

Maybe Osborne's quite happy a double dip that provides ...

Published: January 13, 2026, 5:24 am

I thought this comment from Ivan Horrocks in response to my blog post from earlier today [to be found here](#) was too good not to share more widely:

I do wonder if part of the issue you and many other commentators have with Osborne and co is that you/we are ascribing to them a primary economic policy aim which is in fact not their primary aim. We assume that Osborne and co's primary concern (aim) is to get the economy growing again. And to be fair, this is the impression that Osborne and co promote.

But what if their primary aim is in fact to (try to) fundamentally restructure economic (and social) relations in this country (and beyond if they can) and that their belief is that to do that "austerity" is an essential tool. It can be argued that this is similar to the approach Thatcher employed between 1979-83. For example, under the cover of "austerity" we are witnessing a massive fire sale of public assets, planning laws are being relaxed, the NHS is being "restructured", and so on and on, all to the considerable benefit not to the "big society" but to big business and big finance.

My conclusion would be that the "austerity" approach — and the narrative that's been developed to support it — will not be dropped, regardless of any arguments put by the IMF, UN, you, Martin Wolf or anyone else — or the production of data that shows how dire the economic situation of this country is — until Osborne and his supporters are confident that their primary policy aim is sufficiently entrenched to withstand efforts to stop or undo it. Again, we see this approach reflected in the behaviour of Thatcher's first government. And, furthermore, it resonates with the reported view of senior/influential Tory thinkers, that the first Blair government wasted their first two years in power. In summary then, we could argue that Osborne and co have simply been very good at learning from history.

It's a depressing thought with a horrible resonance that makes it appear all too plausible.