1982

SOUTHAMPTON LABOUR BRIEFING

Healey, 1945: "The upper classes in every country are selfish, depraved and decadent...There is a very great danger, unless we are very careful, that we shall find ourselves running with the red flag in front of the armoured car of Tory imperialism and counter-revolution"

HOW LABOUR CAN WIN

Thatcher's visit to the Falklands, coupled with the announcement that there will be an April budget, shows that it is now vitually certain that we will be faces with a general election this year. This election will not be an ordinary one, but will determine the course of British society for a decade or more.

With mass unemployment, falling living standards, decaying welfare services and falling production it might be expected that the Labour Party is poised to win with an over-whelming majority, elected on its most radical programme for decades. But it is the Tories, who are putting into practice their most radical solutions, who are the most popular at the moment, and are confident of winning the election. All socialists in the Labour Party must ask themselves why this is.

Dennis Healey and the rest of the right in the Party (and their friends in the media) tell us that the party is unpopular because Michael Foot is too 'left' and because he has refused to deal with the left in the Party. All would be well if the extremists were expelled, and Labour returned to its 'traditional' policies. This argument is a smokescreen, to mask the SDP fellow-travellers' opposition to the policy gains of the left, which have given us a programme with the potential of gaining mass support. Dennis Healey wants to return to the discredited policies of the past, the policies of a Labour government which obeys the wishes of the Pentagon and the City, rather than Party Conference and the TUC.

Labour can win only if it can present a clear socialist alternative to the Tories and the SDP. The two central planks of such a policy must be unilateral nuclear disarmament, and a programme to fight unemployment. Labour must clearly be seen as the Party that will get rid of Cruise, Trident, US bases and all nuclear weapons from Britain. We must, with CND and the TUC, build a mass campaign against the missiles, which will strengthen a future Labour government in its fight to get rid of nuclear weapons. Unemployment can only be ended by a policy which takes control of the economy out of the hands of the capitalist class and runs it in the interest of the working class.

In order to prevent Labour enetering the election on a socialist programme, Healey and the right have launched the witch-hunt. Any expulsions, however, are a threat to the whole of the Party, and are not just aimed at Militant or any other one tendency. Southampton Labour Party must maintain its policy of opposing expulsions and witch-hunts, and support the constituency parties that are under threat from the NEC.

PTO

The policies of Dennis Healey were tried by the last Labour government, and they resulted in Thatcher's victory. We must resist any attempt to return to those failed policies, and instead enter the coming election with a clear socialist alternative to Thatcher.

We must defend the hard-won policies of recent years against the right wing, who are prepared to lose the election than come to power on such policies. We cannot allow them to succeed.

Southampton Labour Briefing

Southampton Labour Briefing is a bulletin produced by members of Southampton Labour Party who support the policirs of "Socialist Challenge". "Socialist Challenge" is a weekly newspaper which aims to provide a serious and systematic analysis of the major political, industrial and social issues in Britain and internationally. It campaigns for the return of a Labour government firmly committed to carrying out the radical socialist policies adopted by the Labour Party and the TUC over the last few years.

We are also active in local trade unions and in Trades Council and CND. We hold monthly discussion meetings, at which recent topics have included Poland, Ireland, Central America, Women's Liberation and the campaign against the witch-hunt.

If you would like further information on our policies and activities, we can be contacted by phoning Southampton 398?