

# UTOPIAN FUTURES.

By Anticipations

YOUNG  
FABIANS

SUMMER  
2020

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Playwright **p.2**

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**NOW IS THE TIME  
FOR ONE FINAL PUSH  
TO KNOCK DOWN  
THE DOOR TO A  
MORE SUSTAINABLE  
FUTURE.**

”

**JACK PARKER, P10**

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## ADAM ALLNUTT

### FROM THE CHAIR

**W**elcome to the summer edition of our new look **Anticipations Magazine**.

Our reach this year has been phenomenal. We've sent several delegations to events across Europe and hosted the Young European Socialist Bureau. We're launching the Young Scottish Fabians, Young Welsh Fabians and regional groups across England. We will be launching a complete YF re-brand across the society, the networks, the nations and the regions. We were early adopters of Zoom events and have hosted over 100 virtual events across a wide range of subjects - including 30 members of the Shadow Labour Team - and we're planning a virtual alternative conference.

We have nine active policy pamphlets or reports underway, have co-opted five new incredible committee members, and our blog is more active than ever. We are looking at establishing a patrons board with a mentoring programme, and we've

improved the culture in the Young Fabians – creating a decentralised productive environment where activists feel empowered to produce brilliant pieces of work. The Young Fabians and Fabianism is in the ascendancy with open discussion, debate and thought leadership at its core.

I cannot thank each and every member enough for the effort you have put in to create an atmosphere that people want to join.

As we look to an uncertain future I am filled with confidence that the next generation of leaders are developing their skills here. We follow in the footsteps of giants and as young members my rallying cry to you is step up - we need you. Whether it's on social justice, the climate crisis, inequality or any other wrong you see, it is on us to step up and be the change we want to see. Maybe then we can have the utopian future we all crave.

Thank you for reading, I look forward to working with you. 🇬🇧

## HENNA SHAH

### FROM THE EDITOR

**W**elcome to the summer special edition of **Anticipations**.

As we emerge, bleary eyed, from lockdown, many of us within the Labour movement are thinking about what the future might hold for our country and its place in the world. Comparisons to 1945 are rife, but the truth is we might be standing over an even greater precipice than we did then. We are not embarking on a programme of reconstruction in a world that's shaped by the values we hold dear as a society and. In fact, it often feels that our polity has no unifying values at all.

It's not all doom and gloom, though. While we have seen fractures in our society over the past few months, we have also seen displays of mutual support and care that before seemed more within the realm of nostalgia than social reality. This instinctive tendency towards mutual cooperation is reflected in

some of the brilliant writing we see here, with (sometimes utopian) visions of the future on everything from education to international relations, culture to care.

Politics should be about action. I am delighted that **Anticipations** is a space where we can have a conversation about the kind of society we want, and where young members in particular can share their experiences, expertise, and passion with other progressives.

Of course, this happens all year round in our excellent blog, and I am excited to show you some of the best writing that's appeared in it over the past few months. Thank you to Amber Khan, who is an incredibly talented editor and, of course, to you, the Young Fabians, for being enthusiastic and prolific in your writing.

Enjoy the issue! 🇬🇧

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**CAROLINA SALUDES**

# JAMES GRAHAM ON THE FUTURE OF THEATRE

**J**ames Graham isn't just a very accomplished playwright. The soft-spoken author of *This House*, *Labour of Love* and the somewhat controversial, *Brexit: The Uncivil War*, is everything a progressive could want in a political writer. He's working class, didn't go to Oxbridge, and learned about theatre through panto and school plays. Yet he's had multiple plays on Broadway and is currently working on a project with a certain Elton John.

But that's not why he's here. James is on a mission to save theatre - both from this catastrophic pandemic, and from itself. The UK Arts sector now has a £600m hole to fill. Since losing some 40% of public subsidies in the last decade, it has become very exposed to further ticket and catering sales losses. Arts Council England has replaced its usual Arts grants with a welcome, but insufficient, £160m Covid-19 fund. Performance spaces, which were the first to close, will be the last to open. They need an Emergency Relief Fund and logistical guidance, and they need it now, James says. But that's not enough: 'we also need a reset', a change in how the sector has operated.

To chart this new direction (and in keeping with the theme of this special edition), we need to understand what theatre is for. If it seems counterintuitive to defend Arts spending during a public health crisis, Graham offers a compelling argument. Theatres are a vehicle for community-building where other forms of collective socialisation have disappeared.

Just like the debate in *Labour of Love* over winning University towns vs. ex-min-

ing towns, the ways for people to laugh, cry, and just feel together, seem to be culturally split. 'Metropolitan elites' pay £10 for a glass of wine at a swish West End foyer, and everyone else is much more comfortable with a football match and a pint. Except this doesn't fully reflect our reality, especially that of theatre.

Today, polarisation dictates our lives. Sometimes bubbles are pierced, and unlawful trips to Durham or the plight of black communities burst through, demanding that we all pay attention. But we've not been given the tools, especially emotion-

**THEATRES SHOULD  
BE DEFENDED  
AND CHAMPIONED  
AS CREATORS OF  
COMMUNITY.**

al, to process this flurry of data, to make us less angry and more understanding. As we have painfully realised through a lockdown that has kept us apart, no online experience can replace a hug, a busy pub, the communal laughter at a comedy gig. Graham's point is that artists and creative spaces don't just exist in the slot between the curtain rising and falling, they're a key part of their communities and of British life. They may be the theatre company that has partnered with local schools to provide educational resources, or the writing grant scheme for young creatives or the streamed play about the minutiae of Par-

liamentary proceedings that inadvertently teaches us about our country's political history.

For the price of a single Marvel film, the Government (although Graham is also open for enforcing contributions from Netflix and other media conglomerates) could guarantee the survival of the Arts, one that 'creates £5 in value for every £1 invested'. It would be, he says, 'economically illiterate to decide that the majority of theatres should be mothballed and left to die for what is such a small amount of money to them. There is a direct link between the theatre above a pub and *Star Wars* films, and it makes no sense to let it go.' He's signed a plea for theatres to, amongst other things, postpone rather than cancel plays, to pay fair royalties to writers for plays now streaming online, and to improve protections for freelance crew. These aren't just nice-to-haves, they're lifelines for many.

We also know, however, that theatre has become elitist, some of it for financial reasons. No business rate relief (prior to the pandemic anyway), no contractual contributions from streaming companies that benefit from the theatre talent pool, and insufficient revenue from digital distribution, translate into wafer-thin margins that lead to unfair practices. Underpaid stage actors, precarious freelance contracts, and a dearth of grants and apprenticeships follow, requiring young starters to have a family to house them for free or the bank of mum and dad to support them. All this also exacerbates 'risk-aversion', and hence a lack of any push towards gender and



ethnic diversity in the development and programming of plays. Graham points out that Natasha Gordon's 'Nine night' play last year was the first-ever (!) West End hit written by a black woman, and that only 24% of staged UK plays are written by women. This won't change on its own, says Graham, 'the flow of habit has to be changed'. That will include more saying 'no' to people that look like him. But he also advises against universal quotas, since a 12% diversity requirement may be so high as to be unachievable in Scotland, but be completely unfit for purpose in multicultural London, where 55% of the population is BAME.

Diversity, both of background and worldviews, is key to this future-proofing of theatre. Graham demonstrates this himself through his portrayal of unlikable

characters in empathetic ways (even the likes of Dominic Cummings or Rupert Murdoch), a humanistic approach that has much to teach our current political class. 'The intention is to create a public space where everyone feels welcome, for right or wrong; the best way to hold people to account is to give them a defence first.'

In *This House*, the young MP Ann Taylor (later Chief Whip Baroness Taylor), tries to make a mark by being 'more like the others, like the men' but as his boss tells her, 'I don't want you to change, I want them to be more like you'. Graham's characters force the audience to find nuance, both in their beliefs and their biases, and he argues theatre is unique in being able to do so. Online streaming is great and brings entertainment to people's homes (such as

his deliciously funny ITV drama *Quiz*, about the Charles Ingram scandal) but they can feel 'disposable'. 'TikTok is great', but 'being in a room with a set of characters for two hours, engaging with them, functions in a fundamentally different, more profound way'.

James Graham is right. Theatre doesn't just need to be preserved because it's pleasurable, or even because it makes financial sense to do so. It should be defended and championed, along with our wider Arts sector, as creators of community. They're integral parts of the public sphere, builders of a communal and compassionate reality, empathy factories. The cost of that can't be, and isn't, too high. 🇬🇧

# The Parasite

## AND THE VIRUS

## HOW THE MAFIA PROFITS FROM COVID-19 IN ITALY

Italy is now one of the worst-affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. But Prime Minister Conte's pleas for civilians to reject the Mafia are somewhat less convincing, since these organisations could be their only way of putting food on the table.

The composition of the labour market in the south of Italy goes some way to explain why the Mafiosi are able to capitalise on the Covid-19 crisis. There are some 3 million workers in Italy who work off the books, paid cash-in-hand. Over a million of these workers live in the south. Like other countries in the European Union, Italy announced its own series of economic support packages for individuals and businesses. For these people who work in the shadows, it is much harder to secure support from the government.

An underlying lack of trust in the capacity for the state to 'efficiently' spend the taxpayers' money, fuelled by right-wing populists like Matteo Salvini, has led to a widespread culture of tax evasion. This is often backed up by the notion that the Italian state taxes 'too highly' - even though the rate of corporate income tax in Italy is actually lower than in France, Germany and Portugal (2019). Receipts are in fact a rarity in the south of Italy. It is not uncommon to visit a bar in an Italian coastal town during the summer, and be asked if you 'don't mind' if you don't get a receipt, or fail to be given one at all. You nod, hope they didn't make you a bitter espresso, and life goes

on.

Unlike the more affluent, industrial northern provinces, the south of Italy remains agricultural, and derives much of its income from seasonal tourism. With Covid-19 robbing the south of the usual influx of summer holidaymakers with plenty of cash to throw at hotels, restaurants and local leisure providers, the incomes of many businesses are set to dry up. Whilst the northern provinces with higher population densities have had higher numbers of Covid-19 deaths, it is the regions in the south who will face the strongest blow to their income in the long term.

It is precisely this predictable slump in consumption that will draw many businesses towards support from the Mafia. The financial hardship faced by Italians in the south is already grave. There are reports of families having to live off their elderly relatives' pensions. The journalist Roberto Saviano reported that in Naples, it is the clans who are providing 'welfare': they deliver families food parcels. Saviano also anticipates that in the future, companies re-emerging will need injections of capital to help resume their activities. It is not unlikely that many of these will receive tempting offers of cash from the Mafia. However, these acts are merely part of a campaign to control economic life. If businesses accept the help of the Mafia, they effectively bring them in as unofficial,

but highly dangerous, business partners. These acts of 'benevolence' only add to the wider anti-establishment sentiment felt by many in Italy, drawing individuals away from the civil obedience that is desperately required to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Mafia, which threads itself in and out of Italian life, has a constitution of its own, one built upon conventions of apathy and fear. The extent to which it capitalises upon the financial hardship people will face in this crisis partially depends on the resistance of already vulnerable people.

The Italian crisis shows that tax evasion leaves you in a no-man's-land, where the help of the state is far away when you most need it. But this still remains an attractive option for many people in the south, where job opportunities are few and far between. The conviction among some EU countries that giving EU 'Corona bonds' to Italy is synonymous with dishing cash out to the Mafia is mistaken. Whilst Conte should act quickly to prevent predictable Mafia infiltration into business recovery during the crisis, without re-distributing wealth, protecting workers and investing in businesses in Italy's most deprived provinces, the Mafiosi will only continue to profiteer from the poverty of others.

The Mafia is like a parasite, thriving on the blood of anti-establishment sentiment. To kill it, Conte must start showing people that the Italian state can really deliver the goods. 🗨️

**EDMUND FRONDIGOUN**

# NEW HORIZONS

## CORONAVIRUS WILL IRREVOCABLY RESHAPE OUR CITIES.

### WILL PUBLIC POLICY MATCH IT?

**L**iving in locked-down central London has afforded me the opportunity to observe the surreal silence in the city; surreal because many businesses here are continuing on with their employees dispersed at home. Cloud software and video conferences have recreated almost all the necessary functions of the office.

I originally wrote this before Twitter allowed staff to work from home permanently, and it seems likely that even after the COVID-19 threat has passed many could choose not to return to the office. Would they be able to if they even wanted to? As the country adjusts to the privations of a post-viral economy, businesses may conclude that whilst communications software is a necessity, a permanent office is obsolete. Working from home becomes the new normal; in the fourth industrial revolution, the line between personal and private space is irrevocably blurred.

How this will affect the city is staggering. Scores of offices, particularly in newly-regenerated areas, become surplus to requirement. As do adjacent shops, restaurants, and bars. Doing the same amount of work in less space causes business rates revenue to nose dive. A new retail park or redeveloped warehouse becomes a less engaging investment, and so development funding for the local community is no longer forthcoming.

So our cities, our parks, schools, and services start to slide into decay. And, topping that, after having spent months cramped in a small flat with no outdoor space, will those that can leave the city do so? Is there value in buying a city centre flat when a house with a garden costs the same? And what of the economic damage caused by millions no longer commuting in to work?

Local authorities are already being forced to contemplate the most severe spending cuts stemming from our socially-distanced economy. But we cannot hope to return to how things were before March, for our social economy has already fundamentally changed. For right or wrong, technology marches on. It is no more possible or practical to halt this decentralisation of work than it would have been to save the mines or the mills half a century ago. As socialists and democrats, we should instead adapt to this change, proactively mitigate its worst effects, and ensure the wealth and opportunity stemming from it are available to all. There are already a few obvious adaptations to halt a catastrophic decline of our cities.

Reforming business rates is an urgent priority. In a decentralised, Uberized world, where the house is a node of economic activity, and corporate offices a relic, it is obsolete to levy a charge based solely on floor space. Current retention

and pooling arrangements don't make sense when people work remotely but interdependently up and down the country. Finding a practical and fair way to collect and distribute these funds in a way that is indicative of need is necessary; growing the local tax base simply does not make sense in a decentralised world.

More broadly, a shift in our country's economic geography provides a welcome opportunity to redefine our use of space- with no need for businesses to locate centrally, or for people to live near their workplace, our regional deficit in investment and opportunity can be rebalanced. We can redesign our cities to recognise that homes and commercial property are no longer mutually exclusive. We can develop planning Frameworks and building regulations that build smart, energy efficient homes with space for work and leisure. We can offer city living desirable and affordable for all.

This is all of course still speculative. Yet who in the Labour party of 1945 could have imagined that less than a century later the industrial social and economic fabric of the country would have fundamentally changed? Regardless, it did, and the failure of policy and politicians to accept and adapt has caused much of the inequality we have today. Another fundamental change is now upon us; it is on our generation to do differently. 🇬🇧

**CHRIS SMITH**

# EDUCATION AFTER LOCKDOWN

**Never let a good crisis go to waste’— despite the chaos of the current crisis, teachers are using this period to challenge accepted norms and bring us closer to an education system that truly values learning.**

The earliest Covid-19 revelation was about who the real key workers are. Teachers, despite the reinforcement of teaching’s status as a ‘Cinderella Profession’, were included in this. Politicians regularly cite teachers as professionals akin to doctors when making demands but when it comes to heeding their professional advice they are happy to deny them any such standing, leading to disastrous consequences for teachers and students. Many will be familiar with how unattractive a career teaching is through headlines of the numbers leaving due to workload and stress, which derives from the undercutting of professional status. As a teacher of eight years, I survived the first milestone of five years (after which a reported 30 – 40 per cent quit). However, I am now contemplating leaving before the ten year milestone, by which time half of teachers will leave, due to the huge disparity between what teaching should be and what it is. This is why I am excited by the potential for a brave new world beyond exams – with even The Telegraph recently questioning quite how necessary they are.

If exams can be forgone this summer and students still progress into employment, apprenticeships or university, and it is certain that they will, then why return to them? The case for exams is: they

are dispassionate and anonymous; standardised thus fair; creating results that are easily understood and, critically, enable teachers to be held accountable to. This is why politicians are loathe to lose them – it would shift the balance of power in favour of classroom professionals.

I am not proposing a system of no examinations but rather a system created, administered, assessed and peer reviewed by serving teachers. To those unfamiliar with how current ‘standardised’

**BRITISH STUDENTS ARE SOME OF THE MOST TESTED IN EUROPE, WITH INCREASING RATES OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH.**

examinations work, they are hardly fair or effective. British students are some of the most tested in Europe, with increasing rates of poor mental health and suicide linked to exam overload at the end of two years of ‘cramming’. The schooling of too many is an exam factory, where all efforts are geared towards passing narrowly focused tests. The process of creating and then assessing exams is a bureaucratic labyrinth comprising multiple ‘competing’ exam boards which comprise ‘edubusinesses’, charities and quangos sustained by inadequate education budgets.

All these organisations draft vast amounts of literature telling teachers how to do their jobs, but written by people with little to no teaching experience themselves. Many teachers then mark exam papers in a manner prescribed almost entirely to remove professional judgment. While this is not a scientific study of the economics of exams, the costs of compensating teachers through higher salaries to take on these roles would undoubtedly be less than the sums spent on this outsourcing to professional agencies. Any pay rises would be minimal as all teachers would prize the increased professional autonomy and status derived from being the true gatekeepers of educational standards above financial changes to contracts.

Many will dismiss this as utopian which is understandable, given Britain makes no effort to present teachers as expert professionals. What the current crisis proves, however, is that teachers are key workers. You can take away the exams and bureaucracy, as has been done, and teachers will still deliver learning opportunities for students to progress to the next stage of their lives. Take the teachers out of this equation and that does not happen. Therefore, is it really utopian to suggest freeing teachers to exercise full professional agency? Teachers’ working conditions are children’s learning conditions and taking the opportunity to enhance these and provide teachers with true autonomy is surely necessary to a just education system. 🇬🇧

## SAM ECCLES

**Before the outbreak of the coronavirus, the world was an incredibly divided place – perhaps at a level we have not seen since the Cold War.**

Russia's sustained vetoing of UN Security Council resolutions for peace in Syria, the UK's exit from the European Union, and the President of the United States threatening to withdraw from NATO and ending its participation in the WHO, are all examples of the global rise of isolationism. This has been deeply damaging for nations, and individuals, across the

after the beginning of this crisis, the internal retreat by countries in our 'leaderless world' to tackle this virus on their own was a grave mistake. The vacuum left by the lack of a globally coordinated effort to deal with the virus has sadly led to a death rate that could have been avoided, had action been taken earlier.

One leader who has been vocal on this issue however is Emmanuel Macron. In an interview in April, the French President highlighted that issues that can only be solved unilaterally by governments are becoming much rarer, whilst issues that can

in its influential medical compendium. Organisations like the WHO are for the world's benefit, not one country's individual gain, and all countries need to respect that.

Meanwhile, the stalemate at the UN Security Council, of which the UK is a permanent member, has prompted a potential rethink on how the UK can implement its foreign policy more effectively. One solution proposed by Tony Blair's former chief of staff and one of the key architects of the Good Friday Agreement,

# OUR INTERNATIONAL FUTURE

globe.

Covid-19 has not only shown that the world's nations can cooperate in times of crisis, but that they must if we are to effectively tackle our shared challenges. It is now the turn of our current world leaders to meet our new challenges and form a new understanding of our globalised and interconnected world.

There have been examples of global cooperation since the spread of the virus, from data-sharing, PPE donations and medical equipment loans. However, in the same way these examples have shown the benefits of international cooperation, the silence from world leaders has been deafening. As Gordon Brown wrote soon

only be solved multilaterally are becoming more common and more damaging. He also warned that if the world does not 'wake up to our interdependence', populism and nationalism will win. He's not wrong.

But if we are to champion and utilise our global institutions for our collective benefit, we must also be honest and highlight where their endeavours can be improved. For example, whilst regular updates were provided in the lead up to the crisis, the WHO has been criticised for failing to call the coronavirus a pandemic until as late as March 11.

In addition, there have also been concerns China has used the WHO as a soft-power instrument for greater influence on the global stage; for example, by successfully pressuring the WHO into including traditional Chinese medicine

Jonathan Powell, is to establish a new Beveridge Commission to reassess both the domestic and international landscape.

Keir Starmer and his team must recognise that if we are to tackle both Covid-19 and the key issues of this new decade post-Brexit: climate change, cyber-security and widening global inequality, then a renewed understanding of the importance of global cooperation must be at the heart of their policy platform. We cannot do it alone. Whether the channels used are the UN, G7, G20 or international treaties such as the Paris Climate Agreement, international conversations matter. 🗨️

**LAURA HALL**

# FORGING THE PATH

## TRANSFORMING UK TOWN AND CITY SPACES WITH A 'GREEN RECOVERY' IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

**A**cross the UK, towns and cities are being re-shaped as global leaders and urban planners are implementing changes such as wider pavements, traffic restrictions and increased infrastructure specifically tailored towards pedestrians and cyclists. This re-structuring of our spaces is motivated by a variety of factors – the greater need for social distancing due to the impact of COVID-19, relieving pressure on stretched transport networks, wider public health benefits and most significantly from an environmental perspective, improvement of air quality.

Labour has been at the forefront of re-shaping cities in the UK, with mayors Sadiq Khan and Andy Burnham overseeing advancements in both London and Manchester to widen roads, roll out safer cycling routes and pedestrianize areas to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions. London's new 'Streetspace' scheme will transform central parts of the capital into one of the largest car-free zones in the world. In Wales, the First Minister, Labour's Mark Drakeford, has established funding for

local authorities to change the layout of streets and introduce more active travel measures to get people back into town centres, but in a way where they can social distance safely. Re-assessing what our towns and cities look like and if the existing infrastructure in place is fit for purpose has therefore led to significant spatial changes. The principle that unites all of these examples of spatial re-structuring is this – safe, generous and accessible common space is fundamental to our public life.

More than ever before, it has become evident that public health is interlinked to the health of our environment. Airborne particulate matter and other forms of air pollution, worsened by diesel and petrol vehicles, are closely tied to respiratory disease and cardiovascular problems. Some studies have suggested that these medical issues can be exacerbated further by COVID-19. Consequently, it is vital that our transport systems and spaces are re-designed to prevent further congestion and toxic pollution.

Even during a time when the majority of the world has been in some form of lockdown, recently released figures suggest that global carbon dioxide levels are still

at a record high. This means that temporary behavioural change is not enough to reduce emissions – we need long-term solutions and increased investment in resilience to make the ways we live, work and travel (and the spaces we use to do so) more sustainable.

As we look to be spending more time outdoors due to the higher degree of ventilation and reduced likelihood of passing on COVID-19, further investment will also be required in public realm improvements, such as tree-planting and through protecting parks. We need to prioritise the green spaces that have been a lifeline to communities during this pandemic. Our leaders need to adapt and climate-proof our public spaces to enable the 'green recovery' and action the rescue of the post-COVID-19 economy.

With even the Conservatives now embracing the rhetoric of 'green recovery', following calls from businesses, environmental organisations and youth leaders, it is to be hoped that positive progress can continue to be made across the political spectrum to re-shape our spaces for the better. However, in order to clear the path towards the green recovery, more needs to be done and faster to contribute to a climate-safe and healthier future for UK communities. 🇬🇧



EMMA STEVENSON

# BEYOND 'BIG SOCIETY'

**We need to create communities with oomph.** This is how David Cameron described one of the drivers behind his vision of a 'Big Society'. These newly-'oomphed' communities would be 'in charge of their own destiny', and would feel that if they 'club together and get involved' they would be able to 'shape the world around them.' This 'Big Society' was pitched in contrast to the 'Big State' that New Labour had supposedly advanced, by seeking to reduce state centralisation in parallel with 'an organic communitarianism' through the growth of local responsibility and self-governing communities. Amongst other things, 'Big Society' was an endorsement of the role that voluntary action and social enterprise could play in promoting social inclusion and empowering citizens. Yet, the very essence of the term 'Big Society' failed to grasp the fundamental truth that 'society' is neither homogenous nor simple, and citizens can never be 'big' if structural barriers and inequalities prevent them from fully participating in public life.

Cameron's vision was doomed to fail. Whether it coincided with or was a front for austerity, the drive for cuts and deficit reduction made communal action untenable. In tandem with a predilection for privatisation and the depoliticising of voluntary organisations as service providers, most notably through the Lobbying Act (2014), Cameron's 'Big Society' externalised the state's responsibility for service delivery and passed on the burden of failure.

We need only look to William Beveridge's lesser-known report, *Voluntary Action* (1948), to identify the complex relationship between the state and the voluntary sector. Beveridge recognised the need for voluntary action alongside an active welfare state in eradicating the five 'giant evils': want, disease, ignorance, squalor, and idleness. Under Clement Attlee, the foundation of the welfare state witnessed the transfer of welfare provision from voluntary organisations to the state. Even so, in Beveridge's lifetime, voluntary action

continued to be stimulated by the ever-expanding welfare state, and overlooked by new institutions, voluntary organisations sought to innovate and press for effective state action. Notably, in 1946, the charity now known as Mind was founded to push for mental health services in the new National Health Service.

This unique hybrid function of voluntary action, described by Beveridge as 'private action for public purpose', enshrines voluntary action as a 'buffer zone' between the state and the markets, and therefore a great potential resource in fuelling social innovation without the need for consumer demand. LSE scholar Dr Jonathan Roberts has observed a current loss of faith in the state and markets to solve problems, and therefore identifies voluntary action as a potential key to finding new ways of solving social problems.

'Big Society' left voluntary action not strengthened but weakened, leaving the often disadvantaged and marginalised communities they support even more vulnerable. This truth was one which Labour readily addressed in their 2019 strategy for civil society, *From Paternalism to Participation*. Voluntary organisations and campaign groups form a central part of their solution for participation, by acting as 'advocates' for the 'voiceless' and by making sure 'they always have a voice when decisions that affect them are taken.' Within the same report, and again in their 2019 General Election manifesto, Labour called for a review into strengthening the Social Value Act (2012), in order to make sure 'public decision-making benefits local communities, including by involving more co-operatives and social enterprises in delivering public services.'

Voluntary organisations are a willing ally in this mission, and being advocates for the communities they support is an essential part of their purpose. However, voluntary organisations not only tackle the symptoms of social problems but are an integral force in the fight to tackle the causes of the

challenges the country faces. Voluntary organisations, like social enterprises, have networks in communities that many other organisations and service providers, central and local government often struggle to reach. Social value is at the heart of voluntary action, and social value must align with local people's needs in order to create meaningful buy-in from communities. The combination of this pursuit of social justice and social value, with knowledge of the community means voluntary organisations are uniquely placed to create more inclusive and accessible systems of participation, offering greater capacity for personalisation and a human touch.

There still remains a commonplace on the Left, that voluntary organisations are symptomatic of a state that is failing its citizens. However, we need a state that is committed to creating an environment where volunteering can thrive. Volunteering not only aids the building of social cohesion but has been shown to reduce exclusion and isolation in communities. Volunteering benefits not only those who receive help but the volunteers as well – volunteers themselves can gain personal fulfilment, the experience of responsibility and commitment, and even the acquisition of transferable skills. Within Keir Starmer's vision for a 'just and more equal society' he asserts that 'Public policy must seek to prevent problems from happening in people's lives, rather than seeking to manage them once they've happened.' The voluntary sector needs to be fully involved in the policy-making process and in the delivery of these policies, and citizens need to be encouraged to participate in voluntary action, in order for such a society to be realised.

Whilst the 'Big Society' and now the COVID-19 crisis have left the voluntary sector weakened, we must not give up on it now. Instead, we should be building on it to create the 'Good Society' we all wish to live in. ■



**JACK PARKER**

# PUSHING OPEN THE DOOR TO A GREEN FUTURE

**C**ast your mind back to colourful tents occupying streets around the world, Extinction Rebellion activists glued to bridges, the ascension of Greta Thunberg and the motivating voice of David Attenborough. These were the icons of 2019 and the burgeoning environmental movement, memories that feel grey and distant now that coronavirus has invaded every aspect of our lives.

It may seem logical, when health and economic crises serve more urgent problems, for climate change, air pollution and deforestation to be kicked down the road. Surely, we should focus all our efforts on a vaccine, reopening businesses and getting GDP back up. Then we can worry about sustainability when things return to normal, right?

Wrong.

When push comes to shove, humans are creatures of comfort. We prefer stability over disruption, certainty over chaos. After the threat of coronavirus has faded, and the economy slowly returns to health, convincing the people of the world to engage in yet another chapter of change, to decarbonise entire industries, to change their method of transport, to ask them to change the food they eat, may be an argu-

ment too difficult to win. In fact, it is now, in this period of global disruption, when change is most likely.

UK unemployment is predicted to skyrocket to above 10%, a level not seen since the early 1990s. In the United States, unemployment is already above 13%. Those affected will not just be young retail assistants and hotel managers, but also highly qualified engineers from the collapsing oil and gas sector, finance professionals from the struggling airline industry and many more in between.

Meanwhile, there are green jobs to be done. People are needed to design the next generation energy grid and manufacture electric vehicles. Homes need to be refitted with vast quantities of insulation. Trees need to be planted. Studies suggest that across the world as many as 30 million green jobs need to be created to limit temperatures to a maximum of 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. In normal times, it would be impossible to find enough people willing to do the work. Now there are more people willing to retrain than there have been for decades.

Governments around the world are investing trillions of pounds into keeping the economy afloat, and central banks are

printing trillions more. Interest rates have collapsed and will stay close to zero for the foreseeable future, reducing the total cost for public and private borrowing for job creation and infrastructure spending. The political picture has also changed. We now live in a world in which a Conservative government has directly covered the wages of millions of workers for months. This is a level of state intervention that has smashed the political narrative.

Businesses are also more open to change than ever before. They recognise that for many people, the experience of lockdown has been a time of reflection. Their customers will emerge from it with new priorities and an evolved appetite for different products and services. They have enabled staff to work from home, adapted entire business models.

The world has been thrown into chaos. Millions of people and trillions of pounds are floating in the air, waiting for a new purpose. This is the key that the environmental movement has needed. Now is the time for one final push to knock down the door to a more sustainable future. If we don't do it now, we probably never will. ■

**HASNAIN KHAN**

# NHS

## A NATIONAL CARE SERVICE

**The Adult Social Care System should show dignity and respect to those who have worked tirelessly and contributed to our society.**

However, over the past decade, Tory austerity has stripped away the liberties of our elderly population, leaving our current system unfit for purpose. With some pensioners forced to sell their homes, and others not receiving the care they need, a new proposal needs to address the system and give them the independence and care they deserve.

The social care budget has been cut by over £700 million since Labour was last in office. It's clear that this has had a knock on effect on NHS services, for example in A&E. 2015/16 saw a 27 per cent of over 65s visiting A&E once a year, in comparison to 23% in 2009/10. This stretched emergency services and could have been avoided with proper social care.

Public concern stretches beyond funding to the quality of care. Neil Heslop, CEO of the Leonard Cheshire disability charity highlighted his frustration that 'disabled and older people are still having to endure the indignity and disrespect of receiving flying personal care visits, ... 15 minutes is

nowhere near enough to do these essential tasks if you need support.'

Currently, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitors the quality of social care homes. However, with private ownership of the majority of care home beds (83.6%), there has been no clear leadership to adapt and develop social care policy to meet the needs of our changing society.

Adult social care services are fragmented, leading to greater incidences of abuse and neglect. Efforts to join the two systems have been difficult with an NHS, free at the point of use, yet a means-tested social care system. A lack of coordination has led to poorer outcomes and greater inefficiency.

The Labour Party should champion a system that looks to promote the values established by Attlee by creating a National Care System, providing social care free at the point of use. This would involve a combined budget for the NHS and social care funding at both a national and local level.

With 381,524 of the 456,546 care home beds owned by private companies, a National Care Service will require a significant investment, but the infrastructure to make it a success is already in place. Commis-

sion of service use of social care homes should be run by the well-established 84 NHS Foundation Trusts and, based on reviews by the CQC, Foundation Trusts could provide services to care homes based on quality, not by price. This would create a market where the quality of care is incentivised. The Local Government Association also believes an integrated system could lead to efficiency savings of as much as £1bn a year.

Health care is a right, social care should be too. And evidence shows that reform of social care is possible. Evidence from the devolved nations shows that investment in aspects of social care, free at the point of need, has been achieved. Since 2002, Scotland has operated a needs-tested model for people aged over 65 with domiciliary care provided for free. People who require care in a residential setting receive a flat rate from local government and an additional amount of money invested if nursing care is required. We have seen the recent boom of investment to protect workers through the government furlough scheme. Government can be transformative, and a National Care Service should be one of the first systems it transforms. ■

# KYALO BURT-FULCHER, FIA

## DEFINED CHAOS THE UK PENSIONS SYSTEM, AND HOW WE COULD REMAKE IT

**T**he UK pension system is renowned for being the most complex in the world. Decades of tamping and incremental reform have created a bewildering array of regulations, structures and products. This might be acceptable if it led to better outcomes in retirement, but instead we have wildly uneven coverage and, by many measures, one of the higher rates of pensioner poverty in Europe.

To understand why, and what we might do about it, let's quickly run through the main protagonists. First, there's Defined Benefit (DB), née Final Salary, schemes. These guarantee an income based on length of service and salary, and over a typical career might end up equating to a comfortable annual pension of around half of an employee's final or average salary. To back the pension promise, a portfolio of assets is held in trust - separate from the sponsoring employer - which the employer must replenish should its value dip too low. A predictable, comfortable, and secure income for retirees then. Of course, there is a catch...

The problem was that members started living much longer than expected, investments performed less well than hoped, and a series of well-meaning government reforms from the mid-80s onwards led to both an onerous administrative burden, and also required schemes to grant much higher benefits than employers had ever intended. The upshot of this was that em-

ployers had to hand over much larger sums than they'd ever envisaged (contribution rates of 50%+ of salaries are not unheard of). Consequently, over the last two decades, almost all private sector employers have closed their DB schemes and instead enrolled employees into protagonist no. 2, Defined Contribution (DC) schemes.

In DC schemes employee and employer contributions are paid into separate funds for each employee, invested in a variety of assets, and at retirement each individual can use their specific pot as they please. Unlike in DB, the contributions, not the benefits, are predetermined - and predetermined such that employers contribute much less than they've inadvertently ended up paying into DB schemes. This may or may not result in an adequate income in retirement (the investment and life expectancy risks lie with the member, so there can be no guarantee that it will), but if it doesn't, that's the individual's problem.

Moreover, despite "gold-plated" DB schemes universally being seen as more expensive, they actually provide more bang for your buck than DC schemes do. If a retiring DC scheme member wants a guaranteed income for the rest of their life (as a DB member would receive), they will need to use their pension pot to purchase an annuity. Unfortunately, the regulations under which insurance companies operate require them to back this benefit with so much capital that, even for large DC pots, the resulting annual pension can seem de-

risory. On the other hand, the retiree who doesn't annuitise, is faced with the dilemma of how quickly to "drawdown" their pot. Too slowly, and they die without properly enjoying the fruits of a life's saving; too quickly, and they could run out of money and end up on state benefits alone.

As ever, millennials have it best of all (I'm joking, obviously). While we've been receiving often measly DC contributions and lacking real term pay increases for most of the last decade, our employers were probably compelled to make large contributions to legacy DB schemes (yes, even though they already closed them) that we weren't ever members of, to make up the shortfall relating to benefits that were previously accrued by our older colleagues. Yes, the same older colleagues who started their careers before the financial crisis and have probably owned houses since they were 25. Fantastic.

Of course, occupational pension arrangements aren't supposed to stand entirely by themselves. They are complemented by our aforementioned protagonist no.3, the State Pension. Post-2015 retirees who've paid national insurance for long enough (or just don't have any other income) will receive £175 a week on top of any private provision. By international standards this is not high, but it's what around 1/3rd of people were faced with living off, because until recently this was the proportion of the workforce that surveys found made no private provision at all.



New Labour's solution to this "time bomb", implemented by subsequent governments, is our final protagonist - Automatic Enrollment. Employees must now be "auto-enrolled" into a qualifying pension scheme (almost always DC) when they join a new employer, and at least every three years subsequently. While they retain the ability to opt-out before making any contributions, in reality the vast majority of employees just stay put. This has significantly increased overall scheme membership. Unfortunately, the minimum (and hence most common) contribution level for qualifying schemes is 8% of salary, of which only 3% has to come from the employer. By a very rough rule of thumb, a careers' worth of 8% contributions might buy an annual pension of c.20% of your final salary. Alongside the State Pension it's probably enough to live on, but not well, and this assumes you've kept making both private pension and NI contributions your whole working lifetime.

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But what to do? An all-encompassing utopian solution is not immediately at hand. DB schemes will not be making a comeback in the private sector anytime soon, but nor can the legacy schemes be fully rolled up until their last members have died in 50+ years' time. In any case, almost every public sector employee is still accruing DB benefits and likely to be doing so for many years to come. Significant inequality in pension provision will therefore continue unless we can replace DC schemes or improve outcomes for their members.

Set out in the Pensions Schemes Bill 2020 that is currently progressing through

Parliament, are rules to define a potential 5th protagonist - Collective Defined Contribution (CDC), or Defined Ambition. This represents a hybrid between DB and DC, based on the internationally admired Dutch model, where risk is shared more optimally between employers and employees to produce potentially higher benefits for any given level of contributions. CDC schemes could represent a good long-term solution for the UK, but they are not without their political challenges (benefits can go down as well as up, and pensioners really don't like it when this happens). Moreover, it is unclear that the incentives will ever exist to tempt more than a handful of employers to adopt them.

Perhaps the state should just take on the full burden itself, as happens to (sometimes) good effect in many European countries? Were we starting from scratch, this could be the most efficient and equitable model. However, it would require significant tax increases or spending cuts to other budgets to make it affordable, and would have a limited (perhaps even regressive) redistributive impact. We would likely be paying significant amounts of money to people who have already put away large private pension savings under the current system for many decades.

It's hardly revolutionary, but the ultimate solution might well end up being increasing the minimum contribution rates required for auto-enrollment. This would be extremely simple to do, and since the contributions come from savers and employers, the cost to the exchequer would "only" be the lost tax due to the exemptions on pension contributions (admittedly this would be substantial, but hardly the ruinous sums required to fund benefits directly).

As a ballpark estimate, to afford a com-

fortable retirement for anyone (and their spouse) who stays in employment for around forty years, the current minimum contributions might need to approximately double. That said, there is a tightrope to be walked in setting the level of required contributions between being high enough to provide an adequate pension, and low enough that mass opt-outs don't leave workers without any private pensions savings at all. Alternatively, the government could just make employers pay the whole thing... Certainly utopian - although a pragmatist might reasonably worry about the impact of (in the short term) pushing employers under water, and (in the longer term) depression of salaries as companies seek to rectify their overall wage bills.

Even if we can square the circle on contribution rates, DC schemes still leave retirees the Hobsons choice between a low annuity income and the risk of running out of money before you die. To solve that, we'd actually need to get radical. In exchange for their pension pots, the state could deliver pensioners a far better annuity income than any insurance company could, while still (in all likelihood) running the program at a profit.

There would be clear political risks. Would prudent annuity rates be maintained under political pressure to increase benefits? Might the government be tempted to spend the capital (rather than invest it), and later be left with the infamous "black hole"? Perhaps the same lack of foresight and expertise that has led us where we are now, would also undo such a system. But would we really be Fabians if we didn't think it was worth a try? 🇬🇧

## INGRID ALLAN

# THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT, THE FUTURE'S UBI

**The origins of Universal Basic Income (UBI) may lie in utopian idealism but, in light of the current circumstances, perhaps we should consider it an entirely sensible way forward.** It is not a new concept, nor does it require anywhere near the level of upheaval as that other paragon of near-inconceivable progress, a resource-based global economy.

Though there is understandably a heavy focus on how such an idea might work on a national scale, the first well-documented UBI scheme took place in the small city of Dauphin in the Manitoba province of Canada. The four-year experiment (1974-79) dubbed 'Mincome' was either a tremendous success or a perplexing curiosity confined to local history books, depending on who you ask. It saw monthly cheques delivered to a thousand of the city's poorest households including those who were retired or unable to work due to disability.

Contrary to the widely held belief that it would dis-incentivise paid work, the only participants who reduced their hours had young children or were still in education themselves. Grades improved and high-school graduation rates soared. The experiment might never have come to be at all but for sympathetic left-leaning administrations at both a local and provincial level. When a new federal government came to power in 1979 the project was shelved and no conclusive report, beyond the testimony of the participants, was ever published. The raw data was packed into storage boxes where it sat, abandoned for nearly 30 years.

A 2011 paper by Dr. Evelyn Forget, the first to examine the data, brought the subject back into public scrutiny. A 2013 poll found that a majority 46% of Canadians wanted UBI to replace other forms of state assistance with pilot-scheme in Ottawa scheduled to begin in 2017. Despite UBI enjoying support among many of Canada's fiscal conservatives, who viewed it

as a means to reduce welfare spending in the long term, the same scenario occurred and the scheme was scrapped before researchers could come to a robust conclusion.

Though it is one of the most unequal nations on earth, the United States deserves credit for hosting more than its fair share of small UBI pilot schemes. Though it doesn't fall within the definition of 'basic income' Alaska holds the record for the longest-running guaranteed citizens' allowance. The scheme, known as the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD), gives all residents a cheque of between \$1000-2000 a year, was established in 1982. It has since reduced poverty by up to 20% and extreme poverty is virtually non-existent despite high unemployment and a higher cost of living.

From 1968-74, seven different states ran small-scale pilots, with only the slightest reduction in hours worked by the participants. A 1997 scheme still running in North Carolina has significantly improved the lives of those living on a Cherokee reservation by paying them an annual dividend from a casino built on their land. The length of the project means the decreased rates of crime and addiction, improved education prospects and better mental health are well-documented and available to any with an interest in how UBI could help disadvantaged communities.

However, one UBI pilot stands out. Finland's trial had several unique features which temporarily made this humble, sparsely populated country global news. The 2000 participants were chosen specifically from the unemployed, it was the first scheme backed by a national government, and the payments were to be continued regardless of whether the participants found work.

A documentary crew followed several of those involved until the government decided not to extend

the pilot. Though some groups within the study did see a positive effect on their employment there was no significant data to suggest it gave participants an incentive to work. In the eyes of the global press, the experiment was a failure.

Yet a closer look reveals results that were invisible from a purely economic perspective. Researchers expanding their focus beyond employment later revealed that participants were significantly happier, less anxious, more trusting and felt a greater sense of autonomy than those in the control group. A small but notable portion pursued new business ideas and educational opportunities. Many undertook voluntary work or used it as a safety net while caring for family members.

In the Britain of 2020, with thousands stuck in exploitative and poorly paid work and many more people needing care than our over-stretched local authorities can provide for, the time to have a serious discussion about the merits of UBI is surely now. Even before Coronavirus, automation threatened many of our jobs. With Spain, Kenya and possibly even Scotland planning to roll-out large-scale UBI pilots in the next few years (while the Netherlands and Germany have already begun theirs) we'd only be the latest on an ever-increasing list. ■







The Fabian Window, located in the Shaw Library at the London School of Economics, was designed by George Bernard Shaw in 1910 to commemorate the Fabian Society. The Fabian Turtle is the international symbol of the Fabian Society, with the motto "When I strike, I strike hard."

**YOUNG  
FABIANS**

**ANTICIPATIONS.**

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