

'Realignment on the left of UK politics' – an email on 7th May 2021

To: bridget.phillipson.mp@parliament.uk

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Subject: Realignment on the left

Dear Bridget Phillipson

Very gently, supportively and constructively (having just heard your Radio 4 interview):

1 The Tories are a coalition and:

- (a) have substantially shifted over the past 12 years or so such that they
- (b) have not just seen off but have squashed UKIP and now
- (c) are THE party on the right.

2 Anecdotally, in the local elections, with my four votes, I have just voted for Labour, the Greens and the LibDems (and I could easily have swapped my votes between the three parties)

3 It is crucial, for those on the left, that the realignment of UK politics - now present on the right - is completed by there being a fundamental realignment on the left

4 This is eminently feasible (I have a list of 20 major areas where there is substantial agreement on the left - see my PS below)

5 Can I not just urge but plead with all of my being - in the review that must now come - that the strategists in Labour SERIOUSLY consider this possibility and identify the steps that might be taken?

6 Unless Labour - and the LibDems & the Greens - are willing to work together towards a new one-Party coalition on the left, we will continue to experience Tory rule, a break-up of the UK, further immiseration, decline of public services and a decline of England/ UK on the world stage.

Very kindly - though earnestly,
(Professor) Ronald Barnett

PS: *Areas of broad agreement on the left and where there could be an alignment on the left:*

- i **NHS** - ensuring a substantial real-terms uplift now and a 4% uplift yr-on-yr thereafter
- ii **Social Care** - complete overhaul, on Dilnott principles (or something similar) with a new tax arrangement
- iii **Food** - Addressing food poverty & food standards
- iv **Benefit system**: a total overhaul, not least to end the 5-week wait
- v **Minimum wage**: Uplift in minimum wage (to end scandal of in-work near destitution)

- vi **Europe**: A new relationship with Europe (perhaps a Norway ++)
- vii **Towns and cities**: A 'town' programme, to end the squalor of so many towns/ cities (closed shops/ tawdry urban estates/ shocking state of houses)
- viii **Housing standards**: a binding Quality Framework, not only in the wake of Grenfell but to address all other major matters (room size standards)
- ix **A social housing programme**, with local authorities given £ and powers to raise further monies in the market
- x **Services**:
- (a) **Transport**: A new integrated transport system, to include a semi-nationalisation of the **bus and train services**, with a complete overhaul to ensure evenness and quality of services, not least (buses) in rural areas and level of fares in general (train fares in the UK the highest in Europe)
- (b) **Utilities as such**: a semi-nationalisation of the major utilities, with very tight regulation of private companies and with 40-49% of state ownership
- xi **Ecological crisis** and humanity's relationship to the Earth: A binding and comprehensive Green Framework, backed up by policies, £ and incentives - to companies, LAs, and individuals
- xii **Military**: Major realistic reassessment of the military role of the UK and its military place in the world
- xiii **Global Aid**: Restoration of the .7% aid budget (and related policies - eg our relationships with the UN and its associated bodies)
- xiv **Higher Education**: A new higher education policy framework, requiring universities to address (i) their public service roles within the UK and (ii) their global roles, not least in addressing the UN's Sustainability Development Goals (U of Manchester no 1 in the world but many UK universities making zero contribution)
- xv **A new Policing Framework** - to include a Code of Ethics which every force is obliged to meet
- xvi **A new Nolan Report**, with standards in/of public life being reinstated, reaffirmed and expanded (to meet present-day challenges)
- xvii **A new tax regime**, to ensure that the tech companies pay a rightful level of taxes, to fundamentally change the local rates system (to ensure those with high-end properties pay a proportionate local rate.
- xviii **Education**: A major Inquiry into what it means to be educated in the C21 (to include obligations of citizenship) so as *substantially* to raise the level of 'being educated' in the UK, with a systematic **Continuing Education** entitlement.
- xix **Adult illiteracy** - a major programme to end the scandal of adult illiteracy in the UK
- xx **Youth**: An Inquiry into the challenges of Youth in the C21 (mental health, pornography, training programmes, sexism, isolation, work possibilities)

It follows that we need a new kind of Beveridge Inquiry but with expanded terms of reference, to be established on a *continuing basis* making major independent Reports (of the kind that Professor Marmot and some of the Parliamentary Committees make), making continuing use of People's Parliaments on major issues.

Summary: A policy framework of this kind would enable the formation of a more just UK - and more fitted for the C21 - and restore its standing, and give it a new place, in the world (not to mention in Europe and in/on this fragile Earth).