

# Corbyn needs to make the case for the private sector be...

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A commentator [on this blog yesterday suggested that](#):

*Corbyn's the best leader we've had in a long time and if we all got behind him we could completely transform this country.*

That is a contentious claim. But it made me think. As a result I re-read the introduction to my 2011 book, [The Courageous State](#). There I argued that:

*As I argue in this book, we could have a Courageous State. A Courageous State is populated by politicians who believe in government. They believe in the power of the office they hold. They believe that office exists for the sake of the public good. They know what that public good is. They think it is their job to help each and every person in their country to achieve their potential — something that is unique to each person and which at the same time is a characteristic we all have in common. And they believe they can command the resources to fulfil this task — whether through tax or other means — and that they should command those resources so that we as a country can each achieve, both individually and collectively.*

*We have not had politicians like that for a long time. These are politicians with the courage to work out when the market is absolutely the right mechanism for delivering what society needs — and which backs those who wish to partake in that market openly, honestly and accountably by providing them with the environment they need so that they can flourish, while delivering all the resources required to curtail those intent on market abuse.*

*And they are politicians who are as capable of deciding when the market can never deliver — because it is wholly unsuitable for the task in hand — meaning that it is the job of the state to ensure that what society needs and wants society shall get, at the lowest possible cost for the highest possible outcome for the benefit of all involved.*

*These are politicians of integrity. Who will carry their conviction with pride. Who will stand up to those who get in their way, not by ignoring them and not by bullying them*

*but by presenting them with reasoned argument that shows that these politicians have worked out what they are doing, and why, and how they mean to achieve it.*

*I suspect a great many of us want such politicians. Politicians who are strong and effective; people we can believe in and who inspire but who we know we can hold to account through the democratic process. Politicians we can hold up as examples. Politicians with the ability to admit mistakes and move on. Politicians who we are willing to follow. Politicians of the stature of those who built the post-war consensus in the UK, for example, which proves that such people can exist.*

I stress: those are not my sole criteria. My focus was in the economy. The environment, equality and other issues are addressed elsewhere. They are then necessary but not sufficient conditions to identify the leadership we need, in my opinion.

Does Corbyn meet those criteria? I wish he did. I have to say I am not convinced. There is too much ambiguity as yet for it to be said that he does. And on principles I do not think there is a need for ambiguity, even (and perhaps especially) when in opposition.

I do not dispute Corbyn has merit. I shared platforms with him because he did so. But has he the clarity of thinking to lead real transformation of our economy? Not yet, I suggest, and not least because he has not yet made the case for the private sector which is the necessary corollary of that for the state. At least I have not seen it.

Do that, and the lines are drawn in a way that make it harder for opponents to attack. That's why this is important.