

## NHS FIVE YEAR FORWARD VIEW: a very contrary view in 5 pictures

Where to begin was what kept me from contributing to the discussions about the recently published NHS Five Year Forward View (5YFV); my dilemma was compounded by the desire to add value and help make progress and not come across as the naysayer. I also find it hard to write extensively now as I do not think it works for me (and others), attention spans are short and in fact anyone interested enough can find plenty of information on internet easily. So, this is my lazy attempt, and it is very contrary, mainly because there is no shortage of writings about how good the report is and this is my attempt to inject some balance!

Not sure about you but I expect a report like the 5YFV to tell me what the problem is, what is working and what's not working and then set out the options. But it is silent on the most important problems facing us in the NHS in England – the elephants in the room have been ignored. Health and wellbeing gap is driven by the wealth gap and austerity is now killing people, the system is completely disorganised with no clarity about accountability and failed model of regulation, and 5 YFV takes for granted the argument that NHS cannot have money when much of NHS funding ills can be addressed by stopping privatisation/markets and indeed by recovering taxes from corporates and so on – but these important issues do not get any/serious look in.



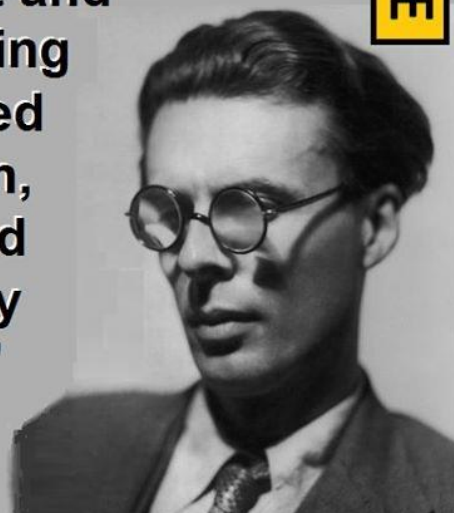
How about reading this analysis to explain what's wrong, for example <http://www.scribd.com/doc/251397369/100-Tory-NHS-Failures-Evidence-Based-With-Links-to-Verify-Data>

What the report has done is confirmed what Aldous Huxley said – and the fact that Simon Stevens seems to have so easily bridged the political divide (having been the advisor to Tony Blair and now with the Coalition) shows how neoliberalism has taken firm hold in our politics and in the NHS. We keep talking about the NHS being the best system in the world and yet completely ignoring what makes/made it so and are constantly changing it for the worse – I am dismayed at the lack of serious differences between the main parties on the NHS.

**"By means of ever more effective methods of mind-manipulation, the democracies will change their nature; the quaint old forms -- elections, parliaments, Supreme Courts and all the rest -- will remain.**

**The underlying substance will be a new kind of totalitarianism. All the traditional names, all the hallowed slogans will remain exactly what they were in the good old days. Democracy and freedom will be the theme of every broadcast and editorial. Meanwhile the ruling oligarchy and its highly trained elite of soldiers, policemen, thought-manufacturers and mind-manipulators will quietly run the show as they see fit."**

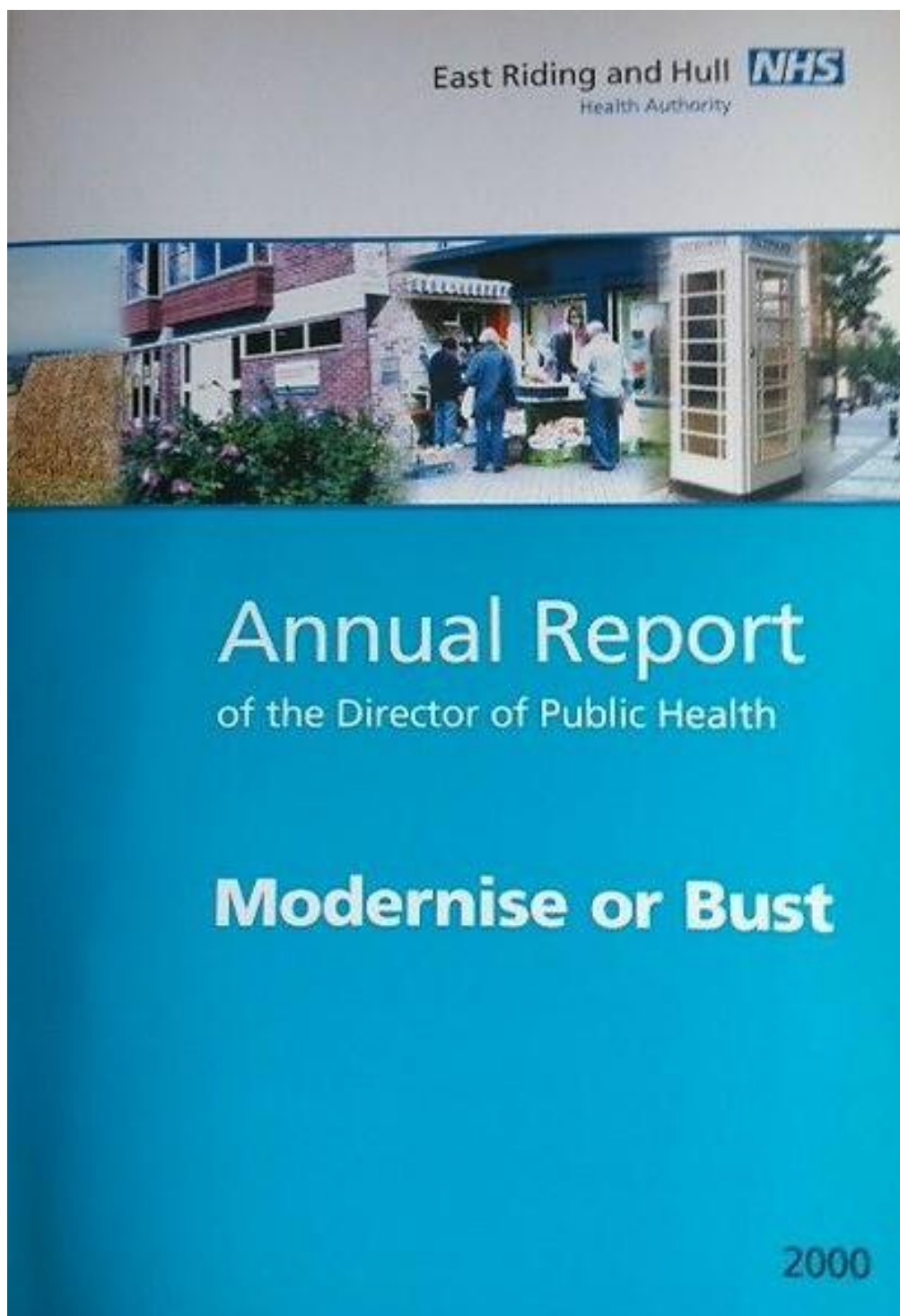
**Aldous Huxley**



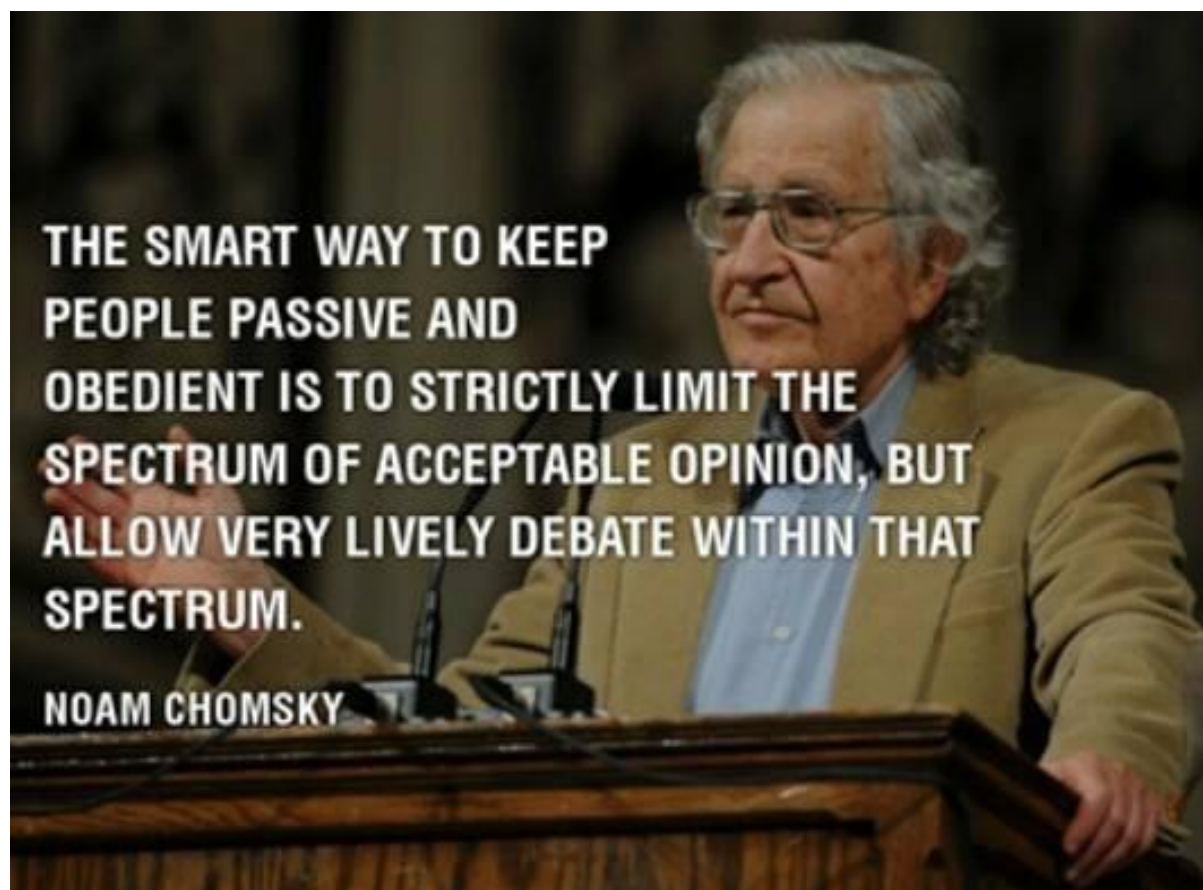
**ANOTHER ANGRY VOICE**

Indeed 5 YFV took me right back to its predecessor (in one sense) Modernisation Plan in 2000, when I had devoted my annual report as the Director of Public Health to the theme. I was politically correct enough in those days, managed to ignore the shortcomings and tried to run with whatever good elements there were (a skill I lost in later years and which then led to my redundancy). The similarities are remarkable, yes, there are a few good bits in 5 YFV but I struggle to reconcile aspiration with reality: staff wellbeing or partnership with voluntary sector are mentioned, for example, without acknowledgement of the whistleblowers concerns and very limited support services for staff (yes, we have the Francis Review but...) or the fact that most voluntary sector organisations struggle to compete given the byzantine procurement rules, and these highlight the need to go further and explain the how of 5 YFV. So, in one sense 5YFV is neither a complete analysis of the situation nor a blueprint for action. By the way, did you notice the writing style of not using verbs – a style that came to be identified with the New Labour speak!





But the best (*sic*) and almost the coup is that 5 YFV has been portrayed as being the only solution for the NHS, the best thing in town and we are being exhorted to get behind it. The latest articles in the HSJ in partnership with KPMG! (<http://www.hsj.co.uk/comment/forward-view-analysed-what-the-nhs-future-holds/5077805.article#.VKV5SCusVcE>) are a testimony to the brilliance of the 'Mind Manipulators' – the debate has been seriously confined as Naom Chomsky points out. The chance to discuss the bigger issues about funding or about the NHS Reinstatement Bill (<http://www.nhsbill2015.org/>) and how the NHS is both conceptually and structurally not fit for purpose and needs a major overhaul will be side-lined.



Remember “Tough on crime and tough on causes of crime”? Time to get tough on causes of the problems of the NHS and health of the population, but I cannot see this happening any time soon or easily. We are not ready to review health services in the 21<sup>st</sup> century beyond the peripherals like genomics or IT, discuss state’s responsibilities for promoting health and welfare of its citizens or explore other and better options like the Cuban health system. We will keep tinkering at the edges whilst systematically destroying the NHS and the welfare state, and the next general election will again make NHS the political football even though the major players are on the same side!

But, never, never, never give up and so we must carry on talking, campaigning, doing our little bits in whatever way we can to (re) create the NHS that we are all proud of and want to have for ourselves, our families and friends and for the society. I have not packed away my walking boots yet but could use some help with my feet – any chiropodists!

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**2 January 2015**

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## NOTE

Rajan Madhok is a former director of public health and medical director. He is politically neutral currently. He did the 300 miles NHS Jarrow march recently (<http://leadershipforhealth.com/999forthenhs/> ). His writings on the NHS are available in the compendium at [www.leadershipforhealth.com](http://www.leadershipforhealth.com)

I picked up some of the pictures on twitter and so thank (blame!) those who shared them – sorry did not keep note of their names. See the joys of twitter- join in!

Twitter: @R\_Madhok