

## The duty to build afresh hangs heavy on those who ca...

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*I wrote this as a Twitter thread. It became a long one.*

*I offer it here in the way that I write it, with lines indicating the breaks between Tweets.*

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It's not coronavirus that's going to cause the greatest damage to our economy in the next year. It's fear that will do that.

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We're frightened of unemployment.

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We're frightened of being dependent on a government that does not care.

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We're frightened of personal debts and how we might pay them off.

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We're frightened for our pensions when the economy is in real trouble.

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We're frightened our children may not get the education they deserve, or the chances that they want.

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We're frightened of a no deal Brexit because it's clear that no one really knows what it might mean.

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We're even got frightened because the government has told us to be frightened of the national debt, although there is literally no reason to be so.

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And we're also frightened of coronavirus even though the chance that it will now kill us is pretty small, most especially if the UK government finally tries to contain it in the way other governments have.

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We're now frightened of fear itself, and that it may not end

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But most of all, I think we're frightened for another reason altogether.

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We're frightened by the fact that no one is giving us hope

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The government told us there would be a V shaped recovery. And a vaccine. Now neither is true

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And they have no alternative message or plan, except that the time is coming when this must be paid for and everything will get worse

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Whilst they have changed their mind on so much, without admitting that they have or why

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The result is that we appear rudderless and without hope because there is no leadership to guide us through this

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We have suffered one of the biggest pandemics in history. It has been an epoch making event: a before and after moment. But the after looks like an abyss right now. Of course

we are frightened

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So what is needed? A vision. An awareness that after is never the same as before. A belief that we can do better. And the drive to create that change

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The only such plan is the Green New Deal. And that's not chance. It addresses another underlying and even bigger fear - of whether we can even survive

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But people know £3 billion does not buy a Green New Deal. And people also know you can't bail out carbon usage and promote Green change at the same time. "So they do not believe we are getting a Green New Deal"

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They also know that the austerity that is obviously coming our way cannot create change

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So they know there is no plan. And the only desire the government has is to balance its books instead of saving life here in earth

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In the choice between money and life this government is choosing money

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People know that's wrong. And if they did not appreciate why before all this more do so now, instinctively they know the economics of downturn cannot work now

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And I strongly suspect that populism is also declining in appeal because it builds on negatives and people are looking for positives

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Only positive politics - best delivered by Nicola Sturgeon in Scotland right now - can win in this situation

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But there is four years with a government that literally does not know how to be positive to come in the UK as a whole. No wonder people are frightened. Four more years of a government running away from the problems we face should frighten anyone

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And yet hope is possible. But only by embracing the new era by seeing it as an opportunity for change. That can be done. We do not need to accept fear as the only option

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But are there politicians with the ability to deliver that hope, that vision and the credible plans for its delivery? If we could answer that question we would know we can tackle the fear that exists. And right now we can't be sure of that answer. So fear will persist.

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The duty to build afresh hangs heavy on those who can do it.