



# Ted Knight

Interviewed by Jeff Rodrigues

Ted Knight, the Leader of Lambeth Council, in south London, has been in the forefront of the campaign against one of the major planks of the Tory Government's economic policies, the cuts in public expenditure. As such, he has led the political opposition to the Government in the field of local government.

He first became formally involved in the labour movement when he joined the Labour Party League of Youth in 1948. Although he felt himself drawn to the Communist Party at that time, any further commitment to the Communist Party was inhibited by what he called 'the cult of the individual' and the 'somewhat flowery' tributes paid to Stalin.

Having met some Trotskyists in his local Labour Party he read Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed* which 'seemed to fit in with very primitive ideas [that he had formed for himself]'. Nevertheless he felt then, and still feels now, that 'a defence of the Soviet Union and of the gains of the October Revolution must be maintained.'

The entrenchment of the right wing within the Labour Party was a feature of this cold war period. Following the attack on Bevan in 1954, the right wing moved on to attack *Tribune*, and proscribed *Socialist Outlook*, which Ted Knight describes as being basically Trotskyist, but with a considerable basis of support within the rank and file level of the Labour Party.

It was at this point that Ted Knight was

one of three people in the local Labour Party who were expelled by the direct intervention of the National Executive Committee. He was accused of being a supporter of *Socialist Outlook*, of not having views compatible with membership of the Labour Party, with corrupting the League of Youth and with corrupting the local Party, of which he was chairman.

Expulsion was a major blow for him. After some months of trying to fight the NEC, Ted Knight and other supporters of *Socialist Outlook*, as well some ex-members of the Communist Party who had left after 1956, became founder members of the Socialist Labour League (SLL).

He became a full time organiser for the SLL and spent three years in Glasgow, building up its branches.

After full-time work for the SLL he became very involved in trade union work as a member of USDAW. It was during this experience of the trade union movement that he was repelled by what he calls 'the sectarianism of the SLL and its isolation from the broad movement'.

He left the SLL in 1964 and from 1965 to 1970 made several unsuccessful applications to rejoin the Labour Party. Meanwhile he had become secretary of Lewisham Trades Council, established good relations with Labour Party members there and found that he was able to work more effectively in the broad movement outside the SLL.

He was not attracted to the Communist Party: he felt that the *British Road to Socialism* and the discussions around it showed him that 'it had left its revolutionary basis and taking a stage further towards reformism . . .'

In 1970, the NEC of the Labour Party re-admitted him to the Party. He says: 'at the interview I mentioned very firmly that I was a Marxist, that Marxism was a legitimate tendency within the working class movement and that Marxists have the right to be inside the broad party of the working class'.

He became a member of Norwood Labour Party, in Lambeth, and in the 1974 local government elections he was elected a councillor along with a substantial minority of 13 other Left-wing candidates from Norwood. They formed an organised opposition to the right wing. Labour Majority, from which they had been expelled. They formed their own 'Shadow Cabinet', learned the craft of local government and began to formulate a critique of the relationship between elected members and the senior full-time officers.

The local government elections of 1978 produced a strong Left wing slate of Councillors, not only in Norwood but across the borough as a whole. The Left councillors took control of the Labour Majority, and after a tussle Knight was elected Leader —

Jeff Rodrigues

*The local authority elections of May, 1978, returned this present Labour majority in Lambeth, with yourself as leader.*

*One of the first objectives of the new Council was the attempt to impose what you called in a previous interview<sup>1</sup> 'member-will' on the administration. That was a significant development in the political practise of Labour local government. To what extent have you been successful?*

Well, I think it was a significant development too. It did help to establish clearly that the elected members were intent on getting control of policy within the Town Hall. The Board of Directors' meetings were seen, not only by ourselves, but also by those active members of the community, to be a decisive brake on any progressive moves within the Council. I think that, on reflection we were wrong, but what is important is that we established the fact that the politicians were now to be party to the highest administrative levels in the Town Hall.

Now, have we won the battle? I would say that, yes, in a way we have. But the bureaucracy is very big and what we haven't been able to defeat is the inertia of the bureaucracy. It has great difficulty in changing direction even though a policy decision has been taken. Also, we have no ability to change personnel: it is very difficult to get people who have been working in a particular way for a long time to change their attitudes. The establishment of the Race Relations Unit, for example, a very significant development, demonstrated, and still demonstrates, that whilst you can take all the policy decisions you like, it is a continuous battle against the bureaucracy to make a change.

However, I think that there is very little doubt in any officer's mind that the members have a greater say within the Council than they have ever had before; officers are now very reluctant to engage in battle with us. Yes, I think we have tamed the bureaucracy.

*The achievement of that taming is not simply the result of a restructuring of the Council's committees and those of the administration. It seems to be a result also of your own personal commitment to the political task of establishing member-will. You work full-time, unpaid, you are in the Town Hall most of the time; in a sense you have bulldozed your way into the meetings of the senior full-time officers. It is this relationship between a personal style of leadership and the conscious need for a political intervention in the administration that has been so decisive. Yet lower down the levels of the structure, there are indications of a strong immunity to the policies of this Council.*

## is the inertia of the bureaucracy. It has great difficulty in changing direction

Yes, I think that's inevitably the case. I don't think that it is possible, with the structure of local government as it is, for councillors to be able to control that situation without them being involved almost on a full-time basis — certainly as far as leading councillors are concerned. We have been very fortunate in that myself and the chairman of Housing and the chairman of Social Services have been able to take that decision to work full-time and that unquestionably has had an impact. It is also, of course, from the officers' point of view, a very satisfactory position because they are able to get decisions, they are able to get indications of the political view of the majority party and that does cut down on some of the wasted activity in the Council. So the officers don't necessarily oppose it, although it is an infringement on what was totally their preserve.

*The difficulty in getting the right methods of working at lower levels in the structure is part of the political problem, but it is also, would you not agree, a managerial problem. With a management more in tune with the political direction of the Council, it may well be more feasible for you to expect them to motivate their staff.*

Yes I think you are right. The civil service within local authorities has been, and still is, I think, very conservative, and probably so politically, as well as just in general attitudes — so, it's a fight. They are not necessarily in agreement with the policies that we are pursuing anyway, although I think it must be said that officers that work in inner-city areas would tend to be somewhat sympathetic to tackling the problems of the inner-city — so that they work with a certain basis of goodwill. But they of course haven't got the political view or motivation that we have and therefore it is just translated into a job and so, obviously, if they were politically in tune with ourselves it would be very helpful — but there is no way that one can impose that position anyway, and I don't think that it is

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anywhere in the country.

necessarily an acceptable situation with the methods of local government that we have now.

*There are two further points I would like to discuss on this subject. The first concerns the perceived distance that still exists between the Council and the community which it is elected to serve. Where you may have succeeded in imposing control on the administration, you have succeeded less in the way the Council is experienced by the ordinary person on the street. I concede that in the last 18 months since this Council was elected there is an improved appreciation of the role of the Council, many of the community organisations have taken more interest in the political developments that have concerned Lambeth, and there may also be an albeit muted support for the stand taken by your Council. At the same time, there are a large number of people who still see their relationship with the Council as a 'them' and 'us' situation. I'm not convinced that your use of the Lambeth Local<sup>2</sup> and your emphasis on written communication has achieved any significant reversal of that position.*

Well, I think that there has been a reversal of the position in as far as the organised community groups are concerned. I think that our relationship with the organised community groups is one at least where they have some confidence that they can talk to us and that we are sympathetic to their problems. I think that an example of that is that just before the 1978 elections, there was a meeting of local groups to discuss the formation of the Inner-City Partnership<sup>3</sup>, at which the Leader of the Labour Council was booed off the platform — he had to give up the meeting. We have never experienced that; in fact we have experienced a much closer relationship with the organised groups. But inevitably they come against the bureaucracy within the Town Hall — the bureaucracy isn't as responsive as we would want it to be — or as they would want it to be. So, yes, there is that problem. As far as the community as a whole is concerned, inevitably we haven't been able to break the view that authority, whether it is the civil service generally, or government departments or local authority departments, are somewhat apart from them.

I think we have taken some steps towards bridging the gap; we have introduced what we term a ward consultation process, where we go to every ward once a year, where we have a public meeting where the councillors face questions from the public and where there is a fair discussion. At our last round, 800 people attended the particular meetings throughout the borough — probably more

than ever have attended any local authority discussion anywhere in the country. We are well ahead on that side — but it's not enough. The problem that we have is that we don't control the media and we have very limited resources, just a local paper which has some limitations anyway — it has to deal with many things — no, I must agree we haven't. I think also here the Labour Parties have something to answer for too.

*Both points you've just mentioned — the power of the London media and the role of the ward Labour Parties — are questions I want to look at. First of all there has been a consistent attack on yourself as Leader, in the evening newspapers in London as well, of course, as in the South London Press, and the pejorative term 'Red Ted' or 'Marxist Ted' has been a consistent and very irritating aspect of their reports. I remember in one particular case a six column article on Lambeth which mentioned 'Marxist Knight' 18 times with no explanation — I mean it wasn't description, it was purely a term of insult and clearly the effect of the London media is quite different from the sort of media reception you might expect in Sheffield, for example like David Blunket<sup>4</sup> could expect, or in any other part of the country. The London media is extremely powerful, with a number of radio stations and so on and this is bound to have an effect on the way that the local people perceive the Council.*

But that has two edges to it of course, like two sides of a coin, that whilst they have engaged in that I think many people — the majority of people in Lambeth — know about Lambeth Labour Council, and they probably do know who the Leader of the Council is, so that in one sense at least we've broken the total ignorance gap that exists in most other places: so it has two edges. It is counter-productive in some respects because of course it is consistent and very difficult to combat.

*If I can go on now to the role of the ward Labour Parties: I think that you've hit on an important point there. In my view the way that the Council is approaching the solution of the problem of the gap between the Council and the community is very much in terms of using written communication of one type or another. To some extent the Leader himself is making a much stronger impression on not just the London media but the national media as a whole. That is something that, despite the adverse publicity, Lambeth people are proud of — I feel that is the case. At the same time though, I don't think that's enough. And I feel that it is a major criticism that the ward Labour Parties have remained basically electoral organisations; you pull them out every four years, they do a pretty good job,*



## found ourselves elected on a manifesto to maintain and expand the services

*but in between those four years, between Council elections, there is no attempt to campaign in the same sort of way that our Communist Party branches do. I'm not just arguing that the ward Labour Party, in a sense, should be the transmission belt of the Council, but nevertheless it seems to me that if this Council is going to survive into the next period it's got to in fact transform those Labour Party organisations from electoral ones into campaigning ones — would you agree?*

Yes, I would. I would think, however, that individual members of the Labour Party, activists, would disagree that they weren't campaigning, but there is certainly no campaigning in a co-ordinated fashion. They of course are very busy people too, like every other activist within the labour movement — they are active in their trade union branches, they are active in their place of work, they are active on particular one-off issues. But we haven't been able to get a consistent campaign on behalf of the Council.

I think of course that this is the case not primarily because of the Lambeth Council or even criticisms they may have of the Lambeth Council, but mainly because of the difficulties inside the Labour Party — the

major differences between the national leadership and the rank and file. We have had a situation in which the policies of the Callaghan government, its predecessor and also, now, the failure of the parliamentary leadership to embark on any serious campaign against the Tories, has had its effects on the local level. The fight has really been inside the Labour Party on the democratic issues and this has taken up most of the time of party activists, so that there hasn't been the turn out towards the broader public that we would have expected.

*That doesn't sound at all convincing. I agree that the debate within the Party may have an effect on the activities of the local Labour Parties, although not necessarily the effect you state. But the local situation, here in Lambeth, has a specific significance, locally and nationally. We have a Council which is taking an extremely advanced position on the cuts and four Constituency Labour Parties which you describe as being transformed particularly in terms of local policy but also in terms supporting a left*

<sup>1</sup> *Marxism Today*, May 1980.

<sup>2</sup> A bi-monthly newspaper, produced by the Lambeth Public Relations Office.

<sup>3</sup> A partnership between the Council and the Department of the Environment, affecting inner city areas in the country. Heseltine's latest penalties effectively ended the 'partnership' with Lambeth.

<sup>4</sup> Leader of Sheffield Council and prominent in the South Yorkshire anti-cuts campaign.

*position within the Party. Yet, it must be admitted to be a major failure that, given the position of Lambeth Council, the ward Labour Parties have not managed to put that across to the working people in the borough.*

Yes, I couldn't deny that, I don't think any activist could deny it. The problem we face of course is that the ward Labour Parties have a very limited active membership, who are involved as I say in so many things that it is very difficult to mobilise it. One could not deny that we should be concentrating on that situation. It's certainly our intention to be doing so over the next period and I think that probably we will see a change in that campaigning stance by local Labour Parties.

*Can I take you back then to the problem of the interface between central and local government. Lambeth Council has been picked out by Heseltine not just as one of the 14 so-called 'overspending' Councils but as a leader of the 14. Is it not rather ironic that having established control over the Town Hall administration, you may now find yourself with virtually no room whatsoever to manoeuvre?*

Yes, that's true. In actual fact of course what we found when we came into office is that we had a Labour government who were in the throes of beginning to cut back on public expenditure, but of course it was still a Labour government and there was still a possibility of influencing that government. Since May 1979, which was only a year after we took office, the Tory government has of course drastically cut back on the resources available to local authorities. We have found ourselves elected on a manifesto to maintain and expand the services to meet the needs of an inner-city borough such as Lambeth but now, without the resources that are really essential to do that job. At the same time, by their very actions they are limiting our room to operate within that situation, as you say.

It is ironic that, whilst having established at least the base for our operations here in Lambeth that now we are prevented from exploring and expanding our policies because of a lack of resources. What we have done in Lambeth is to *expose* these limitations by the Government, and we took a deliberate decision to enter a public debate with the Government on this matter, because we felt that it was something that we needed to get across to the public — that we needed to get across actually to the Labour Party itself — that it wasn't possible to continue local government as we understood it and as the people of Lambeth had come to understand it under the limitations that we're facing from central government.

When the Tories came into office in May 1979, their first budget immediately cut local authority expenditure through a reduction in the Rate Support Grant<sup>5</sup>. This Council's initial decision was to cut our own budget by £3m in the least damaging way and at the same time to prepare the ground for what we anticipated would be a major fight ahead on the whole question of resources. We referred this decision to the Labour Parties locally and asked them to call a conference of their members in the summer of 1979, at which we presented the financial situation and our arguments to them. Their overall view was that a Labour council could not make the cuts that were being proposed. The Council took account of their views and we reversed our decision. It's quite important here to note that we had demonstrated something which was quite new in Labour local government — that is, that Labour councils were accountable to the party that put them into office.

However, a consequence of that reversed decision was that, if we were to maintain our services, we had to impose a rate increase of 50%, one of the biggest increases in the country. This we duly did in April 1980. The financial situation since has been quite disastrous for local government. The Government has pursued its attack on local

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authority expenditure, they have refused to underwrite the comparability award for our workers and their general economic policies, affecting inflation and interest rates, have had a serious effect on our expenditure. For example, the difference between our estimates of the interest rates for 1980/81 and the rate actually permitted by the Government has increased our interest rates by £4m. On these factors alone we are heading for an overspend of £5.5m.

On top of that, because we weren't responding to his budget guidelines, Heseltine reduced our current allocation from the rate support grant by a further £1.5m. In addition, he took his revenge on the so-called 'overspending' 14 Councils — of course, we deny the term 'overspending' but plead guilty to high-spending — and that resulted in the loss of a further £2.1m.

*So the estimated overspend by April 1981 is likely to be in the region of £9m to £11m. The borough is approaching the sort of deficit budget situation which was so much the subject of discussion in the Fightback Campaign this time*

*last year. The interface between central and local government seems to be shrinking to a point where there is little more than a veil between government directives and local government initiatives. The options open to the Council are extremely limited. One option would be to raise a supplementary rate now and to raise rates again in April 1981: but this will simply have a knock-on effect on the Rate Support Grant, with Heseltine simply making another reduction in the allocation for 1981/82. Another option is to resign. And the final one would be to implement cuts. The only way out, it seems to me, is a mass campaign to force the Tories to change their policies, or better still, to remove them from office. I understand that your Chief Executive recently presented a paper outlining to the Policy and Resources Committee the situation; the Committee simply 'noted' its contents.*

Yes, in actual fact the particular paper added no new information but it drew attention to the deficit situation and expressed concern that the deficit projections were being confirmed, that it was likely to be in the region of £9-11 million and suggested that consideration may have to be given to a supplementary rate in order to overcome that situation.

As you rightly say, the problem is that, assuming we're able to carry an £11m deficit into the next financial year, what do we do then? To carry the deficit forward would be the best solution for this financial year, but to do so and to maintain our existing services and staffing levels would require a rate increase next year of some 70%, costing the average ratepayer an increase of £4 a week. Apart from the services we produce we also have to look to our capital expenditure.

*Expenditure on housing programmes, social services, buildings, recreational facilities etc.*

Yes; whereas previously we were able to use rate income to supplement expenditure on these projects, the Government has now limited this use of the rate. In other words, increasing the rate will not protect, for example, the housing and building programmes nor will it protect the jobs of all those related workers, including a Direct Labour Organisation of some 1200 people.

Now, it is the general view of Labour councillors and I would think of the local Labour Parties as well as of most ratepayers, that a rate increase of 70%, given the increases in previous years, is not acceptable. Yet the options before us appear horrific whichever way we move. If we don't impose the rate increase, the impact of the cuts increase would severely damage the social fabric of Lambeth and this would mean the

loss of 1000 jobs.

Local government, as we understand it in Lambeth, frankly can't work under the Tory government policies. I believe the time has come for us to take a stand against the Government on this issue of central government funding. What I have proposed to the local Labour Parties, and what I will be proposing to the Labour councillors and to the trade unions within Lambeth is that we should take such a stand. We should proceed to prepare our budget for next year on the basis that we are making no cuts; we should estimate the likely rate increase at 70% or higher; we should detail the cuts that would be required in order to bring down the rate increase to an acceptable figure (perhaps in line with the current rate of inflation); and that we should use that as a platform and as a basis for a campaign against the Government over the next 2-3 months, and to demonstrate to the people of Lambeth and to the Government the importance of local government in Lambeth by a week of industrial action in which we actually bring local government to a halt in Lambeth.

*That will need effective support on a nationwide basis: could the November 1 conference provide such a basis of support?*

No, it couldn't. Had the conference been called by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and by the TUC, then it might have been different. But the voting on the motions showed a will for action. It showed that if a move was made by a section of the movement, then it would be possible to draw supportive action around it.

*The call for a general strike . . .*

That is not a possibility — it will only come from the development of struggle. But what we are saying is that there is a basis for such a struggle now. We have to build a mass campaign against the Government, and the Lambeth action I have described may well be an important ingredient in that campaign. And there are, of course, other situations of conflict developing, such as the 6% limit on public sector pay awards.

*Which has united the public sector of the movement to a higher degree. Would Lambeth's action be supported by the 72 Labour councils attending the November 1 conference?*

Well, the fact that they were represented at the conference doesn't necessarily mean that they would agree with our course of action. The strategy has to be discussed and agreed and if it is agreed then our shop stewards

would have to work on others through their national organisations and we would be contacting other Councils and their workers. I think it may be possible that we would see a wider range of support than could be anticipated.

*Do you think it is going to be Ouster's last stand?*

I don't think it will be! It'll be part of an ongoing struggle.

*Is the objective to push up the cash limits?*

We must base the fight on a demand that the Government changes its policy on this question of funding. But we can't speculate; we'll have to await the results, assess the balance of forces and then decide on further action. This Tory government is in difficulties; the public reaction is already there



and perhaps we can direct it on this issue. We would certainly be working to that end.

*One critical objective in that perspective has got to be the mobilisation of a fair proportion of Lambeth people who are not involved in the public sector unions of the Town Hall and who are not conventionally seen as being involved in the movement as a whole . . .*

Yes, absolutely.

*The inability, or failure, to do that has been, in my view, a major weakness of the Lambeth Fightback Campaign<sup>6</sup> since its formation. This seemed partially to be the result of sectarian styles of political behaviour within Fightback. Now I think this is important, because it is generally the Left that gives organisational form to the sort of campaign we have discussed. To an important extent this sectarian behaviour sprang from ultra-leftism within the Labour Party as well as the other more easily recognisable groups, and it sprang from their doctrinaire and rather simplistic analysis of the state and of local government, seen simply as a direct arm of the*

*central state. This is what often led to seeing your Council as 'the enemy', rather than seeing the Council as caught in the contracting interface between local and central government. As a result, much of the energy of Fightback was dissipated in attacks on the Council and its leadership rather than on the Tory government. I know, through my network of relationships with community organisations, that many people were aware of this bizarre contradiction and were alienated from the struggle.*

*But another cause of the inability to mobilise the community must, I feel, be laid at your door. One failure of the campaign in the last year has been the failure of the Council and of yourself to articulate to the people of the borough the political nature of the campaign against the cuts and the strategy you were proposing. People wanted a perspective against or within which they could situate their own decisions. But, in practice, they simply saw the Council and Ted*

*Knight living on a day to day basis. And the vacuum in consciousness was filled by the destructive London media view of Red Ted' etc. Now you have outlined a perspective in which a mobilisation of Lambeth people is crucial: what difference in leadership will now be required by the Council, the Labour Parties and by yourself?*

I think that I couldn't challenge you on the fact that we've failed to get our position across: it is very difficult to be able to do that just as a Council, because there are limitations as to what the Council can do and you do require a movement of activists outside of the Council arguing for those positions.

We have had a general perspective: the problem that we've been facing of course is that the Government has not itself had a very clear policy. Although its overall aim was clear, the actual details of it have developed

<sup>5</sup> The method by which central government, through the Department of the Environment, funds local authorities.

<sup>6</sup> A campaign against the cuts, sponsored by Lambeth Trades Council.

over the year and one has never been quite sure just how deep the cuts were going to be. So it has been very difficult to argue other than that we would have a 'no cuts' position generally. I think now that it's much clearer, we will certainly have to win the public outside. I think we also have not only to win working class support outside but also we have to win middle class support too in Lambeth: we have to try to unite the community in an anti-Tory fight.

*To which sections do you refer when you say 'middle-class'?*

I'm talking about the middle-income groups, but in actual fact, even the small businesses — we will be looking to try and bring them into joint struggle. It is important to win the middle class, because of the very real danger of Right reaction. I think this is a national problem for the labour movement. The middle class will move towards those who are presenting a programme of action, whichever way it may be. I'm very worried that we are

### Foot's talk of coalition is just a reflection back of his own frustration.

approaching a period in which the Right will be able to mount an offensive. It is up to us as a labour movement to counter that danger, and I have every confidence that we can do it, but we've really got to start at the local level as well as the national level.

*The loss of momentum in the campaign against the cuts since our Lambeth march on November 7 last year (1979) has been a serious blow to us in Lambeth, but the problem is closely related to the absence of a national campaign.*

I think that is very true, and *that* is a failure of the leadership of the labour movement, both the TUC and the Labour Party. It is a very

real failure because what they are facing very clearly for the first time in their political lives is that reformism is no longer able to operate as a viable force. The reforms gained by the working class over decades of struggle can no longer be sustained by the capitalist class. Now, the leadership and bureaucracy of the labour movement has been used to operating in a situation where they are able to get concessions and have a co-existence with capitalism. I mean, the TUC's leadership feels itself to be in a most difficult situation because Thatcher won't talk to them, not because she doesn't want to but because, frankly, she doesn't require them to deliver any goods to her.

This is a total change in the postwar period: the movement is entering a new situation, the TUC leadership is not geared to it and they are not even in sympathy with the ideology which is needed to break that conflict situation. The TUC leadership is frightened that forces are going to grow which they won't be able to control. So, apart from the inertia of its bureaucracy, the TUC's hesitation in helping initiate and organise a national movement is ideological.

*Do you feel, then, that the internal developments of the Labour Party will have effects on the labour movement as a whole. In a sense it is a two pronged battle: on the one hand it is a battle to shift the existing leadership of the labour movement and the policies they've advocated and on the other to make a trenchant attack on the Tories at the same time.*

And I don't think just an attack on the Tories, but the working class will have to face up to the question of really *who controls society*. It hasn't been necessary for them to face up to that very clearly up to the moment, because capitalism has been able to make concessions, Parliament has been able to ameliorate some of the difficulties of life under capitalism. Now, they're to be faced with that question and it will be reflected into

the situation in the Labour Party.

The issues in the Labour Party are now wider and ideologically more clear. Shirley Williams and the Gang of Three's ideological position is very clear: they are for maintaining capitalism and the status quo at the expense of the working class. They've been forced into a clear ideological debate.

That is why I think Foot's whole approach 'to unite the Party' — is totally naive. He talks continuously of coalition — the 'coalition' that brought down the Heath Government, the 'coalition' required to bring down this Government. But a coalition is not possible within the Labour Party or outside of it. Foot's talk of coalition is just a reflection back of his own frustration.

*Are you arguing that the debate with the Right in the Labour Party should be continued and won, or are you in fact arguing for a split in the Party?*

I frankly think that we have to fight the arguments out with the right wing. I think we have to welcome them leaving if they wish to do so. Any compromise with the right wing of the Labour Party is a compromise with the position of accepting that the crisis of capitalism must be overcome at the expense of the working class.

*Finally, what are your main objectives in the next two years?*

I think that what I want to see us being able to do, in the process of mounting a major anti-Tory campaign, is for the labour movement to present very clear alternatives. The opportunity for posing the question to people — that there is a need for fundamental change in the structure of society — is with us. I see the fighting inside the Labour Party along those lines. There is going to be a major shift inside the labour movement in 2 or 3 years. I hope to play a part and to have as great an impact on that situation as I can manage. •

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