

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 91
 (produced 22nd November 1981)

(F)

1. Introduction

Two surveys conducted in Crosby have been published in the last week and both have found a substantial lead for Shirley Williams. The publication of a number of further opinion surveys conducted in the constituency can be expected before polling day (26th November). Both the recent Crosby surveys have been conducted by NOP. Details are given below:-

	<u>Fieldwork 17/18 Nov</u> (Published Daily Mail 20th November 1981)	<u>Fieldwork 19/20 Nov</u> (Published Observer 22nd November 1981)
SDP/Liberal	47	46
Conservative	37	36
Labour	15	16
Others	1	2

The Observer poll found support for the Alliance in Crosby as being fairly broadly based with 30% coming from previous Labour voters, 27% from previous Conservative voters, 20% from previous Liberal voters, and the balance being made up by those who either did not vote in May 1979 or could not remember how they had voted.

The results from our latest national Gallup 'tracking' study are the same as those published in the Daily Telegraph on 19th November 1981. When compared with the results from our previous unpublished 'tracking' study, conducted from 4th to 9th November this survey found almost no change in the level of support for the main parties. Conservative support remained unchanged at 26½%, Labour support increased from 28½% (4/9 November) to 29% in the latest study, Liberal support increased from 14½% (4/9 Nov.) to 15%. Support for the Social Democrats fell from 28½% (4/9 Nov.) to 27% in the latest Gallup survey. The level of combined support for the Liberals and Social Democrats fell from 43% (4/9 November) to 42% in our latest study - a change which in opinion poll terms is not significant.

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of the trend in support for the main parties in the standard Gallup unprompted voting intention question from both our unpublished 'tracking' studies and Gallup's published polls are shown in the table below and on the attached graph:-

VOTING INTENTION
(unprompted question)

	CON	LAB	LIB	SOCIAL DEMOCRAT	OTHER	LEAD	LIBERAL + SOCIAL DEMOCRAT
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<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
11/16 Nov	26.5	29.0	15.0	27.0	2.5	-2.5**	42.0

* First Gallup post-Election survey
** Published Polls

This latest 'tracking' study included a new 'prompted' voting intention question. This new question specifically offered respondents the possibility of voting four ways. Gallup asked 'If an election were to take place tomorrow, and the following candidates were standing in your constituency, how would you vote. They found:

Conservative	25½%
Labour	28%
SDP/Liberal Alliance	43%
Some other party	3½%

The pattern of support for the parties as shown by the prompted voting intention question is very similar to that found in the standard unprompted question.

2. Government Record

The sharp improvement in the popularity of the Government we found in our last 'tracking' study (conducted 4/9 November) was not maintained in the latest study (conducted 11/16 November). Our latest study found 23% approving of our record and 66% disapproving. Details are shown below:-

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<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
23/30 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
11/16 November	23	66	11

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Support for Mr. Foot as Labour's leader is now at an all-time low for any post-war leader with only 16% of the electorate thinking he is doing a good job. Our latest survey also found a slight drop in the popularity of both Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Steel. Details are shown below:-

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 not</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is not</u>	<u>Don't</u>
	%	sat.	Know	%	%	Know	%	%	Know
<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
8/13 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
4/9 Nov	32	64	3	24	62	3	68	16	16
11/16 Nov	28	66	6	16	67	17	64	17	19

4. Published Polls

(a) Gallup (Daily Telegraph 19th November 1981)

In addition to the standard voting intention and other 'tracking' questions considered in detail above the Gallup survey published in the Daily Telegraph on 19th November 1981 also included the results from a range of other questions on the image of the parties.

Gallup found 81% of the electorate thought unemployment was the most urgent problem facing the country, 36% cost of living, 12% other economic problems, 9% defence/nuclear weapons, 6% strikes/trade unions, 6% pensions and 5% housing/rates/mortgages. Details of what the supporters of the main parties saw as the most urgent problems Britain faces are shown below:-

Most Urgent Problems Facing Britain

	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative supporters</u>	<u>Labour supporters</u>	<u>Liberal supporters</u>	<u>Social Democrat supporters</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	81	72	84	82	86
Cost of living	36	38	38	32	39
Other economic problems	12	14	9	15	13
Defence/Nuclear weapons	9	6	10	6	11
Strikes/Trade Unions	6	14	2	8	3
Pensions	6	3	8	10	4
Housing/Rates/Mortgages	5	5	6	3	3

Gallup asked respondents 'Do you think there should be a General Election in the near future or should the Government carry on?' 54% wanted an election soon, 41% wanted the Government to carry on and 5% did not have a view. Gallup also asked 'Irrespective of how you yourself will vote, who do you think will win the next General Election?' 31% thought Labour would win, 31% the Social Democrats, 17% the Conservatives and 8% the Liberals.

Gallup attempted to measure the public image of the main parties by asking 'When deciding which party to support, which of these things do you yourself look for first of all?'. Gallup found:

	<u>1979</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1974</u>
	%	%	%
Honest, intelligent, experienced leaders	36	47	57
Forward-looking plans for improving our standard of living and making the world a better place to live in	34	36	32
Sound domestic policies for looking after things in this country	33	31	39
Concern for the interests of myself and my family and people like us	28	37	50
Will make the country prosperous	28	32	40
Ability to keep a fair balance between the interests of all sections of the community	25	27	33
A democratic organisation so that party policy is decided by the members and is not decided for them by powerful members	20	21	24
Unity and agreement within the party	19	20	25
Ability to get the support of trade unions and the workers	17	16	20
Ability to get the support of business, industry and commerce	16	14	20
Sound policies for looking after foreign affairs	11	15	20
None of these	5	6	6

Gallup also asked these respondents whether or not various statements applied to the Conservative Party, the Labour Party or the Alliance between the Liberal Party and the Social Democrats.

The table below shows the net scores from these questions where a '+' indicates more people thought the material applied them it did not, and a '-' indicates the reverse:-

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
Leadership	-2	-9	+29
Sound domestic policies	-21	-10	+19
Forward looking	+2	-3	+39
Making country prosperous	-14	-20	+16
Concern for people like self	-35	+8	+28
Keep fair balance	-30	-11	+22
Democratic organisation	-4	-20	+37
Party Unity	-9	-67	+30
Supported by business	+56	-41	0
Supported by unions	-71	+71	-10
Sound foreign policies	+20	-19	0

At present the public's image of the Conservative party is in sharp contrast with the position in 1977. In 1981 on only three items do we have a positive score, whilst in 1977 all the scores were positive, with the exception of trade union support. The positive image of the Alliance in comparison with the negative image of the other two parties is shown clearly by the table above.

(b) N.O.P. (Daily Mail 20th November 1981)

An NOP poll, conducted in Crosby on 17th/18th November was published in the Daily Mail on 20th November. NOP found 47% of the electorate claiming they will vote SDP/Liberal, 37% Conservative, 15% Labour and 1% for 'other' parties. 62% of the electorate claimed they were certain to vote.

(c) N.O.P. (Observer 22nd November 1981)

An NOP poll, conducted in Crosby on 19th/20th November was published in the Observer on 22nd November. NOP found 46% claiming they will vote SDP/Liberal; 36% Conservative, 16% Labour and 2% for 'other' parties. In this poll NOP found 66% of electors claimed they were 'certain to vote' and 16% 'very likely' to vote.

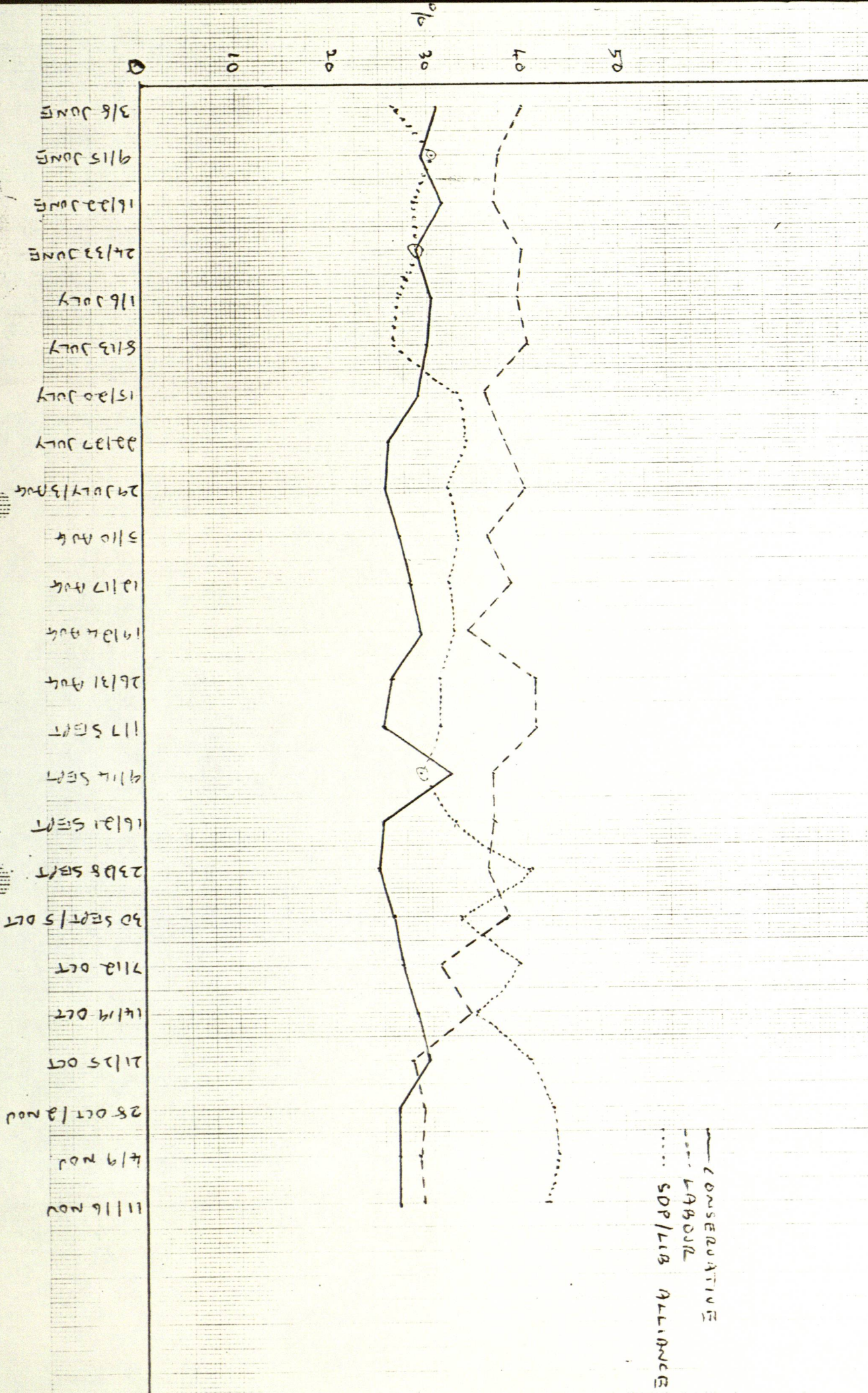
When asked about issues 62% of those interviewed mentioned unemployment as an issue influencing the way they intend to vote, 48% mentioned inflation and the cost of living, 33% social services and education, 32% rates, 20% taxation, 19% defence, 17% Northern Ireland, 14% housing, and 8% race relations.

(d) System Three (Glasgow Herald 16th November 1981)

A System Three poll published in the Glasgow Herald on 16th November 1981 looked at attitudes in Scotland. They found:-

	<u>October</u> <u>1981</u>	<u>September</u> <u>1981</u>	<u>January</u> <u>1981</u>	<u>General Election</u> <u>1979</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	14	15	19	31
Labour	42	52	47	42
Liberal/SDP	22	16	-	-
SNP	21	17	18	17
Communist	1	-	-	-

GALLUP PROMPTED VOTING INTENTION



— CONSERVATIVE
 - - - LABOUR
 SDP/LIB ALLIANCE