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Extract from a speech by the Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP (East Surrey),  
Chancellor of the Exchequer, to Surbiton Conservative Association, Guildhall, Kingston-  
upon-Thames, on Friday, 6th May 1983

It is interesting that one of Labour's proposals is to give councils the right to buy back council houses from the half a million tenants who've bought them during our period of office. I wonder whether they realise that the Communist government in Budapest has been selling state-owned flats on the excellent grounds that "Those who became private owners in these buildings are well placed to maintain them, and to keep them in a good state. In this way, the State gains, but the occupier gains too, because he or she will have a good quality flat and will look after it and care for it." So here we have, behind the Iron Curtain, a recognition of the value of home ownership and personal property which the British Labour Party cannot understand. But who knows: where the Communists of Hungary lead today, the socialists of Britain may follow tomorrow?

The Labour Party deserve to be mocked and derided for the naivete of their proposals and the weakness of their leadership. But we must not be complacent about the election battle against them. The SDP-Liberal Alliance, despite its claims to be a replacement for Labour, could yet cause great havoc in Tory seats. Events in the Darlington by-election strengthen the argument that a vote for the Alliance, whether in the SDP or Liberal guise is effectively a vote for Labour. It would be a tragedy if Labour were to win by default, because of support for that gang of four passé politicians. Four politicians, who having failed to keep control of their own party, now ask to be placed in charge of the country.

But whenever the election comes, we know we have a record in Government which deserves the approval of the voters. And in Dick Tracey you will have in Surbiton an excellent candidate, and a worthy successor to Nigel Fisher.

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