

The Big Interruption and an agenda for change

There is a mood for change so deafening you would have to be tin-eared not to pick it up.

75 years ago, the end of the Second World War in Europe released a mighty and pent-up impetus to re-build along very different lines that even the incomparable and iconic Churchill was swept from power. In the UK, the 1945 moment translated into radical transformation of society. Not many had picked up the growing hunger to do things differently.

In the short-term, there is an urgent need to get the economy functioning after pandemic carnage. The long-term question is of an entirely different order. Along what lines we re-build will shape society for a generation and more. When we get something as huge as this and the whole world stops spinning for a while, the impact on social and political issues is bound to be profound.

A way of life based on consumption came to a screeching halt. Not only did producers not produce so much, it turned out we didn't need so much but other things became important.

To put society back together requires new thinking about social ecology as an integrated unit. A good place to start is the considering what stood out during the crisis as being vital to value more:

- i) the value of lives to keep the nation going (despite the inevitable trade-offs)
- ii) the value of connection, arts, parks and faith as loneliness exposed as a strategic issue.
- iii) the value of the economy as the sphere on which people depended for their livelihood
- iv) the value of the natural world that had respite care and our vulnerability to it exposed

These domains came to the fore and are so linked that we cannot now see each as stand-alone areas of public concern. We need a ringing 'declaration of inter-dependence'. This is not about policy prescriptions beyond what flows fairly naturally but here is an agenda for transformative change:

- I) Investing in resilience and social care plus measures to even up differences in society;
- i) Investing in social solidarity to address loneliness, parks, public health and education;
- ii) Investing in the real economy (Main St not Wall St) and public not shareholder value;
- iii) Investing in a green, healthier future for planet and people through the Green New Deal.

These agendas are fairly clear but hard to do without new models of social change to implement them. We will though try to capture this moment and how rising appetite for change can be mobilised into system change through a lens of what it means to flourish and the inputs that sustain them. A chance to re-boot comes once a lifetime. There has to be a better way of organising society. What sort of a world do we want to see? After all, the future is something we can all create. It is within us to aspire and mobilise towards something greater, a public good that works for the future.