

The background of the cover is a complex, abstract composition. It features a dense field of multi-colored splatters and speckles in shades of magenta, purple, blue, green, and yellow. Overlaid on this is a subtle, dark grid pattern that becomes more prominent in the lower right quadrant. The overall effect is one of vibrant, textured energy.

RSA

Action and Research Centre

**Ideas for a
21st century
enlightenment**

Edited by

Anthony Painter

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About the RSA

Since 1754 the RSA has sought to unleash the human potential for enterprise and creativity. We have a strong history of finding new solutions to social challenges by acting on the very best ideas and rigorous research, drawing on the expertise of our networks and partners.

The current mission of the RSA is '21st century enlightenment; enriching society through ideas and action'. We believe that all human beings have creative capacities that, when understood and supported, can be mobilised to make the world a better place for all its citizens.

Central to the RSA's current work are the concepts of convening and change making. The RSA has also developed a distinctive approach to change: 'Think like a system, act like an entrepreneur' which now runs through most of our projects. Our work is based on rigorous research, innovative ideas and practical projects, empowering citizens and partners, individually and collectively, alongside our 29,000 strong Fellowship.

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Foundations for a 21st century enlightenment

We believe the following are necessary foundations to bring the Enlightenment values of freedom, universalism and humanism to 21st century society:

- **Mass ownership** of the assets of the new economy – and a Universal Basic Opportunity Fund to support economic security.
- A national dialogue about expanding **investment in the public services** of the future after a decade of cuts.
- A ten-year **transformational Agriculture Plan** to meet our commitments to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Pilot Universal Basic Income** as a platform for real economic security and welfare.
- **New devolution settlement** for the UK to empower neighbourhoods, towns, cities and regions to combat inequality.
- **Mission-led schools** with the freedom to provide a more complete and generous education of the 'head, hand and heart' – a precondition for a 21st Century Enlightenment.
- **Devolve power to teachers, parents, communities and pupils** to support a rich education for all.
- A new social contract including Personal Training Accounts to help safeguard **good work amidst widespread technological change**.
- Embed **deliberative democracy** in the UK constitution at national and local level.
- A **new data commons** to ensure rights are protected and the benefits of the AI revolution are shared.

The following essays explore these ideas:

Anthony Painter argues that it is movements and ideas combined that secure lasting change; Julian Astle and Laura Partridge argue for a mission-led education that gives pupils the capabilities to be the authors of their own lives; Benedict Dellot and Brhmie Balaram call for new rights, responsibilities and assets to help workers thrive amidst new technologies; and Ed Cox calls for new public service and democratic institutions geared towards tackling inequality, loneliness and intolerance.

1. Ideas for a 21st century enlightenment

By Anthony Painter

Hidden in the story of human progress lie acts of extraordinary collective leadership. Victories are hard earned and then the struggle is slowly forgotten. A residue of heroic figures, great discoveries, battles won and lost remains. Yet the human toil of many, their effort and bravery, fades from view. Enlightenment values of freedom, humanism and universalism advance when collective leadership is visible and recede when it is absent. In times of confusion, much like these times of geo-political, cultural, economic and ecological tumult, we hope for saviour figures. Yet, the historical record suggests, it is movements rather than individuals that shift history. Perhaps we are seeking the wrong types of solution. These essays tie big ideas to collective action to change – the essence of 21st century democratic change.

To take one historical example, when we think of the abolition of the slave trade, we immediately remember William Wilberforce - the campaigning MP who led the parliamentary movement towards abolition of the trade. Few will recall the name, Thomas Clarkson, who effectively devoted his life to ending the slave trade. Even fewer would cite Olaudah Equiano, the former slave who bought his freedom, then wrote an autobiography to tell the tale to rapt audiences across the country. It was, in part, in the civic and intellectual cauldron of late eighteenth century London, in its printing shops and coffee houses (from which the RSA also sprung into life), that radical reform was fomented.

Even less is known of the enormous movement behind abolition – of trade and then slavery itself in British colonies. Mary Birkett, the poet, Hannah More, the poet-writer and Mary Wollstonecraft were all prominent in the early movement. Sailors and doctors who travelled on slave ships detailed the horrors of the trade, leading to opinion swaying pictorial portrayals of inhumane conditions. Josiah Wedgwood produced an iconic medallion with the slogan, “am I not a man and brother?”

By the 1820s, movement leaders such as Elizabeth Heyrick, were also asking, “am I not a woman and a sister?” Heyrick would publish the case for immediate rather than gradual abolition – from which Wilberforce recoiled. The women’s sections of the abolitionist movement were the most active, intellectually robust, and politically demanding. They canvassed almost every house in Birmingham with their abolition petition. The link between the attitudes that sanctioned slavery and the oppression of women and working people back home did not go unnoticed. Abolition

would have been unimaginable in 1833 without the work of Heyrick – who did not quite live to see abolition - and many others.

And, of course, there was the critical role of the slaves themselves. Resistance had become more frequent with riots in the Caribbean on several occasions. These riots created both an economic cost and a shock to the system – an ignition under the movement.

Enlightened change contains critical components, pursued relentlessly over time by multitudes. And without such movements, change can be superficial, fleeting, and incomplete. Abolitionist movements combined forceful aims, the diligent gathering of evidence not just of an oppressive present but a different possible future, and the spread of ideas and knowledge that could lead to real change. Of note was the ability of the movement to build smart alliances, sometimes with plantation owners themselves. An early member of the Society of Arts and plantation owner, Joshua Steele, more advocate of amelioration than abolition it should be said, experimented with more humane treatment of slaves, and no slave purchases from trading ships. These experiments demonstrated the economic inefficiencies of the slave trade in the process. Ideas were combined with interests, pressure, moral suasion, resistance, experimentation and disseminated at scale. So it was that history was shifted.

The state of Britain – and a response

And what of our current times? This moment we are in feels like one in which a divided society is pulling away from progress. This is something that is picked up very strongly in a survey we ran to explore the thirst for new ideas to meet big societal challenges – such as automation, climate change, the ageing society, inequality, social isolation and intolerance. A strong sense of pessimism comes through in the results. Just 21 percent believe that Britain will be a better place to live in 2030. This is a bracing outcome. Over a third think it will be worse. The three most likely words to describe Britain in 2030? Divided comes out top, followed by diverse and insecure. This is not a moment where the nation is at ease with itself; quite the opposite in fact.

Our survey found that remainers and leavers are at least united on one issue – Brexit is seen as a distraction for the big challenges society faces. Overall, seventy-five percent see Brexit as a distraction with remainers five-to-one and leavers three-to-one in agreement. However, there is a positive story to tell from our data. Though survey respondents see citizens as the least influential group in society, they see citizens as driving ideas for the future. Sixty percent look to citizens themselves to come up with the right ideas for the future with public service leaders, academic institutions and thinktanks not far behind. It's not quite the twilight of the expert that some have claimed – as long as they reach out to citizens and ensure they have voice and influence. It's a less promising story for the major political parties – neither is seen as having the ideas for the future.

They are not alone. Institutions and organisations of an array of forms are struggling to attain and sustain legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Facebook, a much-loved social platform enjoyed by billions, nonetheless finds itself at the centre of legislative and legal inquiries into political manipulation of its users through its data sharing and advertising platforms. Brexit is not even at the top of the EU's agenda as the Eurozone, austerity

and migration gnaw at its base. Public institutions from welfare to health systems struggle to meet new citizen demands from economic insecurity, ageing societies and distributional demands – of identity and class. Democracies everywhere face challenges from outsider, radical political movements – some authoritarian. Inequalities of wealth, power and voice that opened after the collapse of the Bretton Woods international system have become ever more opaque, impenetrable and consequential. If you are part of the majority on the wrong side of the wealth and income divide you are destined for relentless day-by-day insecurity. Global business and capital markets seem out of reach to democratic regulation.

Is it any wonder that citizens feel excluded and want their voice to be heard? And there are no shortage of voices encouraging people to lash out. In opposition to such voices, there are Establishment respondents counselling moderation and continuity. Given the scale of the challenges modern societies face, incrementalism is insufficient even if well-intended. But populism provides few ultimate answers even if it can provide a popular vent. Something more substantive yet bold is required to shift us towards a better place. And that is exactly what the slavery abolitionists achieved. We cannot look to expertise or democracy – both will need to operate in tandem. And that requires a very different approach to that taken in much of today's politics, business, and global institutions.

A fusion and interaction of expertise and civic renewal lies at the heart of the RSA's model of change. As this essay collection shows, we see our role as spotting good ideas, often bold, and developing them with others, testing them in partnership and working with our network of Fellows and wider civic and practitioner networks to spread and develop them further.

These essays make no claim to being exhaustive in terms of the challenges they confront. Over the coming year we will have far more to say on the growing threat of climate breakdown – as evidenced by the warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” consequences of even a 1.5°C increase in global temperatures from pre-industrial times. Coming to terms with what this means for UK society and knowing how best to act to have a positive effect is, arguably, the most critical requirement of our time.

In the recently published Food, Farming and Countryside Commission Progress Report, Sue Pritchard sets out the Commission's thinking so far, underpinned by a shared recognition that urgent action is crucial. For example, the Commission suggests a ten-year agriculture transition plan to enable the UK to meet its Sustainable Development Goal commitments. Such a plan must be compiled with deep democratic engagement. Change will not come from technical fixes alone.

Research backed ideas are just the start. We also seek to develop an understanding of change and bring a wide array of voices into our work. In this spirit we took the insights developed in our report *The New Digital Learning Age* and worked with dozens of partners from business, school to university education, culture and arts, community groups and local authorities in Brighton, Plymouth and Greater Manchester to develop our Cities of Learning programme. Pilots will follow in 2019 which will aim to create a mass engagement with learning in a place and narrow learning inequalities. The Citizens' Economic Council was so successful

in breaking down the barriers between economic experts and citizens that the Bank of England took up the idea of citizen deliberation. The Future Work Centre blends cutting-edge research with sectoral co-design to help widen pathways to good work. And rather than sitting in oak-panelled rooms, the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission has been on the road and working with communities to support them in imagining a more sustainable and inclusive future. We are also working in local communities in Scotland to explore how a Universal Basic Income can be integrated into communities thereby ensuring recipients receive additional support from business, services and voluntary action.

This bridge between ideas, citizens, experimentation and change runs through all the essays in this collection.

Ideas, people and change

In the field of education, foundational to a 21st century enlightenment, Julian Astle and Laura Partridge argue for a genuinely inclusive and expansive education for all grounded rigorously in knowledge with an eye to understanding the range of capabilities that the citizens of the future will require. This mission-oriented education challenges a system too bedevilled by narrow focus and gaming. But they see professionals, education leaders and communities taking charge of educational missions. A knowledge, ethics and practice rich education must be owned by communities rather than imposed from above.

Ben Dellot and Brhmie Balaram help us navigate a new wave of ‘radical technologies’ which, like previous technological waves, require a determined response if all are to share in the benefits. They caution against holding technology back and, indeed, advocate moving at a faster pace where economic, social and environmental benefits are to be harnessed. Yet, they argue that the adoption of these technologies must be ‘on our own terms’. In practice, this will mean the renewal of the ‘social contract’ to better provide people with the tools and resources - such as access to personal training accounts - to help them adapt and shape technological innovation. Data rights must be more clearly formulated in a way that is of use to people as they, for example, engage with major platforms or new public services. In parallel, major adopters of Artificial Intelligence and automation should safeguard these rights for our individual and collective benefit. Ownership of these new radical technologies must be spread widely if they are not to divide further economically polarised societies.

And Ed Cox argues, in similar vein, that a new settlement is needed to support people and places. Economic security could be enhanced by Universal Basic Income, pilots of which in Scotland the RSA supports, and a national debate is needed to see how to best support public services, starved of resources after almost a decade of austerity. But resources are not sufficient, voice is vital too. And, building on the RSA’s Citizen’s Economic Council and its chief executive’s advocacy of deliberative reforms to UK democracy, the RSA will work with others to see such innovations spread both at local and national level. To support the former and make meaningful decision-making possible, Cox argues for a comprehensive devolution settlement for the whole of England and enhanced

devolution for the UK more widely.

These ideas reach towards an approach to change that is ‘of’ the people rather than simply ‘for’ them. In so doing, change becomes infused with the values of freedom, universalism and humanism. Change becomes owned by us all. A greater field of vision opens with more diverse voices and suddenly, rather than only 21 percent believing the country is headed for better times, many come to see the collective possibilities to confront enormous and multifarious challenges.

To paraphrase Margaret Mead, never doubt that a movement of people, imbued with a sense of mission, knowledge, the willingness to experiment and share ideas and practice can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has. As we face the daunting challenges of climate change, a technological transformation, an ageing society, economic insecurity and inequality, and a democracy and society that appears deeply divided, such a commitment to change – amongst many – now seems like prerequisite for the future success of our modern societies. Twenty-first century enlightenment, in its purest form, will be a mass partnership that can bring about lasting change. It’s been done that way before, after all – just look to the millions who in our corner of the world and its overseas territories fought slavery.

2. Education for enlightenment

By Julian Astle and Laura Partridge

“We the people”

For most people, the word ‘enlightenment’ probably sounds a bit rarefied, elitist even; something which might consume the thoughts of a philosopher in an ivory tower, but which has precious little to do with the rest of us down in the square. Which is more than a little paradoxical, considering the central idea of the 18th century enlightenment was that the people in the square need no longer defer to elites or submit to their claims to authority; that all of us, armed with evidence and guided by reason, can build a better world without recourse to superstition, revelation or dogma.

This enduring humanistic belief – that “we the people” are capable of discovering what is true, deciding what is right, and shaping society accordingly – amounts to a declaration of intellectual, moral and political sovereignty. But claiming that sovereignty, and exercising it, are quite different things. If we are to create a 21st century enlightenment, we need to educate our children for that task.

That means inducting them into the great conversation of mankind – the unending dialogue between the living, the dead and the yet-to-be-born. It means introducing them to the best that has been thought, said and done, and equipping them to appreciate it, interrogate it, apply it and build on it. It means providing them with a more complete and generous education – an education in academics, aesthetics and ethics, or, as we refer to it at the RSA, an education of the ‘head, hand and heart’.

Yet too many children and young people today receive the opposite – a narrow, hollowed-out, instrumentalist education that is specifically designed and tightly calibrated for the task of getting them through exams, but which doesn’t prepare them fully for life.

Education by numbers

To understand why this is, we need to understand the nature of the system in which our children study and teachers work. Above all, we need to understand the impact of the current numbers-based performance management and school accountability system – the tail that wags the dog in English education.

As Jerry Muller, author of *The Tyranny of Metrics*, has argued, numerical targets distort organisations’ priorities in a variety of ways. There are no fewer than 10 categories of problem that stem directly from

the use of metrics to measure school and teacher performance. Each of these should cause ministers serious concern. In combination, they should lead them to commit to the system's urgent and wholesale reform.

The first is what we might call goal displacement – the temptation for professionals to focus on those outcomes that are being measured, while ignoring others that also matter, and often matter more. In education, the metrics that policy makers care most about are exam grades, and not without reason. But a good exam grade doesn't tell us everything we might want to know about a student, still less the school she attends. Like whether she will be able to put her knowledge to use in the real world. Or whether she enjoyed acquiring that knowledge and will leave school determined to keep on learning as she will need to do during her 50+ years in the 21st century's increasingly fluid labour markets. Most importantly, an exam grade doesn't tell us whether she is happy, kind, selfless or brave – whether she will go out into society and use what she has learnt to help others, to stand up to injustice and make a positive difference.

The second is the tendency to engage in activities that produce temporary, superficial or entirely illusory gains, but which nonetheless allow schools to tick a box on a performance data spreadsheet. The most widespread and damaging example of this is teaching-to-the-test, a practice that allows schools to achieve the proxy goal of preparing pupils for exams, while failing to achieve education's true goal – preparing pupils for the challenges of further study, work and life.

The third problem is gaming, a serviceable definition of which is any decision that puts the institutional interests of the school before the educational interests of the child. Cheating in exams, manipulating admissions and exclusions, herding students towards easy-to-pass qualifications of little value or interest, devoting resources to statistically important subjects and pupils while deprioritising others – all are examples of gaming. Or, to be more precise, all of them are rational responses to the system's many perverse incentives – incentives that, if ignored, can cost a headteacher her job, livelihood and professional reputation.

The fourth is the creation of powerful system-wide dynamics that work to the disadvantage of the poorest communities and most vulnerable pupils. In a system where the effectiveness of schools and teachers is measured by reference to pupils' test scores, working in a school where pupil achievement is likely to be lower carries significant risks. Which is one of the reasons why schools in the most deprived communities struggle to recruit and retain the best teachers, and why England's unusually high levels of educational inequality are proving so hard to reduce.

The fifth is short-termism. This is most apparent in the tendency to focus attention and resources on those year groups that are sitting high-stakes tests while underinvesting in younger pupils. This leads to an over-reliance on quick-fix, data-driven, deficit-focused interventions and the neglect of long-term fundamentals, curriculum design above all.

The sixth is pupil disengagement. Attending an exam factory school is grim. From the day a child arrives in Year 7 and is given his target grade, the tone is set. Key stage 3 will be cut short, non-examined subjects will be dropped, exam-taking techniques will be drummed in, texts that are studied in one key stage will be re-studied in the next. Five years later, that child will no doubt know how to answer a 4- or 8-point question, but

will he know how to think for himself? Will he be capable of producing interesting and original work? And will the prospect of further learning be something he looks forward to, or something he will want to escape as soon as the law allows?

The seventh is the stifling effect metric-based accountability has on experimentation and innovation. Since these can lead to failure and the severe consequences that follow, school leaders become understandably risk averse, placing their trust in well established, yet obviously improvable methods. And to ensure those methods are used, school leaders become ever more prescriptive and controlling, reducing teacher autonomy, discouraging creativity and demanding compliance.

The eighth is the increase in teacher workload. All those numbers need to be collected, reported, collated, analysed and tracked. All of which takes a lot of time – time that teachers could devote to teaching, to professional development or to some well-earned rest.

The ninth is the demoralisation of the workforce. It would be hard to think of a better way of sapping teachers' morale than ordering them to meet crude, distorting and widely gamed numerical targets upon pain of sanction. Such an approach undermines their agency, corrodes their professional identity and damages their self-esteem.

All of which leads to the final problem – the only one of the ten that governments can't ignore and the one that now confronts the British government: an inability to attract and retain enough teachers.

Forcing people to focus their efforts on a narrow range of measurable outcomes diminishes the experience of work for everyone. But it is particularly intolerable for the most capable, principled, driven and entrepreneurial who will likely seek out alternative opportunities in organisations where the bureaucracy is less suffocating and initiative is prized. Little surprise then that half of all the non-retiring teachers who left the state-funded sector last year took up teaching jobs in the independent sector. Or that some of the best minds in English education have left teaching to become advisors and consultants.

A chance for change

There are two reasons for thinking fundamental change might now be achievable.

The first is the teacher recruitment and retention crisis. It was Barack Obama's Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, who said "never let a crisis go to waste". England's teachers would be well advised to heed his words. For this is a crisis the government cannot solve without listening to teachers and responding to their concerns.

The second is the work of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. Spielman has been clear from the day she was appointed: she wants to use her time at the inspectorate to end this tyranny of numbers and get schools re-focused on the things that really matter. She wants to judge schools not simply by their results, but by the quality of their curricula and of the education they provide. But she'll first have to convince a sceptical Department for Education that such a subjective power is safe in the hands of her inspectors.

Even if Spielman wins that battle, all the hard work will still be in front of us.

For what is required, if we are to move from education-by-numbers to education-for-enlightenment, is nothing short of a new settlement based on a fundamentally different relationship between government, schools and the communities they serve.

Education for enlightenment

If it is axiomatic to state that a 21st century enlightenment needs to be people-powered, it should be equally self-evident that the process of educating for enlightenment must be driven from the bottom up – by school governors and leaders, teachers, pupils, their parents and the wider community. You can't run a top-down, compliance-based system that distrusts and disempowers those who work within it and expect that system to produce confident, capable, independent-minded young adults with the agency required to build a new enlightenment.

The existing settlement, of governmental command-and-control, backed by the threat of sanction, has taken the system as far as it can. As Joel Klein, who ran New York City's school system, put it: "You can mandate adequacy, but greatness needs to be unleashed". How to do that – how to remove the leash on which even the highest performing schools are kept so as to build the best public education system in the world – is the challenge we now need to meet.

If the existing system is centred on number crunchers and data managers, the new system needs to be designed for and built around:

Inquisitive **students**, with a love of learning, who cherish independent thought;

Reflective **educators**, with a love of their subject, who are fascinated by the science and art of teaching;

Mission-oriented **schools** with a clear sense of their own identity, values and goals;

Supportive **communities** that provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities to learn, develop and contribute.

Inquisitive students

If we are trying to produce inquisitive, independent-minded, life-long learners, we should educate them accordingly. The clear lesson from both cognitive science and educational research is that, at the start of the long journey from novice to expert, this requires plenty of clear, explicit instruction and deliberate practice so as not to overload the pupil's limited working memory. But over time, teaching methods need to shift from the monologic to the dialogic, the didactic to the dialectic, with responsibility and control gradually shifting from teacher to student. The goal, however, remains the same throughout: to teach the student not what to think, but how to think.

This process can't be rushed. Deep learning, real understanding, true appreciation – these things take time. A complete and generous education is one that gives the student the time and space to learn and overlearn, to practice and repeat, to delve deeper or digress, to challenge and question, to discuss and debate, and, throughout, to pause, consider, evaluate and reflect. It is one that enculturates the student in the logic and language of the disciplines and introduces them to their differing perspectives on, and contributions to, the world. It is explicitly open ended, embracing

dualism, doubt and irresolution. It deals in the subjective as well as the objective, encouraging students to develop their own opinions, but demanding that they be informed and evidenced. It is one in which students learn from each other, as well as from adults, and that encourages them to share their learning, whether through an essay, a presentation, a portfolio or a performance. It is one that offers students the chance to follow their passions and lose themselves in their work – to achieve that state of presence, purpose and focus that is attainable only through hard work in pursuit of perfection. It is an education that is valued above all for its intrinsic benefits; for its power to enrich, confound, inspire and amaze.

Reflective teachers

Such an education cannot be provided by teachers whose job is to hit numerical output targets using a limited range of prescribed methods. Downloadable lesson plans and pre-prepared scripts are how the system mandates adequacy. They are not how it will unleash greatness.

Anyone who has engaged with the evidence of what works in education will know what a complex, layered and highly intellectual profession teaching is. Affecting an invisible change in the minds of the 30 unique individuals in front of you, knowing whether and when that change has occurred, and proceeding at a pace that doesn't overwhelm the slowest and bore the fastest is an almost impossibly difficult task. To do it well requires the teacher to be an expert not only in their subject, but in how to teach it. This requires them to gather evidence from multiple sources – cognitive science, classroom trials, school-level progress and attainment data and real-time formative assessment data. To do it well, in other words, requires the judgement of a highly skilled professional.

Mission-led schools

It would be a mistake to conclude from this that the challenge of delivering a world class education is a technical one, however. For ultimately, education is values based and goal driven. Its essential character depends on the sort of adults you are trying to produce, and the sort of world you are trying to build.

Which is why the best schools are always mission-led. And because a mission is an expression of shared purpose, it needs to be owned by everyone in the school.

What that mission is will vary from school to school. What matters, assuming that mission is compatible with Britain's core democratic values, is that they have one, and that they put it at the centre of everything they do.

It would be hard to overstate the importance of mission to excellent schooling. As an expression of shared values, it provides a school with an identity, and the school community with a sense of belonging. And as an expression of shared aims, it provides governors and leaders with a lodestar – a constant point on the horizon to aim at – that prevents them being blown off course by the shifting short-term demands of the external accountability system. But a mission isn't just about values and vision. It also provides a school with a set of organising principals that should govern everything it does, infusing its curriculum and culture, its practices and protocols, its daily rituals and routines. Ask a teacher or pupil in a

mission-led school what that school is all about and they will be able to tell you what makes it different, why that difference is a strength and why they feel privileged to work or study there.

Supportive communities

No school is an island, however. And even the best schools, populated by the most committed and expert teachers, cannot overcome the problems many children face without help. They need the support and engagement of the wider community.

Pupils poor enough to qualify for free school meals currently arrive at primary school an average of four months behind their peers and leave secondary school 18 months behind. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities start school 15 months behind and leave school a full three years behind.

If schools are to close those gaps provide the most disadvantaged children with the support they need to prosper, they need help. They need it from parents, carers and families. They need it from other public agencies and services. And they need it from civil society – the youth workers, mentors, volunteers and charities that work to overcome the many and serious problems poverty creates.

And if schools are to provide those children with the opportunities their more affluent peers take for granted, they need the help of businesses, professional bodies, arts and cultural organisations, colleges and universities, all of whom can give young people the sense of agency and creative possibility that come from realising how limitless are the ways to find meaning and create value in the world.

A new attitude towards young people, and towards school

The final ingredient in an enlightenment education is perhaps the most fundamental. It is to challenge widely held views about both young people's characters and schooling's purpose.

In a recent RSA-commissioned poll, adults were asked to choose from a list of six adjectives – three positive, three negative – to describe teenagers. The most popular answers were 'selfish', 'lazy' and 'anti-social'. Yet a parallel survey of 14 to 18-year olds found that 84 percent want to help others, and that 68 percent have done so through volunteering and social action. This gap between perception and reality is shocking and cannot help but damage young people's sense of worth. If we give up on our children, we should not be surprised if they give up on themselves.

The other prevailing attitude that needs to be challenged is that school is a necessarily joyless experience but that it will be 'worth it in the end' – that sacrifice today will be rewarded tomorrow. The problem, of course, is that tomorrow never comes. Which is why we need to tell students that today matters – that they don't have to wait to create, contribute and make a difference. After all, as Martin Luther King reminded us, "In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action."

3. Automation on our own terms

By Benedict Dellot and Brhmie Balaram

Here come the machines

In 1921, Czech playwright Karel Capek introduced the term ‘robot’ for the first time to the English language. His science fiction play, R.U.R., depicted a future where human clones would “do the work of two-and-a-half labourers”. Their purpose? To free people from oppressive toil and allow them to lead lives of leisure.

The story does not end well. Realising they are smarter than the humans who created them, Capek’s robots overthrow their masters and, in typical cyborg fashion, begin to eradicate humans from the face of the Earth. Just one man is left standing.

Fast forward to 2018 and popular culture is again dominated by tales of machines gone rogue – from Ex Machina to the TV series Humans, and from Black Mirror to the film Automata.

But while the existential threat of robotics and AI remains firmly confined to science fiction, the prospect of new technologies changing the face of work appears real. PwC expects 7m UK jobs to be wiped out by 2040, whereas the Bank of England puts the figure at 15m by 2035. Whichever prediction you care to believe, the picture painted by thinktanks and consultancies is an alarming one.

Yet far from shying away from automation, we believe that the UK economy needs to accelerate its take up of technology if it is to move to a high skilled, high productivity and high pay paradigm. Automation must be pursued on our own terms, with good work guaranteed through a new economic settlement of mass ownership, a data commons and a reimagined social contract.

To anyone who doubts this mission can be achieved, look to the history of the RSA. Over the course of our 264 years, we have witnessed the birth of multiple industrial revolutions – from the advent of the first spinning frames to the birth of modern computing. And at every point we have sought to bend new innovations to the will of the many.

Our Premiums promoted technology for the “publick good”, including handmills that freed people to grind their own corn, and chimney sweeping inventions that did away with the need for child cleaners. Our Great Exhibition of 1851 raised the profile of the best industrial technology, from telescopes to early photography.

Minor as these activities may seem to us now, the note of hopefulness

they struck was a radical departure from the despondent attitudes towards technology that plagued the early industrial revolutions. If we are to make the most of the fourth industrial revolution, we will need to rekindle that same spirit of pragmatic optimism which saw technology not as a threat, but as a force for human progress.

The myth of mass job losses

There are few better places to begin than to call out the myth of mass automation, which has for too long dominated the media and public's attention.

New developments in fields such as deep learning, transfer learning and cloud robotics are indeed remarkable. Autonomous vehicles are now being tested in most developed countries, as are parcel delivery drones and cancer-detecting algorithms. Such feats would have seemed impossible just 15 years ago.

Yet for every jaw-droppingly impressive technology we hear of, there is another that silently falters without notice. IBM's Watson computer has made several incorrect treatment recommendations for cancer diagnosis. Google Translate still struggles with translating large passages of text, despite years of tinkering. And Ocado's complex warehouse robotics system continues to require end-to-end human involvement.

What is more, technology rarely automates whole jobs. More often it is designed to substitute for individual tasks. And because the vast majority of jobs contain tens, if not hundreds, of tasks, the removal of one or two by a machine is hardly terminal. No technology can fully substitute for a teacher, a carer, an architect or a construction worker. McKinsey estimates there are 2,000 different types of work tasks across all occupations.

Nor do technologies always substitute labour. Self-driving cars may replace taxi drivers and picking and packing machines may replace parts of a warehouse operative's job. But CAD software extends designers' abilities to create compelling visuals, just as robotic medical tools allow surgeons to make more precise incisions.

There are also cases where technology creates tasks that were never done by a human previously, or only by a fraction of the workforce. A prime example is the carebot ElliQ, which can remind people to take their medicine, set up video chats with family and friends, and recommend physical exercises. Given that none but the wealthiest of individuals have carers on hand 24/7, this device cannot be seen as encroaching on human turf.

On the occasions where automation does replace tasks and jobs, the savings to consumers and employers are not lost. In a process the RSA calls 'recycled demand', automation can lead to productivity gains and thereby cheaper goods for consumers. The money saved can be spent either on more of the same product or in another market, thereby reviving demand for labour.

One of the best examples of recycled demand can be found in the transformation of the 19th century garment industry. It is estimated that 98 percent of the labour required to weave a yard of cloth was automated as a result of new technologies, yet the number of textile weavers actually grew for a period because prices fell and demand was elastic.

Quality over quantity

For all the talk of an impending labour market meltdown, joblessness in the UK has not been lower since 1975. More people want to cut their hours than work more, and involuntary redundancy rates have fallen steadily over the last decade.

Less certain, however, is how the quality of work will change as technology advances.

Many believe new machines will replace lousy jobs with better ones in emerging digital industries. New systems need to be designed and monitored, experts say, and their outputs explained. The number of programmers has grown by 40 percent since 2011, and IT directors have doubled over the same period.

Others doubt a high-tech job revolution is around the corner. An investigation in 2013 by PwC found just 6 percent of all UK jobs that year were of a kind that did not exist in 1990. We may be creating jobs, the authors argue, but they are more or less the same as 30 years ago. Recent analysis by the IFS found that high-skilled jobs made up 46 percent of roles in 2016, barely higher than the 42 percent they occupied in 2005.

Pay is another area of contention. A study of 28 OECD countries by US economist David Autor found that, although technology has not been employment-displacing, it has reduced labour's share in value added (with owners of capital – machines – gaining the rest). This does not necessarily mean wages have fallen for workers, but rather that they have missed out on the spoils of new wealth.

Again, these claims are contested. In 2015, Georg Graetz and Guy Michaels analysed industrial data for 17 countries from 1993-2007. Their results showed that industrial robots raised labour productivity, increased value-added, and augmented worker wages (although averages can hide wide variations in wage changes).

Technology's impact on management practices is equally debateable. Biased algorithms used in recruitment could exclude minority groups from new job opportunities, surveillance software could erode the privacy of workers, and gig platforms – which would not exist without sophisticated algorithms – could atomise working partners, undermining job security in the process.

Alternatively, recruitment algorithms could remove bias from hiring decisions by focusing only on a candidate's experience and qualifications, and surveillance software could prevent accidents and discourage workers from free-riding on the efforts of others. Microsoft, for example, has developed an AI-enabled 'smart camera' to detect unmanned tools, spillages and potential accidents in warehouses and factories.

Finally, it is impossible to predict how business models will evolve in response to technological disruption. It was not long ago that the music industry was thought to face decimation because of new streaming services. In the end, business models survived but flipped. Money was no longer to be made in album sales but live performances, with knock on consequences for all those working in the industry.

Too many robots? We don't have enough

Different machines will have different effects on workers. Some will deskill jobs, reduce the bargaining power of employees, impinge on privacy, and

put workers under greater scrutiny. Others will enliven and enlarge workers' capabilities, help them to achieve more and better-quality work, and raise wages. Automation will create winners as well as losers.

Yet this debate is largely irrelevant if technology is not adopted, and herein lies the great irony of debates on technology and work. Despite the magnitude of commentary on automation, the RSA's research shows our economy is automating relatively slowly and among only a narrow group of firms. A 2017 RSA/YouGov survey of UK business leaders found that just 14 percent of businesses are actively adopting AI and/or robotics, or soon plan to.

Other research comes to the same conclusion. The International Federation of Robotics finds the UK has just 71 robot units for every 10,000 employees, compared with 189 in the US and 303 in Japan. Overall business spending on ICT, machinery and other equipment has barely budged in real terms since the turn of the millennium.

If automation is tough, running an automating business is even tougher. Earlier this year, cobot company Rethink Robotics went bust with a loss of 91 jobs after a major order did not materialise (cobot referring to machines that work collaboratively with workers rather than in isolation). Elsewhere, Johnson & Johnson had pulled the plug on its automated anaesthesiologist machine following disappointing sales.

Far from being a cause for celebration, low technology adoption rates could weaken the UK economy and our future prosperity. First, automation is a means to raise productivity, without which we are unlikely to see a return to meaningful wage growth. In terms of GDP per hour worked, UK workers are 26 percent less productive than their counterparts in Germany, and 30 percent less than US workers.

Second, without adopting technology our businesses cannot hope to be competitive internationally. Firms in tradeable sectors like finance and manufacturing are going head to head with rivals in China, India, Germany and elsewhere. If our businesses do not automate, they will struggle to cut costs and win clients, and jobs will be lost regardless. Automation in this sense can protect domestic work, not act as its adversary.

Third, widespread underinvestment in technology risks a small number of large, tech-led firms racing ahead of the competition and gobbling up market share in the process. Apple already shows signs of moving into healthcare, Facebook into banking and Amazon into bricks and mortar retail (see, for example, its recent purchase of Whole Foods). Concentrated markets are a threat to jobs and a risk to our democracy.

The value of automation is demonstrated by our European neighbours. Germany is one of the most automated economies, with more robots per worker than any other European country. But it also has one of the strongest manufacturing bases and has experienced real wage growth every year since 2014.

Sweden is another country that has embraced automation. According to an EU Commission Survey, 80 percent of Swedes have a positive view of AI and robotics, versus 60 percent of Brits. Why? Because they have created the mechanisms, such as Job Security Councils, to ensure the gains of automation are spread among the population. 'The Robots are Coming, and Sweden is Fine', ran the headline of a recent New York Times article.

Automation on our own terms

We need to accelerate the adoption of new technologies in a way that delivers automation on our own terms.

If technology is adopted without due care it will sharpen inequalities, deepen geographic divisions and entrench demographic biases within our workplaces. Educators, employers and policymakers need to be mindful stewards of technology, overseeing its creation and adoption, and establishing a new economic settlement for good work to prevail.

First, we need a social contract fit for the modern labour market. If automation leads to even moderate job losses, inequalities of distribution, or puts downward pressure on wages, we will need a means of sustaining the living standards of people within work, not just outside of it. This provides one of the reasons for committing to Universal Basic Income (UBI) pilots (as the RSA is now supporting in Scotland); establishing a new welfare deal for the self-employed, with more rights in exchange for higher national insurance contributions; and creating Individual Training Accounts, which would give every worker an individual budget to finance lifelong learning.

But top down policy is not the only means of supporting workers. The RSA's Future Work Awards will soon highlight inspiring examples of grassroots innovation that are reinforcing economic security from the bottom up. Among them are new insurance packages for gig workers, chatbots that can answer queries from workers about their rights, and recruitment algorithms that are purposely designed to boost diversity in hiring decisions. One Fellow, Stuart Field, is launching a Bread Funds scheme in the UK, which would provide the self-employed with a sick pay fund by pooling a small amount of money every month.

A new social contract should also feature a commitment to a shorter working week. As technology makes us wealthier, workers should in theory need fewer hours to maintain the same standard of living. Yet in the post-war period, we have managed to shave off just two and a half hours from the average working week. The solution will not come from policy change alone but from bottom-up experiments within workplaces, as we have seen recently in New Zealand and Sweden.

Second, we need to promote mass ownership and a stakeholder society. If automation means more income flowing to capital over labour, workers must have a stake in assets (the businesses and technology that are becoming ever more profitable) rather than simply relying on earnings. Labour's recent announcement of a John Lewis-style share ownership scheme for employees could be a step in the right direction. The RSA has proposed a Universal Basic Opportunity Fund, which would be created through a government endowment, replenished annually with levies on wealth, profits and data transfers, to be invested in infrastructure and global equities to pay out periodic dividends to every citizen (workers and non-workers alike).

We should recognise, too, where stakes in ownership already exist and can be leaned upon. Millions of us already have stakes in businesses deploying technology through our pension schemes or other investments. These investments are often small individually, but campaigns like DivestInvest, which seeks to accelerate clean energy investment, show how

collective power can shift business behaviour. The charity ShareAction has encouraged more than 100 investors to back the Workforce Disclosure Initiative, which puts pressure on companies to disclose information on how their workforce are treated.

But ownership should not stop at conventional shareholding. The RSA has promoted the community ownership of business as a way of giving people a stake in the services they rely upon and value. From pubs to shops to clean energy generation, this form of ownership primarily exists not to generate income but to ensure institutions serve local interests for the long haul. One example is South West Mutual, a customer-owned bank established by RSA Fellows that will work for the benefit of savers rather than distant shareholders.

Third, we need a new approach to data, which treats it less as an individual asset to be exploited and more as a common asset to support broader social goals. As pools of data expand to power new technologies like AI, we must ask how workers can have a greater say over how data is used and under what conditions. Should data be deployed to facilitate recruitment and interviews? Should employers collect more data to analyse worker performance?

Increasingly, there are calls for individuals to reclaim control over their own data, so that they can manage and monetise what they share. Jaron Lanier and Glen Weyl argue that data is a form of labour, and should be paid for as such. They imagine the rise of ‘data-labour unions’, organisations which can serve as gatekeepers of people’s data and negotiate rates like a traditional union would. John C Havens of the IEEE Global Initiative on Ethics of Autonomous and Intelligent Systems recently made the case that, in response to automation, workers can save their paychecks by becoming their own personal data brokers. However, the RSA and the Open Data Institute believe it is better to frame this challenge in terms of data rights that apply to all – not least because financial returns on data at an individual level are unlikely to reflect its real value. For example, if Facebook or Google were to pay individuals for their data, it would amount to less than \$10 per year.

A new Rights Framework for Data, on the other hand, could help people exercise more power over how their data is used. A framework could, for example, limit workplace surveillance, which, according to a recent RSA/Populus survey, half of all workers fear.

Corporations, the state and public services must also develop transparent governance structures to demonstrate how data rights are safeguarded, while not shying away from using data to create better products and services. GDPR is a leap forward but more could do this voluntarily. For example, organisations could commit to disclosing which automated decision systems they use, for what purposes and with what safeguards.

Ending the digital dogma

In the heated debate that surrounds technology, it is easy to forget that we have choices.

Investors can choose which technologies to back. Tech companies can choose which projects to prioritise and which features to build into their products. Employers can choose which technologies to purchase and how

to deploy them. Educators can choose which skills to equip young people with. And policymakers can choose the terms of our tax and welfare systems.

Just as the pioneers of the enlightenment struggled against the dogmas of church and state, so too must a 21st century enlightenment challenge the deeply embedded logic of scientific progress and the market. Rather than believe that if something can be automated then it must be, as a society we must continue to ask what technology is for. And more importantly, how will it help us to achieve the goal of good work for all?

Though they may have been painful in the short term, previous eras of technological progress were a tremendous force in making societies more free, humane and equal. It may not feel like it now, but in 30 years' time we will undoubtedly be more prosperous. The question is whether everyone shares in the spoils.

4. Britain's New Giants

By Ed Cox

On a hot July evening, Hastings was wilting. The closed down cafés and boarded up amusement arcades seemed to betray the pretensions of the new pier and a refurbished community cinema-cum-antiques-emporium in which we met. Even the seagulls couldn't be bothered with a group of visitors from London juggling laptops and banner stands with open packets of fish and chips. As RSA Fellows and others from the area met to talk about Britain's 'New Giants', we were left in little doubt that Hastings – like many other seaside towns - felt disconnected from an otherwise prosperous South East and ignored by those in power.

It was the same at a workshop the RSA's public services team ran in Swindon, where the local community poet treated us to a sardonic verse called "Brexit Tick-Tock", and in Manchester where women from Oldham spoke of their anger that, despite all their self-organising, they felt unheard. A palpable discontent. Uneasy conversations. Unexpected outbursts of anger. Even at our workshop in London, in a rather groovy community-centre-cum-science-lab in Bermondsey, all the talk was of isolation, disaffection and despite being hyper-connected communities, people were struggling to find common cause.

Recalling William Beveridge's Five Giant Evils of 1942, some workshop participants reflected how straightforward the social challenges seemed back then: squalor, ignorance, idleness, want and disease, each with a practical prescription for a big state solution. Oh, that it might be so simple today. Many bemoaned the work still not completed on these giant evils. With the nation in an anxious mood, it was not difficult to elicit examples of more contemporary concerns, nor to find consensus from around the country about the nature of Britain's New Giants.

In every place we visited, one Giant towered over all the rest: inequality. Income and wealth inequality were at the forefront of people's concerns and it was considered symptomatic of a society that had lost its moral compass. In Manchester, Hastings, Glasgow and elsewhere there was also a deep sense of spatial inequality, with a visceral resentment towards the concentration of power in London. Racial and gender inequality were also significant concerns, as was the impact of inequality on our physical and mental health. For some, inequality lay at the root of hopelessness and lack of aspiration; what some called 'apathy'. Many Fellows saw this problem as a feature of our broken democratic system and, with recent political events looming large, there was much talk of the pros and cons of referendums, the state of our political parties and our highly centralised decision-making structures.

Others focused on different types of disconnection and insecurity.

Isolation and loneliness were highlighted not only as symptoms of an ageing society, but also as problems affecting us all and key contributors to the apparent deterioration in the nation's mental health. A lot of blame was heaped on technology, and social media was pinpointed as a breeding ground for growing levels of intolerance and polarisation.

In every session, environmental concerns surfaced as a looming shadow on the horizon, whether in the form of climate change, air pollution or our consumer culture more broadly.

Inequality. Disempowerment. Isolation. Intolerance. Climate change. According to RSA Fellows, these are Britain's New Giants, identified with unerring consistency right across the nation. And they would appear to reflect public concerns too. In a brand new public poll undertaken by Populus, when asked about the biggest challenges facing Britain the public agreed with inequality as the biggest concern, jointly with an ageing society (49 percent). This was followed by isolation and mental illness (35 percent), climate change (35 percent), and then international relations/Brexit (33 percent).

These challenges facing 21st century Britain must constitute a starting point for shared missions if society is to progress with the pace and creativity that characterised those early decades of the welfare state. Any 21st century enlightenment will have to confront these giants collectively and head-on to illuminate the national mood.

A new social settlement

Beveridge's generation designed the welfare state to tackle the Five Giants of his day, so in the face of the New Giants our concern must be to revisit this challenge. Though Beveridge himself never intended the state to have such a dominant role, the twin pillars of social security and the National Health Service (NHS) put government and its associated bureaucracy centre-stage. Despite significant successes, the excesses of monolithic state solutions have too often inhibited progress and generated perverse incentives, deadweight costs and diseconomies of scale. Where many other nations saw the writing on the wall at the end of the 1970s and began to decentralise, in the UK – in England in particular – creeping centralisation has exacerbated a sense that big government keeps getting it wrong.

Perhaps the conjunction of 'welfare' and 'state' has been the problem? Beveridge himself wrote a later report in 1948 about the importance of 'voluntary action' and the value of citizen action in providing "services of a kind which often money cannot buy". Notions of voluntarism have always played a role in British society and in the past decade have been characterised through the concepts of co-production, asset-based community development, the Big Society, or the RSA's own ideas of 'social productivity'. Most recently, the government's civil society strategy argued that "a strong partnership of government, business, finance, and communities will help society rise to the enormous opportunities of our times". It would be wrong to ignore the nuances implied in different approaches, but whatever perspective we might wish to take on the relationship between state and voluntary action, few would doubt its central significance in the well-being and prosperity of a good society.

However, in recent years, despite imaginative attempts to galvanise social action, it has been difficult for civil society to do much more than mitigate the consequences of sharp reductions in public expenditure. A

decade of austerity has plunged health and social care systems into regular crises and caused many councils to close down whole systems of local social support such as children's centres, libraries and voluntary sector grant-giving. It is not that civil society hasn't stepped up: food banks have proliferated, largely to mitigate the unintended consequences of Universal Credit, community businesses have formed to take over post offices and the like, and local 'homelessness partnerships' have been developed to support the growing numbers of people evicted by private landlords and sleeping on the street. But in too many cases, social action has simply involved picking up the pieces of a fracturing system.

With Government spending on public services as a proportion of GDP, now below 40 percent, the UK is falling into what Danny Dorling, Professor of Geography at the University of Oxford, describes as the "third division" of European nations, along with Estonia and Ireland. The struggle to recover from the global financial crisis and a decade of austerity, and facing up to the New Giants, has stirred those who might advocate the RSA values of humanism, autonomy and universalism to a new mission.

Our vision is of a society where citizens, businesses and governments work together, in policy and in practice, to tackle inequalities of income and wealth, of health and wellbeing and of place, power and exclusion: a new social settlement that reconciles welfare with opportunity and social action.

Just as the New Giants on which we focus are closely interrelated and have many faces and dimensions, so a new social settlement necessarily involves coordinated activity across different disciplines and sectors and at different spatial scales, from the very local to the global.

Tackling economic insecurity

A shared endeavour to ensure that everyone has the capability to participate in economic, political and social life should be at the heart of any new settlement. Other colleagues at the RSA are investigating and experimenting with what this means in our education and skills systems and in a world of work now increasingly affected by new technologies and artificial intelligence. If notions of 'inclusive growth' are to be anything other than wishful soundbites, then towns and cities across the country need the courage and entrepreneurialism to experiment with radical ideas and action on the ground.

One such idea is a universal basic income (UBI). Beveridge's welfare state was predicated upon the principle that every citizen deserved a level of economic security to support them and their families through the ups and downs of life. However, the concept of conditionality that has increasingly shaped today's benefits system has failed to enhance claimants' motivation to work while being harmful to their mental and physical health. For example, the controversial Universal Credit system, is itself becoming a source of deep insecurity and as such the very inverse of what Beveridge originally intended.

UBI, on the other hand, is not dependent on income and so is not means-tested. It is a basic platform on which people can build their lives – whether they want to earn, learn, care or set up a business – and, crucially, it can be embedded in systems of wider community support. Experiments in Finland, Kenya and elsewhere suggest it might just work. The RSA

wants to champion further experiments in the UK and is already working with local authorities in Scotland to test the feasibility of this radical new approach. A new social settlement would see the introduction of a benefits system designed to tackle economic insecurity, not make it worse.

We are interested in other practical experiments that stimulate more shared prosperity too. The RSA's work on inclusive growth is concerned with building community wealth, pioneering new experiments in economic democracy and developing a more radical orientation towards future sustainability, working with a wide range of local areas to make tackling inequalities a key priority of local industrial strategies.

Transforming public services

Another key plank of Beveridge's welfare state was the notion of what we have come to call 'public services', the NHS being the most celebrated example. In recent times the RSA has devoted much effort to understanding the developing relationship between citizen and state in the realm of public service provision. Our work on 'health as a social movement', for example, identified eight key principles to give people more control over the resources in their communities that affect health and well-being. As our health needs become more complex, so we need to move away from the big levers of the central state towards more agile approaches to commissioning and care.

If our systems are to change, a new generation of 'public entrepreneurs' will have to be willing to break down the silos between public, private and third-sector agencies and overcome the resistance to change so often found in current systems. There are already great examples of community care being delivered by self-managed teams worthy of support such as the Wellbeing Teams in Ashton and Wigan or the Bay Care Group in Torbay. The symptoms of social isolation and the challenges of mental health and well-being are, by their very nature, highly complex and current types of service provision struggle to adequately respond. Across the public sector a transformation in areas such as commissioning and regulation will be required. And public servants need public entrepreneurship woven into their curricula and training programmes.

As enterprising as we might be with our future public services, there are limits to what can be achieved as the public spending pot gets smaller relative to GDP and the demands of an ageing society grow. Despite numerous reviews about the future costs of health and social care, we seem no closer to any politically palatable and sustainable solutions. With the moral sentiment of the nation now tilting away from further austerity, there can be a more open public debate about how we pay for more effective public services. A new social settlement could reset ambitions for the proportion of GDP we are collectively prepared to invest in our public services.

The power of place and the place of power

Even if a new social settlement is to recast a national approach to economic security and public services, we know that results will vary across the country. The UK is far from united and has greater levels of regional inequality than any other European nation. This is in no small part due to the runaway dominance of London over the past few decades. The city's

status as a global hub for financial services means it is propped up by preferential policy treatment and disproportionate public and philanthropic spending. While London overshadows other big cities, the differences between cities and our smaller towns, and coastal and rural areas are also growing. And even within our towns and cities, local inequalities abound, with struggling neighbourhoods sitting sometimes just yards from much more prosperous places.

We must look again at how local housing markets perpetuate inequality and economic insecurity and the role of neighbourhoods and their so-called ‘social infrastructure’ play such important roles in supporting healthy and connected communities.

None of this can be dictated from Westminster or Whitehall. For too long, concerns about postcode lotteries have been used to hoard power in central government, when in fact it is centralised policymaking that has so damaged economic productivity and public service reform and caused the local inequalities such policies were apparently designed to address. A new settlement would involve a comprehensive devolution agreement between central and local government in England that gives combined authorities and reconstituted regions the kinds of power and fiscal freedoms currently only afforded to the devolved nations.

There is much to do in designing such an agreement. The recently launched UK2070 Commission has made a powerful case for a greater role for spatial strategies to tackle regional inequalities and devolve public investment. With the Peterloo bicentenary on the horizon, we will also work with the People’s Powerhouse movement to put citizens centre stage in the driving the future of the Northern economy.

Passing power downwards is vital, and it will only make a difference if it is accompanied by deep democratic reform. With new powers must come new accountabilities and a democratic system that is alive to the opportunities of new cultural norms and technologies. Many have campaigned for change on different fronts, from party funding to voting reform to reconstituting the House of Lords, and the RSA’s chief executive, Matthew Taylor, has argued for a shared campaign for deliberative democracy as a ‘gateway reform’ in the transformation to a new democratic system.

There is huge merit in this argument. Deliberative experiments such as citizens’ juries and assemblies have been used in Ireland, Australia and elsewhere to address the kinds of complex social and economic challenges that characterise 21st century Britain. Had we reached deeper into the democratic toolbox, a ‘Peoples Assembly on Brexit’ rather than to a referendum, to address Britain’s highly sophisticated relationship with the European Union we might have been able to avoid the deep divisions we see now. Deliberative democracy as a practical means of reaching beyond shallow public opinion and rebuilding political trust is an idea whose time has come. Our new social settlement could involve a Deliberative Democracy Bill supporting three national deliberative assemblies each year, each one leading to further parliamentary debate and action, as well as action locally and regionally.

Conclusion

From Hastings to Glasgow, Oldham to Swindon, Cambridge to London,

Britain's New Giants are looming large, foreshadowed by Brexit uncertainty and a decade of austerity. Other nations have managed to move past so-called 'peak inequality' and so can we. To do so will require a shared endeavour, with every person recognising their common humanity, every place given its due autonomy and every public institution committed to more inclusive service provision.

Recasting notions of 'welfare' – human flourishing - in a post-crash, post-Brexit Britain may seem a daunting task. Public, private and third-sector entrepreneurs can rise to the challenge and, through their collective intelligence and collaborative design, lay out a new social settlement – in policy and in practice – to shape the rest of this century collectively and democratically, just as Beveridge and his collaborators shaped the last, albeit as elites. 21st century enlightenment will be based on a new shared settlement, beyond reports and legislation alone but energised by widespread civic renewal. The New Giants will need more than David and a sling if they are to be slayed. It will require a cast of millions.

How to join in the conversation

Do you agree or disagree with our ideas? Do you want to play a part in rolling them out, debate how they could work or spread the word?

If so, join us this autumn as the RSA marks the launch of our new coffeehouse – Rawthmells – with a celebration of the very best ideas for the future.

The RSA was born in a coffeehouse in 1754 by a group of people with a shared vision for a better tomorrow. And like the original, we want our 21st-century coffeehouse to be a place where individuals become part of a greater movement for social change – a natural home for anyone who wants to change the world, enabling people to connect, share knowledge, collaborate, and build new communities to tackle the social challenges of our time.

To celebrate Rawthmells' opening, we're bringing together a series of powerful conversations and events reflecting on some of the ideas we've shared in these essays, so join us this autumn to hear more and have your say.

- **Become an RSA Fellow** - join a global network of 29,000 people for access to the brightest new ideas, innovative projects, a diverse network of like-minded people and a platform for social change.
- **Join the conversation** - there are plenty of opportunities to join discussion groups, or host one of your own, in the Coffeehouse, including the weekly RSA Breakfast Club and RSA Friday Conversations.
- **Attend an event** - explore our programme of free events, running from 19 November to 10 December, and book your place at: www.thersa.org/jointheconversation
- **Watch online** - if you can't join us at RSA House, follow the events online with our livestreams and on replay on our YouTube channel.
- **Explore these ideas and more** – find out more about the ideas and projects from the RSA that aim to address the world's challenges by unleashing the creative potential in every individual, www.thersa.org/discover
- **Share your ideas** - what are your ideas to support 21st Century Enlightenment? Our new online platform, RSA Ideas, is a digital space for Fellows to come together, share and discover ideas, discuss and collaborate at: www.thersa.org/fellowship/coffeehouse/rsa-ideas-space

- **Make it local** - want to join the conversation locally? There are Fellowship events taking place all across the UK and globally, take a look at what's happening near you, www.thersa.org/fellowship/in-your-area

Appendix: Populus survey

To mark the launch of this essay collection spelling out the RSA's ideas to some of the biggest challenges we face, we partnered Populus to ask citizens about their vision for Britain's future.

Populus interviewed 2,096 respondents aged 18+ online between 15 and 16 October 2018. Surveys were conducted with a UK audience with quotas set on age, gender and region and data weighted to the profile of all UK adults. Populus is a founder member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. For further information visit www.populus.co.uk.

Respondents were asked whether they broadly agreed or disagreed with the statement "Brexit is distracting too much attention from more pressing issues, like the NHS, schools, automation, and social care", and we asked them to select whether they voted remain, leave or didn't vote in the 2016 European Union referendum.

Overall 75 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, with 20 percent disagreeing and 5 percent did not know.

This included a majority of both remain supporters, who agreed with the statement by around five-to-one, and leave supporters, who agreed by around three-to-one.

To understand how the public imagine Britain evolving over the next decade, we asked survey respondents who they thought had the ideas to tackle the challenges we face over the coming years.

Respondents thought that ordinary citizens have the ideas to meet the challenges (60 percent agreeing), followed by public service leaders (57 percent) and think-tanks and academic institutions – showing that the public may not have had enough of the experts, but there is a clear demand for citizens to take on a greater role.

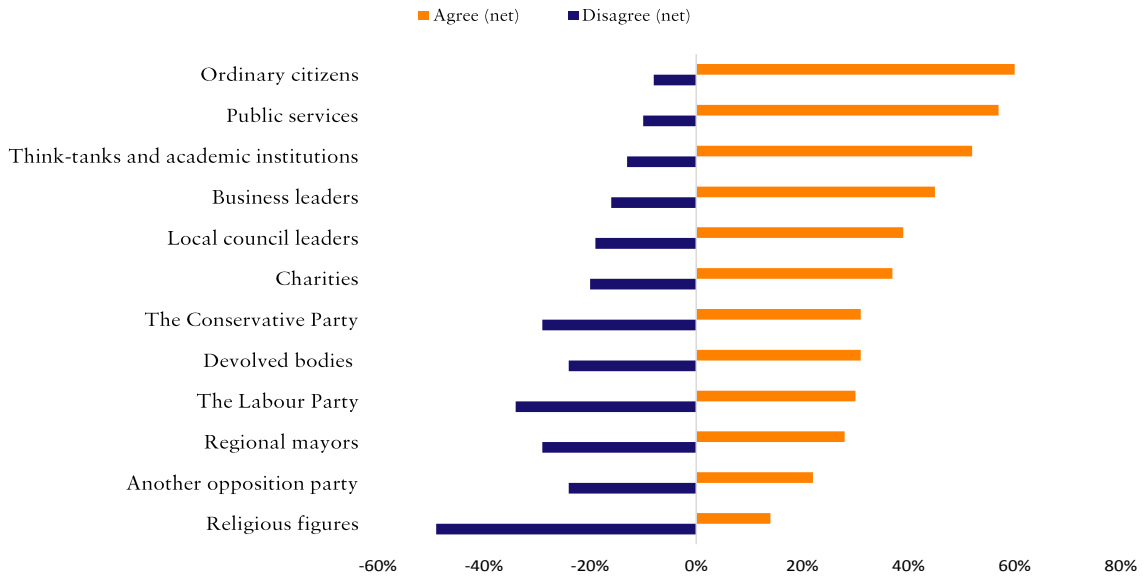
Although both parties claim to be winning the battle of ideas, this is not reflected in the public's view: with the Conservatives slightly ahead of Labour on 31 percent and 30 percent respectively.

But if the public think ordinary citizens have the ideas for the future, they do not think citizens currently reflect the agenda. Asked who is the most influential force in modern Britain, 25 percent said the media, 20 percent said government, 17 percent tech companies like Facebook, 14 percent banks and business leaders, 7 percent citizens and just 2 percent said trade unions.

Lastly, respondents were presented with a series of opposing words, such as open vs closed, and rich vs poor, and asked to choose which of these represented how they imagined Britain will look in 2030 – compared to how they want it to look.

“Divided” was the most chosen word, selected by 30 percent of respondents, followed by “diverse” (18 percent), “insecure” (15 percent), “unsustainable” (15 percent), and “isolated” (13 percent). People were least likely to describe Britain in 2030 as “uniform” (1 percent), “stingy” (2 percent), generous (2 percent), young (3 percent) or rich (4 percent).

Who has the ideas to meet our challenges?



The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) believes that everyone should have the freedom and power to turn their ideas into reality. Through our ideas, research and 29,000-strong Fellowship, we seek to realise a society where creative power is distributed, where concentrations of power are confronted, and where creative values are nurtured.

Recent RSA studies have explored the rise in self-employment, the gig economy and the ethics of artificial intelligence. In each case, we have sought to dig behind the headlines, unpick the nuance of debates, and canvas views from across the political spectrum. Our goal is to explore the big challenges facing society today.



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