



10 DOWNING STREET

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

21st December, 1983

Dear Chris

Thank you for your letter of December 6th and the attached paper which we discussed briefly on the telephone earlier this month.

The paper raises four broad areas:

1. educating the British public on key subjects
2. making the most of the Government's publicity machine
3. modern campaign methods
4. formulating a strategy for the next election which takes account of different voting patterns in different constituencies.

I believe, as I said to you, that we ought to consider a half-day or day presentation to the Prime Minister, and at the same time or later to senior Ministers, on the politics of strategy of the re-election of this Government. This would certainly touch on 1. (above) and involve 4. As I see it, the purpose of the presentation would be to bring together Government policies, popular aspirations and possible voting patterns.

Perhaps we could discuss this early in the New Year. At this stage I have not raised even the idea of a presentation with the Chairman.

Yours
Stephen

Stephen Sherbourne
Political Secretary

*Every good wish for
Christmas and the New Year.*

Christopher Lawson, Esq



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CONFIDENTIAL

6th December 1983

Dear Stephen,

Attached are some notes on the subject that we discussed at our last meeting. I would be very pleased to have your opinions.

Yours sincerely,

- 1 education of B. party.
- 2 Socy parking matter
- 3 modern copy matter
- 4 Key Controversies +


Christopher Lawson

Stephen Sherbourne Esq

WINNING FOR THE THIRD TIME - SOME STEPPING STONES TO VICTORY

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the next 4½ years the Conservative Government and Party will have to face the British electorate for the third time under Mrs Thatcher's leadership. The return of a Conservative Government for a third term under the same leader would be unprecedented in British politics.

We have the advantage of time - time to plan and time to communicate our ideas and underlying philosophy to the British electorate. However if we are to succeed in 1987/88 the planning of a long term communication strategy we need to start now. We need to separate out the long term process of changing the attitudes and expectations of the electorate from the short term day to day process of political debate. I believe that we need to isolate a number of general areas fundamental to our philosophy as Conservatives and use what resources we have, or can obtain - both Party and Government - as part of a co-ordinated programme to modify public attitudes from now to the next election.

2. KEY TARGETS

My personal belief is that we should be concentrating upon the following areas - each of which will require a detailed 'game' plan:

1.

(i) Economic Literacy

Research in 1980/81 indicated a considerable number of areas in which the electorate does not understand the economic realities of the fourth quarter of the 20th century. To change such attitudes will require a long term programme of communication - a programme that may well require to be continued beyond the next election.

(ii) Public Expenditure

At the election we promised a public debate about the need for fundamental changes in the structure of public expenditure in the country. As part of the debate we need to develop a positive approach to putting over our side of the case - presumably for a fundamental change in the levels and direction of public expenditure.

(iii) NHS

We faced a storm of criticism when we attempted to cut the NHS by $\frac{1}{2}\%$ without adequate preparation of public opinion. The shibboleth of the NHS requires reform but if we are going to face up to the challenge it can only be done after a programme designed to educate the electorate about the need for change.

(iv) Personal Responsibilities

We need to educate the public on the need for greater personal responsibility for their own lives and for the removal of many of the unnecessary restrictions that limit the freedom of the individual.

(v) Social Environment

We need to attempt to start a long term change in the social environment to increase the status of successful businessmen, engineers, technical experts etc.

(vi) Technological Change

There has been considerable academic and opinion formers debate on the impact of technological change on our society. As both a government and party we have failed to consider the implication of these changes. We need to face this challenge and to start the process of educating the British people on the implications of such changes.

(vii) Changing Social Fabric

We must also face up to the realities of the changing social fabric of our society - with an ageing population and the breakdown of the traditional family unit. Whilst we cannot change the demographic situation of an ageing population - we could change attitudes (in the long term) towards social values and the importance of the family - if we want to.

3. STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Linked to these long term campaigns we need to consider the structures that operate in the following areas:

(i) Government Publicity

We need to use governmental resources to promote what the government is doing and why. At present with a few notable exceptions the Government publicity service is totally failing to meet the needs of our Government. Changes will require long term Ministerial involvement.

(ii) Conservative Party

We need to bring the campaigning techniques of the Conservative Party at all levels into the fourth quarter of the 20th Century. The methods to change exist, many ideas on what to change exist - what is needed is the will to change.

4. Winning the Next Election

There will be a major change in communication strategy necessary in 4-5 years in order to safeguard the present government's majority in the Commons. The voting pattern in the 1983 June election was such that there appeared to be five ways in which the Conservative Party could lose the next election.

- (i) The Conservative vote falls by a very considerable margin. This margin would need to be extreme and such an event is unlikely.
- (ii) A major recovery in Labour Party support. Again, the size of the swing necessary is such that it is again much too large to believe possible.
- (iii) The support for the Alliance grows strongly from either of the other parties. The swing again would need to be large, but less than (i) or (ii). Again unlikely.
- (iv) Support of the Alliance collapses. This support going to Labour. Again possible and is seen to be turning that way at the moment. In the longer term a situation unlikely to lose us an overall majority.
- (v) The most dangerous situation is where, either consciously or unconsciously, there is tactical voting in the constituencies for the party that came second at the General Election. The swing necessary to unseat the Government is much less in this situation than in any other.

Consideration should be given now to the handling of this problem by directing our attack against the second party in those constituencies in this situation.

The development of a defensive strategy is essential at an early stage so that action can be taken within key constituencies. The situation outlined in (v) above would mean a completed change in communication strategy,

which would need to be developed on a much more localised basis. Our answer to this problem may well be the faster development of a constituency direct mail programme.