

# A new era of transparency and openness?

We were promised in Labour's Manifesto a new era of transparency. The Labour leader came over as a virtuous puritan, out to clean the stables and run an austerity policy. Modest additions to spending would be precisely costed and specifically funded by a small tax rise here or a small spending cut there. It was not exciting or uplifting, but some people liked it whilst many others wanted to show their disapproval of the then government.

So what went wrong? Why are MPs and journalists told that they should not expect to know what is in the alleged £22 bn black hole we hear about continuously? Maybe one day the Treasury will allow us to peep, but not before the budget. We hear large uncosted and unfunded spending commitments being made as the government offers inflation busting pay awards to various public sector groups well above the pay inflation allowed for in the budget figures. Why is there no formal Treasury statement of cost and explanation of how it will be paid for? Why is there no Office of Budget Responsibility forecast and commentary as promised? The government is busy breaking the new law it is bringing in to make an OBR assessment essential for such events.

Why have various senior civil servants turned up as senior advisers or Ministers? What does that tell us about civil service impartiality? Why have donors turned up in jobs or with favoured passes and access?

Why are they agreeing to close down our primary steel making capacity before completing and publishing their steel strategy? What is the point of a strategy if you have no industry left? How are they allowing in the budgets for future revenues for the accelerated decline of the oil and gas industry? This is the industry which pays several times as much tax per pound of profit as anything else?

All the government says about anything is that it is all a mess thanks to the previous government. It also complains about all of us, alleging there is a societal black hole. Government is about tackling the problems before you. Normal governments explain the issues and then set about supplying the remedies. When they announce increased spending they cost it, get it approved and explain how it is being paid for. Most leaders try to point the country to a better tomorrow and take pride in what is working and is good. How much longer can this government keep up the bad mouthing of the country, the NHS, political groups they do not like, and the state of society?

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## Mr Draghi sets out why the EU is falling badly behind the US

I have long been asking why GDP per head is twice the EU level in the US. Those who want the U.K. to obey more EU laws and pay the EU more money never want to answer this or think it some fabricated Brexiteer question . Now Mr Draghi has written a long report saying that the EU this century has fallen badly behind. Its productivity is poor, its investment too small, its skew to making cars rather than digital products and services is impeding growth in real incomes and living standards.

Central to Mr Draghi's case ( as mine) is the EU – just like the U.K. in and out of the EU – has gone for dear energy whilst the US and China have gone for cheaper. He says EU electricity costs 2-3 times US and gas is a knock out 4-5 times US. China goes for cheap coal. He sets out the large extra costs of the EU's net zero policies which he supports.

So what are his remedies? He says the EU must impose more tariffs and the carbon border adjustment tax on imports to offset the advantage. That means higher prices for consumers. He says the EU must find 5% more of its GDP to invest every year. He says the EU must borrow more itself to pump prime the hundreds of billions of investment needed.

Germany and some other states are against the EU building up yet bigger debts. The U.K. by Brexit has avoided responsibility for its share of the Euro 800 bn they are already borrowing, dodging a Euro 120 bn bullet. The U.K. would be well advised to study Draghi's analysis of EU poor performance and move our policy on energy closer to the US one, as more affordable energy is crucial to industrial success.

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## Jon Moynihan 's new book "Return to Growth"

I went to Jon's launch yesterday in London. His book makes a strong case for lower taxes, fewer areas run by government and less regulation. He condemned the attacks on free speech and increasingly intrusive rules and bans on motorists.

He started his talk by pointing out there are now 8 bn people alive. Over all the years of human history there have been 109 bn in total, now dead. Multi billion populations are very recent. The average age of death was 30 for all those dead, lowered in part by a much higher level of infant and child mortality. he argued 80 bn of those died of disease. The reason life

expectancy has shot up so much is the huge advances in medical science with vaccines and antibiotics given us a much longer life. More people now die in older age of inflammatory conditions. Maybe medical science will make more breakthroughs there.

It is free enterprise that has taken scientific and technical advances and applied them to products that prolong our lives. It is that same combination that has given us the car, the plane, the digital Revolution, the food conservation and supply revolution.

The book shows how high living standards and faster growth go along with lower tax rates, controlled public spending and regulation limited to the most important. It is well worth a read. I do not agree with all its challenges to the much loved principle of free healthcare at the point of need or to some of welfare measures the U.K. has developed.

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## [A bizarre way to run a government](#)

Prime Ministers usually praise most of the things going on in the country they govern. They make proposals for improvement. They tell us things will be better tomorrow as we follow their lead.

Not this one. He tells us everything about the country and the government is bad. The NHS is broken. There is a societal black hole, meaning the people misbehave. The Treasury does not have enough money. There were "right wing" riots on the streets. He stresses it is all the fault of the last Conservative government.

It is true many former Conservative voters stayed at home or voted Reform because they were very critical of the last government. They did not go and vote Labour because they thought Labour would make things worse. They are angry about the way the Starmer government runs down the U.K. as well as about the last not very conservative government. They are angry that his changes in his own words will make things worse. They are angry about fuel benefit cuts, about bloated public sector pay awards for well paid train drivers, about more overseas aid, more so called green investment, the continuing failure to control migration, more poor performance of public services and nationalised industries.

The PM may find it is easy to drive down the low polls for his party and himself but more difficult to pull them up again when has punished us enough. Normal PMs do not behave like this as they realise the public doesn't like gloom and does expect a government who identifies actual or made up holes to fill them in quickly. Labour won a record majority on a very low share of the vote. It was no endorsement of Labour but a scream of anger by Conservative voters that their party had let them down badly over stopping the boats, controlling migration, keeping tax down and avoiding inflation.

The latest polls show Labour down to 30%. They show Reform and the Conservatives together well ahead, but also the big split between the two would still leave both individually trailing Labour. Since the election both Opposition parties are up, Reform by the more. Conservatives still lead Reform.

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## [Can we be proud of British history? 10 things to be proud of in the UK's past](#)

Are you as fed up as I am with left wing parties and many in the media constantly running down our past? They demand apologies for historical bad conduct only from Britain. They rightly condemn slavery but do not insist on statute removal of Roman artefacts, a society based on violent conquest, slavery and an army of occupation. They ignore the U.K. role in ending the slave trade. So here to provide balance and perspective are 10 things to be proud of in U.K. history.

1. Great Britain has pioneered many crucial technological advances that have raised world living standards. There was the steam engine, factory organisation, the jet engine, vaccines and many great products from the Industrial revolution to the worldwide web.
2. The U.K. pioneered universal suffrage and democratic government through the Glorious Revolution to the great Reform Bill and votes for women.
3. The U.K. stood alone against Germany's attempt to govern Europe with an army of conquest, later joining with the USA and USSR to end the tyranny and genocide.
4. The U.K. has made a huge cultural contribution to the world. Shakespeare is the world's greatest dramatist. His plays are acted and filmed worldwide today because they capture eternal truths about mankind.
5. The U.K. pioneered relief of poverty from the provision of money under the early Poor laws by parishes through to the post 1945 comprehensive pension and benefits system.
6. The U.K. has stood up for the self determination of peoples and rescued smaller countries from invasion and aggression by violent neighbours. The U.K. sided with the Netherlands against Spanish occupation, defeated Napoleon's efforts to invade many European countries and helped liberate Kuwait.
7. The U.K. has been a leading force for free trade worldwide.
8. The U.K. invented or developed football, cricket, rugby and lawn tennis as

global sports, bringing much entertainment to a world in need of joy.

9. The U.K. developed modern farming techniques from selective breeding to higher yielding crops to help eliminate starvation. .The U.K. has a big Aid programme helping bring improved agriculture to hungry countries.

10. Great Britain founded the east coast settlements in North America that fathered the USA, the most powerful and innovative nation on earth. The drivers of US independence based their thoughts and actions on Great Britain's political theories and structures.