



The Jimmy Reid
Foundation

Tenth Annual

Jimmy Reid

Memorial Lecture



**How human-centred economics inspires leaders
towards purposeful economic growth**

Speaker:

**The First Minister of Scotland
Humza Yousaf MSP**

ABOUT US

The Jimmy Reid Foundation was established in 2011 in memory of Jimmy Reid and to continue the legacy of radical political thinking and activity his life and work represented. The Foundation is an independent 'think tank' and advocacy group focussed on practical, policy proposals for transforming Scotland which are based on analysis and investigation of the current Scottish and global political, cultural and social situations. The Jimmy Reid Foundation was set up to include the full range of progressive politics in Scotland. All the work of The Reid Foundation is based on a series of underpinning principles drawn from Jimmy's own thinking:

- That society should be based on equality and social justice for all
- That people should have the democratic power to influence and control their workplace, community and wider social institutions
- That the quality of life should be at the forefront of political debate and not an afterthought
- That justice can only come from peace and support for human rights
- That ideas, learning, arts and culture have the power to transform society and individuals
- That all these principles are underpinned by the importance of a progressive, radical national identity and a vision for Scotland

The Jimmy Reid Foundation includes the *Scottish Left Review*, which was Jimmy's last major political project, being established in 2000.

The Jimmy Reid Foundation is a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, SC051331).

TENTH ANNUAL JIMMY REID MEMORIAL LECTURE

How human-centred economics inspires leaders towards purposeful economic growth

Thursday 26 October, Banqueting Hall, City Chambers, Glasgow

PROGRAMME

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| 6.15pm | Registration with tea and coffee served |
| 7.00pm | Civic welcome – Bailie Anthony Carroll |
| 7.05pm | Introduction by Mary Alexander, Deputy Regional Secretary of Unite the Union and Jimmy Reid Foundation charity trustee |
| 7.10pm | Humza Yousaf MSP, First Minister of Scotland
Followed by ‘Questions and Answers’ |
| 8.25pm | Vote of thanks by Dave Watson, Director, Jimmy Reid Foundation |
| 8.30pm | Close of Lecture |

The Foundation acknowledges its thanks to Glasgow City Council for providing the venue for tonight’s lecture.

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Humza Yousaf was appointed First Minister in March 2023. He was born in Glasgow and educated at Hutchesons Grammar School and the University of Glasgow, graduating with a degree in Politics.

He was elected as an MSP for the Glasgow region in May 2011 and to the constituency of Glasgow Pollok since 2016. He has held several ministerial positions in the Scottish Government since 2012 and joined the cabinet in June 2018 as Cabinet Secretary for Justice. He was appointed as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care in May 2021.



“I have the great honour of representing Govan in our Scottish Parliament, the home of the iconic Jimmy Reid. The actions of Jimmy Reid stand as an enduring example of how trade unions empower people; of how they provide a voice for those who might otherwise go unheard. I look forward to discussing his legacy, and how his philosophy of human-centred economics inspires leaders towards purposeful economic growth now more than ever.”

Humza Yousaf MSP

'The Rat Race is for Rats': excerpts from Jimmy Reid's rectorial address on 28 April 1972

Alienation is the precise and correctly applied word for describing the major social problem in Britain today. People feel alienated by society. In some intellectual circles it is treated almost as a new phenomenon. It has, however, been with us for years. What I believe is true is that today it is more widespread, more pervasive than ever before. Let me right at the outset define what I mean by alienation. It is the cry of men [and women] who feel themselves the victims of blind economic forces beyond their control. It's the frustration of ordinary people excluded from the processes of decision-making. The feeling of despair and hopelessness that pervades people who feel with justification that they have no real say in shaping or determining their own destinies.

Many may not have rationalised it. May not even understand, may not be able to articulate it. But they feel it. It therefore conditions and colours their social attitudes. Alienation expresses itself in different ways in different people. It is to be found in what our courts often describe as the criminal antisocial behaviour of a section of the community. It is expressed by those young people who want to opt out of society, by drop-outs, the so-called maladjusted, those who seek to escape permanently from the reality of society through intoxicants and narcotics. Of course, it would be wrong to say it was the sole reason for these things. But it is a much greater factor in all of them than is generally recognised.

Society and its prevailing sense of values leads to another form of alienation. It alienates some from humanity. It partially de-humanises some people, makes them insensitive, ruthless in their handling of fellow human beings, self-centred and grasping. The irony is, they are often considered normal and well-adjusted. It is my sincere contention that anyone who can be totally adjusted to our society is in greater need of psychiatric analysis and treatment than anyone else.

Man is a social being. Real fulfilment for any person lies in service to his fellow men and women. ... Any society which, for example, permits over one million people to be unemployed is far too permissive for my liking. Nor is it moral laxity in the narrow sense that this word is generally employed – although in a sense here we come nearer to the problem. It does involve morality, ethics, and our concept of human values. The challenge we face is that of rooting out anything and everything that distorts and devalues human relations.

A rat race is for rats. We're not rats. We're human beings. Reject the insidious pressures in society that would blunt your critical faculties to all that is happening around you, that would caution silence in the face of injustice lest you jeopardise your chances of promotion and self-advancement. This is how it starts, and before you know where you are, you're a fully paid-up member of the rat-pack. The price is too high. It entails the loss of your dignity and human spirit.

Profit is the sole criterion used by the establishment to evaluate economic activity. From the rat race to lame ducks. The vocabulary in vogue is a give-away. It's more reminiscent of a human menagerie than human society. The power structures that have inevitably emerged from this approach threaten and undermine our hard-won democratic rights. The whole process is towards the centralisation and concentration of power in fewer and fewer hands. The facts are there for all who want to see. Giant monopoly companies and consortia dominate almost every branch of our economy. The men who wield effective control within these giants exercise a power over their fellow men which is frightening and is a negation of democracy.

Government by the people for the people becomes meaningless unless it includes major economic decision-making by the people for the people. This is not simply an economic matter. In essence it is an ethical and moral question, for whoever takes the important economic decisions in society ipso facto determines the social priorities of that society.

From the Olympian heights of an executive suite, in an atmosphere where your success is judged by the extent to which you can maximise profits, the overwhelming tendency must be to see people as units of production, as indices in your accountants' books. ... The concentration of power in the economic field is matched by the centralisation of decision-making in the political institutions of society. The power of Parliament has undoubtedly been eroded over past decades, with more and more authority being invested in the Executive. The power of local authorities has been and is being systematically undermined. The only justification I can see for local government is as a counter- balance to the centralised character of national government.

If modern technology requires greater and larger productive units, let's make our wealth-producing resources and potential subject to public control and to social accountability. Let's gear our society to social need, not personal greed. Given such creative re-orientation of society, there is no doubt in my mind that in a few years

we could eradicate in our country the scourge of poverty, the underprivileged, slums, and insecurity.

Even this is not enough. To measure social progress purely by material advance is not enough. Our aim must be the enrichment of the whole quality of life. It requires a social and cultural, or if you wish, a spiritual transformation of our country. A necessary part of this must be the restructuring of the institutions of government and, where necessary, the evolution of additional structures so as to involve the people in the decision-making processes of our society. The so-called experts will tell you that this would be cumbersome or marginally inefficient. I am prepared to sacrifice a margin of efficiency for the value of the people's participation. Anyway, in the longer term, I reject this argument.

To unleash the latent potential of our people requires that we give them responsibility. The untapped resources of the North Sea are as nothing compared to the untapped resources of our people. I am convinced that the great mass of our people go through life without even a glimmer of what they could have contributed to their fellow human beings. This is a personal tragedy. It's a social crime. The flowering of each individual's personality and talents is the pre-condition for everyone's development.

In this context education has a vital role to play. If automation and technology is accompanied as it must be with a full employment, then the leisure time available to man will be enormously increased. If that is so, then our whole concept of education must change. The whole object must be to equip and educate people for life, not solely for work or a profession. The creative use of leisure, in communion with and in service to our fellow human beings, can and must become an important element in self-fulfilment.

Universities must be in the forefront of development, must meet social needs and not lag behind them. It is my earnest desire that this great University of Glasgow should be in the vanguard, initiating changes and setting the example for others to follow. Part of our educational process must be the involvement of all sections of the university on the governing bodies. The case for student representation is unanswerable. It is inevitable.

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Recent Jimmy Reid Foundation publications

Since the Foundation was created, it has published over one hundred policy and research papers. They are available on our website <http://reidfoundation.scot/>

This year we have produced papers on:

- Freedom of Information reform
- National Care Service
- Land Reform for the Common Good
- Assessing Fair Work in Scotland
- A Human Rights Law for Scotland

We have also introduced a programme of regular briefings, including, UK Budget, Working Week, Libraries, Cost of Living Crisis, and the Programme for Government.

If you have any suggestions for future papers or would like to write for the Foundation; please contact the Director: contact@reidfoundation.scot.

Join us and help fund us

Individuals can join the Foundation network (<https://reidfoundation.scot/subscribe-2/>) at no charge. This gives network members news of the latest Foundation papers and updates. However, we would encourage network members and Foundation supporters to make donations, whether regular or one-off by using this link.

Please use the link above or send a cheque to 'Reid Foundation', The Reid Foundation, 14 West Campbell Street, Glasgow G2 6RX.

Extracts from this year's publications

Assessing Fair Work in Scotland

The report concludes that the largely voluntary approach taken to Scotland's Fair Work initiative has made a limited but positive contribution to improving working lives, particularly in the broader public services. However, it has not yet delivered major results, as evidenced by the continued prevalence of poor-quality work across Scotland's labour market. If Scotland is to claim to be a Fair Work Nation in 2025, much more needs to be done to turn the worthy ambition into reality.

Land Reform for the Common Good

Recalling Jimmy Reid's legacy as a lifelong campaigner for social justice, Dr MacLeod's paper argues for a much more radical and integrated approach to land reform to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises, reverse rural depopulation, and achieve a wellbeing economy based on a fair sharing of Scotland's land wealth for the many, not the few. That requires land reform to be recognised and repositioned as a distinctive area of public policy, cutting across Government portfolios in a strategic and increasingly interventionist way.

A Human Rights Law for Scotland

The Scottish Government is carving a distinctive path to advance human rights law by expanding domestic delivery of United Nations' global standards at a time when the UK Government is seeking to limit and curtail rights as well as their enforcement. Scotland's distinctive approach is welcomed, but it is imperative that the current proposals are strengthened to ensure duties are upheld daily, and rights are enforced when duty-bearers fail to comply. Positive words in inadequate legislation will fail to create the architecture of cultural, policy, funding and service changes to make a significant impact.

Save our Public Libraries

Our public library system has a special place in the work of the Jimmy Reid Foundation. His extensive reading nurtured Jimmy's political seeds, starting before he went to school and developing into a lifelong passion. Like so many working-class families, there weren't many books in the home as they were expensive, so Govan Library became a regular haunt.

**We are grateful to the following organisations for
sponsoring the publication of this programme:**

The logo for the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) features the lowercase letters 'eis' in a stylized, blue, serif font. The 'i' has a dot, and the 's' has a distinctive shape.

The Educational
Institute of Scotland

The logo for 'unite the UNION' features a stylized flame or ribbon graphic in shades of orange and red above the word 'unite' in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below 'unite' is the word 'the UNION' in a smaller, blue, lowercase, sans-serif font, with 'UNION' in all caps.The logo for the University and College Union (UCU) features the letters 'UCU' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'U' is pink, the 'C' is pink, and the 'U' is dark blue. Below the letters is the text 'University and College Union' in a black, sans-serif font, with 'Scotland' in a pink, sans-serif font below that.

SCOTTISH LEFT REVIEW

RADICAL SCOTTISH POLITICAL WRITING

Published by the Jimmy Reid Foundation, 14 West Campbell Street, Glasgow.

<https://reidfoundation.scot>

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC051331)