

Ms A Campbell The Chairman  
The Parliamentary Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower Millbank  
London SW1P 4QP

Dear Madam

### The Expropriation of Bradford & Bingley (B&B)

I am chairman of the B&B Action Group and refer to my original letter to you in respect of maladministration by the Cabinet Office (CO) and the ensuing complaint correspondence Ref EN 261616/0047. Detailed below is your officer's refusal to investigate this which was supported by the Customer Care Team:-

"We cannot rule out that maladministration occurred in 2008 from the Cabinet Office regarding the way the FOI request was handled. However, our decision not to investigate is based on our view that an investigation would be unlikely to resolve matters for you given that you were not entitled to the requested information, as determined by the ICO's assessment." The officer also suggested that BBAG's objective then was to secure compensation which was not correct, BBAG's primary objective is to secure a public inquiry and the whole truth as only then will it be able to pursue the question of compensation if appropriate. BBAG believes that the public interest defence supported by the Information Commissioner's Office, albeit by a narrow margin, is totally irrelevant to its maladministration complaint in which prima evidence evidence of serious wrongdoing by the CO was made available to your officer.

BBAG believes that the CO's statement in 2008 that it had no files on B&B was deliberate subterfuge as it enabled the Establishment to avoid telling the truth as to why it destroyed B&B as an ongoing business unlike Royal Bank of Scotland and Halifax Bank of Scotland

which had far weaker balance sheets. This and the appointment of the independent valuer Peter Clokey was an exercise in news management by the UK Government in the politically sensitive period between the banking crisis in 2008 and the General Election in May 2010.

It was in 2011, in response to more FOIA requests, that the CO finally admitted it did have files on the B&B expropriation. However it refused to divulge the information on the grounds of public interest which was supported by the Information Commissioner's Office. BBAG believes the PO's decision was flawed as its FOIA request to the CO asked for details of the B&B expropriation whilst its complaint to the PO asked who was responsible for the untrue statement issued by the CO and what disciplinary action, if any, had been taken. If I had not read Gordon Brown's book 'Beyond the Crash' in which he described his decision to expropriate B&B, BBAG would still not know of his and the CO's involvement.

In BBAG's view the nine year passage of time favours B&B in its many requests for a public inquiry to secure the truth and weakens the public interest defence of the Establishment, particularly as full details of the support to RBS and HBOS are in the public domain. Please find attached the sequence of events which highlights in detail the obfuscation and subterfuge to which nearly one million B&B employees, share and bond holders have been subjected, treatment which in my view has been disgraceful. Nearly all of them were ordinary retail investors who were entitled to a duty of care from the UK Government and the Tripartite Regulatory Authorities, a duty in which they failed. Indeed, in my view based on the treatment they have suffered to date it would appear 'The Establishment' do not recognize it has such a duty.

When BBAG made its complaint to your office in respect of the CO's misconduct it had high hopes of progress in securing the truth as this could well be the first step in achieving our main objective of a public

inquiry or at the least a Public Accounts or Treasury Select Committee hearing. BBAG urges you to reconsider your office's refusal to pursue our complaint against the CO. In my view to allow the current position to continue to fester would be the negation of honest government and a gross miscarriage of justice.

My understanding is that if BBAG has exhausted all avenues available within the UK in securing the truth one may appeal to the European Commission. Please confirm whether this is correct and the procedures available for pursuing this further. This request is made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours Faithfully

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