

BACKGROUND GRAPHS

VOTING INTENTION



GOVERNMENT RECORD



POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

