



Richard Ryder?

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The Lord Thorneycroft, CH PC
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Dr Peter

As you are doubtless aware, the issue of "Politics Today" on Social Policy which was to have been sent out last week contained what can only be described as some very unhelpful passages on Child Benefit. I am sure that Alan Howarth was right to hold it back for revision. Had it been distributed, it could well have caused us gratuitous embarrassment with the Party both in the House and in the country.

Now that the danger is passed there is no point in pursuing this particular incident any further. But it raises a general issue about which both the Prime Minister and I remain concerned. While it has long been normal for the Labour Party to display its disagreements in public, and for Transport House to pitch in against the leadership from time to time, our Party machine has hitherto sustained a long and valuable tradition of unity and loyalty. It would be most unfortunate for it to be weakened at this moment, particularly by barely veiled public criticism of sensitive aspects of Government policy in an official Party publication.

In my experience the Research Department has been consistently meticulous in ensuring that it explains and defends Policy and, when we are in power, Government Policy. I have, therefore, no doubt that you will be anxious to remind CRD

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of the great importance of continuing to do so in future.
I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister.

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Howe
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GEOFFREY HOWE