# **STATE OF HATE 2025 Reform Rising And Racist Riots**





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#### **STATE OF HATE 2025**

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#### **STATE OF HATE 2025**



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# **EDITORIAL**

Welcome to our **State of Hate 2025** report, the most comprehensive and analytical guide to the state of far-right extremism in Britain today.

This year's report arrives against the backdrop of an increasingly confident and resurgent far right. It reflects on a year in which we have seen the greatest-ever extent of racist rioting in Britain, as well as the electoral rise of Reform UK and the largest far-right demo in central London. Supporting all this is the radical-right ecosystem, which is continuing to grow through an array of podcasts, Substacks and social media videos.

Last year's report featured the radical right within the Conservative Party. Twelve months on, this is much diminished. Many right-wing MPs lost their seats in the general election; others subsequently defected to Reform. Now the radical right is firmly encamped outside the Conservative Party.

The prospects for 2025 look equally tough. Internationally, Donald Trump is back in the White House and the AfD secured a strong second place in the German federal elections. In the UK, Reform is now leading in many polls and will seek to win some county council and mayoral elections this May. They hope that strong performances in these elections will be followed by more defections from the Conservatives.

Much of our focus is now turning to how we defeat the far right and, as always, for HOPE not hate that means intelligence-led campaigning. This State of Hate report helps us understand the British far right and this, coupled with our data analysis of the Reform voter, gives us a route map for action.

Away from the ballot box, the threat of farright terrorism remains very real. Last year, 23 far-right activists and sympathisers were convicted of terror-related offences, several of them teenagers. Just as worryingly, we are also seeing rising numbers of young men who through ideologically fluid means – picking elements of different and even contradictory ideologies – are drawn together through a desire to commit extreme violence. The Southport killer fitted this mould, as does the 764 cult exposed in this report.

Given the political rise of the far right, it is vital we challenge the quite understandable mood of pessimism amongst many progressive people. While the far right's actions and confidence can feel intimidating, we must remember that there are more of us than them. As our polling in this report shows, the majority of British people want to live in a multicultural society, and three quarters want the government to improve community cohesion.

There is much work to do, but armed with the information contained within this report and the determination and resilience that are intrinsic to HOPE not hate, we can and we will win.

I'd like to finish by thanking everyone who has contributed to this report and the thousands of others who donate every month to our **HOPE Action Fund** – it is because of your support that we can produce in-depth publications such as this.

If you are not yet a member of our fund, then please do sign up. For as little as the cost of a cup of coffee or a sandwich every month, you can help us continue our vital work, positively affecting communities up and down the country.

With difficult times ahead, please keep the faith. Our work is needed more than ever.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The far right poses its biggest political threat in Britain since World War Two. At the ballot box, on the streets and online, the far right – in all its guises – is increasingly confident, assertive and growing.

With Donald Trump returning to the Presidency of the United States and Elon Musk, the world's richest man, financially and ideologically supporting the British far right, we can only assume that the threat will grow in 2025.

#### **REFORM UK**

Britain faces a genuine far-right political threat for the first time in our history, in the form of Reform UK:

- Reform UK received 4.2m votes in the 2024 general election, a 14.3% vote share
- Support for Reform UK has continued to grow since the election and now regularly tops opinion polls
- The party currently has 218,000 members and, with an influx of money and experienced political campaigners, is becoming an increasingly professional outfit

#### RIOTS

2024 saw the worst race riots in 100 years, following the murder of three young girls in Southport by 18-year-old Axel Rudakubana:

- Violence broke out in 18 towns and cities across England
- While activists from known far-right organisations were involved in the trouble, most incidents emerged from localised, post-organisational far-right networks
- The riots were fuelled by disinformation and the widely reported claim across the entire far right that the authorities were covering up the Islamist motives of the attacker. Despite Axel Rudakubana not being a Muslim, much of the far right still refer to him as such
- HOPE not hate identified the man behind the Southport Wake Up Telegram group, which played a central role in stirring up the violence. He was recently imprisoned for seven years

#### **TOMMY ROBINSON**

Former EDL leader Stephen Lennon, better known as Tommy Robinson, continues to be the most influential far-right activist outside Reform:

- Lennon held a demonstration of 30,000 to 40,000 people in London in July, the largest far-right protest ever
- Lennon has acquired more than one million followers on X, and his tweets on the day of the big demonstration were seen by 58m people
- He was imprisoned for 18 months in late October for contempt of court
- He received support from Elon Musk, including funding

#### RADICAL RIGHT ECOSYSTEM

Fuelling the British far right is a growing, increasingly confident and well-resourced radical-right ecosystem, which spans traditional media, new media and a burgeoning number of individual actors:

- GB News is increasingly the mouthpiece for Reform UK
- A growing number of radical-right activists are leaving platforms like GB News to establish their own media outlets, backed by donations and subscriptions from supporters
- Academic-turned-activist Matt Goodwin is playing an increasingly important role in supporting Reform, backed by a Substack with more than 70,000 followers

#### TERRORISM

Far-right terrorism continues to pose a major threat in the UK:

- Twenty-three people who were far-right sympathisers were convicted under terrorist legislation
- A new violent cult called 764, closely linked to the nazi Satanist group Order of Nine Angles, is active in Britain
- A growing number of extremely violent young men are becoming increasing ideologically fluid, drawing inspiration from a diverse array of extremes in order to justify their thoughts and acts of violence. The Southport killer Axel Rudakubana is a case in point

#### DEMOCRACY

The public continue to be downbeat about the state of democracy and politics in the UK:

- 40% of Britons in a poll of 23,000 support a "strong and decisive leader who has the authority to override or ignore parliament" over a representative parliamentary democracy
- 68% do not believe that politicians listen to people like them, with just 9% believing they do
- The more pessimistic people are about their own lives, the more likely they are to support Reform UK, to believe multiculturalism is failing, and to oppose immigration

# OVERVIEW: REFORM RISING AND RACISTS RIOTING

At the ballot box, on the streets and online, Britain's far right is posing its most serious threat since the Second World War. JOE MULHALL and NICK LOWLES review the past year.



2024 has been difficult for all of us who are concerned about the far right. Two billion people went to the polls around the world for regional, national or international elections, making it an important year for the direction of global politics, and many ended up returning right-wing, anti-immigrant and chauvinist parties and leaders.

Most impactful has been the re-election of Donald Trump, who since his inauguration this January has hastily set about implementing a dramatic far-right agenda, undermining the US Constitution at home and the transatlantic alliance abroad. Just weeks ago, in a move that would have been previously inconceivable, the US sided with Russia, Belarus and North Korea to pass resolutions on the conflict in Ukraine.

2024 was also a dangerous year in Europe. In March,

the far-right Chega party quadrupled its parliamentary representation in Portugal; in May, the ruling party in Croatia confirmed a coalition with the far-right Homeland Movement; in June, the far-right National Rally won the first round of the French elections by a clear margin before being defeated in the second; and in September, the extreme Alternative For Germany (AfD) won the most votes in the east German state of Thuringia and came second in Saxony. That same month, the far-right Freedom Party of Austria placed first with 28.8% of the vote.

As it now stands, seven EU member states – Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovakia – have far-right parties within government.

At May's European Elections there was more bad news, when the far right secured 150 of the 720



# **ELON MUSK:** A DANGER TO DEMOCRACY



At the turn of the year, Elon Musk, the world's richest man, waded into British politics with a stream of posts about grooming gangs, freedom of speech and immigration. He even publicly backed Tommy Robinson and called for Reform to have a new leader when Nigel Farage failed to do likewise.

Despite being a latecomer to team Trump, Musk still managed to spend almost \$250m helping him get elected. Buoyed up by this success, he clearly thinks he can influence elections around the world.

In addition to the UK, Musk became an active supporter of the far-right Alternative for Germany ahead of the German elections.

It seems almost certain that Musk will financially support Reform in the future, either directly through a donation or more likely indirectly through incessant posts on X, adverts and manipulating the algorithms to ensure people see more Reform content.

However, Musk's interventions could well be double-edged for Reform. While it will undoubtedly bring huge attention to the party, his actions are also likely to elicit a reaction too. Polling by HOPE not hate reveals that more people in Britain dislike Musk than like him, and most people here are appalled at the idea of the world's richest man trying to influence the outcome of our political process.



available seats. While this was less than some commentators feared, far-right parties still topped the polls in five countries and came second in a further three.

Furthermore, 2025 also got off to a worrying start, with the AfD coming second in Germany's Bundestag elections, winning 20% of the votes and 152 seats.

Sadly, we live in a world where, once again, the call for universal human rights is increasingly rejected and consciously undermined. This is manifesting as an assault on liberal democracy, the system built on the concept that every human being has inherent dignity and universal rights.

#### **ON THE MARCH IN BRITAIN**

Until recently, it was still common to find newspaper articles and ill-informed media commentators who spoke about the far right as if it were a problem that happened elsewhere. Yet HOPE not hate has always worked to inform and educate about the very real danger of the far right here in the UK. Britain faces the same fundamental challenge from the far right as many of our neighbours and allies.

In 2023, we raised the alarm about how far-right politics was at the time growing within and around the Conservative Party, rather than as a distinct radical or far-right alternative.

In 2024, this changed with three major events.



#### THE RISE OF REFORM UK

At 10pm on 4 July 2024, the night of the general election, all those worried about the rising far right took a sharp intake of breath as the exit poll predicted Reform UK would win an unprecedented 13 seats. When the votes were finally all counted and the party had only won five, many were relieved.

Yet this result would have been inconceivable just a month before. The party had underperformed at the May local elections, picking up just two councillors. With Richard Tice as leader, Reform looked unthreatening in the general election polls. This all changed when Nigel Farage re-entered the fray and replaced Tice as leader. By the day of the election, it was clear that Reform was likely to have a good night.

With 4.1 million votes – 14.3% of the total – the result represents the largest ever vote share for a far-right party at a general election. Reform came second in 98 constituencies, 89 of which were won by Labour, including large swathes of the North East, Midlands and South Wales, and gained above 20% of the vote in 148. Newly crowned leader Nigel Farage scored a convincing win in Clacton, taking 46.2% of the vote and a majority of 8,405 over the Conservative incumbent.

One of the most troubling aspects about Reform's success is that it was achieved with very little party infrastructure. During the election, the party lacked a significant activist base and had very few functioning branches. Despite its lack of professional ground game consisting of organised activists targeting constituencies informed with data insights, it still came away with over 14% of the vote.

Since the election, Reform has worked quickly to set up hundreds of new branches, with more being created every week. These new "pilot branches" are being populated by a rapidly growing number of activists, with the party now claiming it has over 219,000 members.

The party's rising membership is mirrored by a similar rise in the polls, with it regularly topping opinion polls over the last few weeks. It will enter the 2025 county council elections in confident mood, hoping to do well everywhere, but especially in Kent, County Durham, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire.

It will also be posing a serious challenge in the Greater Lincolnshire, Doncaster and Hull & East Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough mayoral elections, whilst it is currently pushing a recall petition in Runcorn, where the current MP Mike Amesbury recently pleaded guilty to assault.

While it is too early to predict the outcome of these elections, Reform will be a very different opponent than it was in 2024. Bigger, better funded and certainly more organised.

The rise of Reform UK has posed an almost existential threat to the radical right in the Conservative Party. With most of the MPs we defined in last year's report as being radical right having lost their seats in the general election and with a few even defecting to Reform, the hard right in the Conservative Party have been left marginalised and demoralised. The arena for ideas that was once occupied around forums such as National Conservatism appear to have withered as the energy is now outside the party.

Reform's rise also has implications for the traditional far right. While groups like Britain First, Patriotic Alternative and the Homeland Party fight it out to be the dominant racial nationalist party in the UK, all will struggle to make any electoral headway as long as Reform is doing well. That said, as this report highlights, Homeland is slowly but surely asserting dominance over the others, though at present its electoral threat continues to be marginal.

The one group that does hope to exploit Reform's attempts to become more respectable for slightly more moderate voters is UKIP, which has been pushing a far harder line on immigration and Islam. Now under the leadership of Nick Tenconi, UKIP is increasingly aligning itself to Tommy Robinson, with several of the former English Defence League (EDL) leader's associates now on the party's executive.

However, there is little evidence that Tenconi is cutting through with Reform voters and his aggressive style of politics is winning few friends.

#### **TOMMY ROBINSON RETURNS**

On 27 July, just weeks after the general election, Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson) held a vast far-right demonstration in central London, attracting as many as 30,000 people. This was the largest farright demonstration seen in the UK for decades.

Only recently, it had seemed Lennon had become

an increasingly marginal figure. Plagued by legal and personal problems, he was spending much of his time abroad and had a fraction of the influence he once enjoyed. This changed dramatically in 2024, as he once again became a national figure of discussion, his name sung by enormous crowds, his face splashed across national newspapers.

At times during the July protest, there were also more than 500,000 people watching Lennon's livestream online. While marching, Lennon thanked Elon Musk for returning his account on X. Since getting his account back, Lennon has amassed 700,000 followers and now reaches millions of people with his content.

Remarkably, just 48 hours before he was due in court to face a hearing related to the contempt of court proceedings, he decided to broadcast the whole of his libellous film *Silenced* to the massed crowds on vast screens in Trafalgar Square. "Now you can take me to court," he screamed from the stage.

On 28 October, Lennon admitted committing contempt of court by repeating the false allegations against the Syrian refugee Jamal Hijazi. Lennon received an 18-month custodial sentence, with the judge stating that the breaches of the injunction were not "accidental, negligent or merely reckless" and the custodial threshold was "amply crossed".

Lennon will not be back on the streets until the summer, but his supporters have events planned calling for his freedom and a major demonstration is already being organised to mark his release. With the backing of Musk and rafts of media coverage over recent months, he will emerge from prison with a higher profile than ever.

#### **RACIST RIOTS**

Just weeks after the shocking general election results and days after Stephen Lennon's massive London demonstration, the UK erupted in racist rioting.

The week of 29 July to 5 August 2024 witnessed the largest outbreak of far-right rioting and disorder in the post-war period. Over a seven-day period, a spate of extraordinarily violent far-right protests upturned towns and cities across the country, many of which spilled over into full-blown riots.

Far-right actors capitalised on the horrific killing of three children in Southport, Merseyside on 29 July, with a blizzard of disinformation that fed into a wave of protests across the country. These quickly became disconnected from the specifics of Southport and were fuelled by a broad anti-migrant, anti-Muslim, anti-multiculturalism and anti-government agenda.

While some protests passed uneventfully, others saw mobs of masked thugs hurling missiles at police, fighting with counter-protesters, shouting far-right slogans and physically attacking minoritised ethnic communities. Vehicles were set ablaze, homes vandalised and shops opportunistically looted.

Others laid siege to mosques, and asylum accommodation centres in Rotherham and Tamworth were subjected to arson attempts – to the cheers of onlookers – while residents were still inside.

HOPE not hate identified figures linked to numerous far-right organisations present at the protests and disturbances, including individuals from the now-



defunct English Defence League, Patriotic Alternative, North East Infidels, North West Infidels, Britain First, National Rebirth Party, Blood & Honour, British Democrats, some of the UK's foremost "migrant hunters" and more.

However, these events were primarily a product of the "post-organisational" far right. Most of the disturbances were planned organically, often by local people unaligned to any formal organisation, but who were plugged into decentralised far-right networks online. The shared slogans, language and iconography were owed to the fact that their organisers were often active in overlapping online spaces.

At the time of writing, at least 1,600 individuals have been arrested, more than 800 charged and several hundred already convicted and serving sentences. While the riots have quickly faded from the news cycle, the damage inflicted on communities across the country will take years to heal.

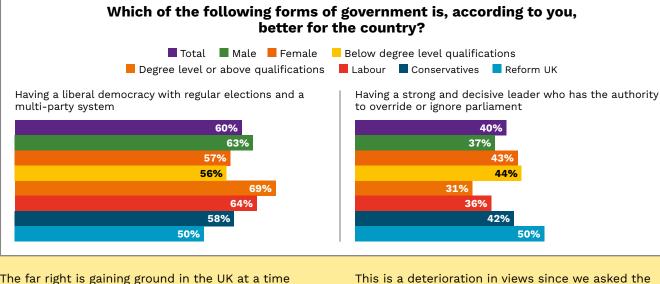
The riots fizzled out after a fortnight, but there was a lasting impact on public opinion. As this report reveals, attitudes towards community cohesion and multiculturalism worsened.

While the riots quite obviously captured the attention of the media, far-right violence and terrorism continued unabated. During 2024, 23 individuals influenced by far-right ideology were convicted and/ or sentenced for terror-related offences. While most were convicted for possessing and/or disseminating terrorist material, some were involved in more serious offences. These included 19-year-old Mason Reynolds from Brighton, who drew up a plan to suicide-bomb a synagogue and was an admin of a Telegram channel which venerated far-right terrorists and shared explosive-making and 3D gun-making manuals.

One of the emerging trends we are witnessing in the UK is the growth of ideologically fluid young men who seem obsessed with extreme violence. There are a growing number of Telegram channels where Islamist Jihadists, nazis and Satanists all mix – united in their love of violence. In this report we highlight the 764 cult, which appears heavily influenced by the nazisatanist Order of Nine Angles. Two teenage Britons linked to this cult were convicted under terrorism legislation last year.

Certainly the most prominent example ideologically fluid young men who seem obsessed with extreme violence was Axel Rudakubana, the 18-year-old who murdered the three girls in Southport. While the media focused heavily on the Al Qaeda manuals he had downloaded, he had also expressed interest in school shootings, the London Bridge attack, the IRA, MI5 and the Middle East.

#### **A FRAGILE DEMOCRACY**



The far right is gaining ground in the UK at a time when the public have serious doubts about the state of democracy. In fact, the far right is gaining ground precisely because the public have serious doubts about the state of our democracy.

Only 60% of Britons, in a poll of 23,000 people, support "Having a liberal democracy with regular elections and a multi-party system", whilst 40% back "Having a strong and decisive leader who has the authority to override or ignore parliament".

#### **ANGER AND DISILLUSIONMENT**

2024 removed any doubt that Britain has a major problem with the far right. After seeing the biggest vote share achieved at a general election by a far-right party, the largest street demonstration in years or the most widespread far-right violence of the postwar period, it is clear that there is currently a magma chamber of anger and disillusionment in the UK, manifesting as fear, prejudice and hatred. These three major events show the various ways that far-right hate can manifest: at the ballot box, through street protest and via extreme violence.

But all this doesn't happen in a vacuum. Many people are continuing to struggle with the cost-of-living crisis, and their trust that mainstream parties can solve their problems is low. People are supporting Reform and right-wing narratives for a whole variety of reasons. Some, of course, are fuelled by antiimmigrant bigotry, but many others are economically insecure and so believe the rhetoric that others are benefitting at their expense.

Polling from HOPE not hate finds a direct correlation between pessimism and support for Reform. Twice as many people who are pessimistic about the future, think Britain is in decline and think their lives are going to be worse than those of their parents would vote Reform than would vote for either Labour or the Conservatives.

This same group of pessimistic voters are much

same question in our two previous mega polls in 2022 and 2023, when 63% backed a liberal democracy in each poll and 37% chose a strong leader.

Opinions were even more stark amongst particular groups. Those who say that they would vote Reform are split 50/50, whilst Conservative voters break 58% for liberal democracy and 42% for a strong leader. Liberal Democrat voters are the most supportive for democracy, with an 80/20 split.

less likely to believe the political system works, and much more likely to have a negative attitude towards immigrants and to believe that multiculturalism is not working.

#### WHAT NOW?

Against such a far-right resurgence at home and abroad, it might seem sensible to take a defensive position – to protect what we have and hope we are not forced to concede more ground. However, with the status quo being discredited in the eyes of many, and indeed being part of the problem, HOPE not hate, together with its partners, needs to develop strategies that offer practical and realisable political and policy alternatives and changes to our institutions and the way we do democracy.

At the same time, we must build a network of activists who can act against the far right in their localities, whilst also building resilience and sharing good practice amongst councils and community groups.

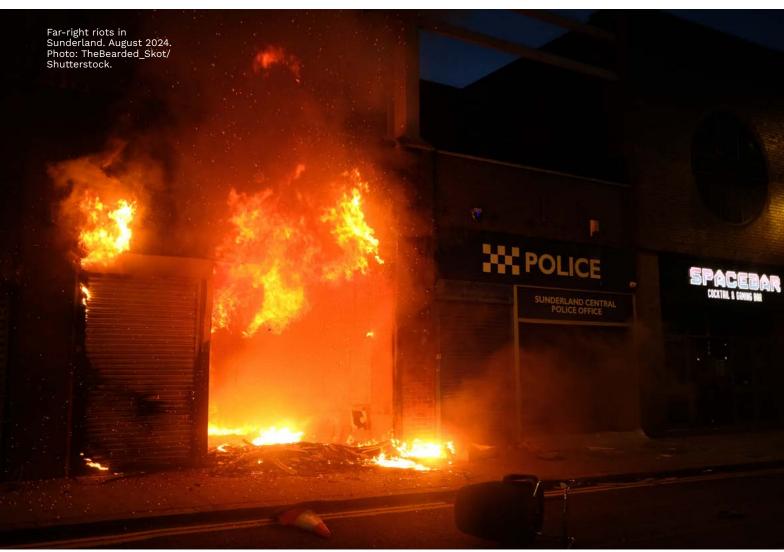
Fundamentally, whilst the majority of British people continue to reject the politics of hate, we will continue to see the far right grow unless we mobilise these people. So while there are some things that only governments can do, there is plenty for us all to do – individually and collectively.

If 2024 was a year of far-right resurgence, then this year has to be the year we begin to organise the fight back.

200

Southport, Merseyside, 30 July 2024. A protestor prepares to throw a brick towards riot police. Photo: Ian Hamlett/Shutterstock.

# **THE SUMMER OF CHAOS** FAR-RIGHT RIOTS ERUPT ACROSS BRITAIN



#### **By MARCUS NORTH**

IN THE SUMMER of 2024, the UK endured the most significant and widespread spate of racist rioting in the post-war period.

Opportunistic far-right actors capitalised on the horrific killing of three children in Southport, Merseyside on 29 July, and the subsequent riot outside a mosque in the town the next day, by overwhelming social media with disinformation and calling a flurry of protests across the country on a broad anti-migrant, anti-Muslim and anti-multiculturalism agenda.

What followed was a wave of startlingly violent farright demonstrations in numerous towns and cities across England and Northern Ireland, nine of which descended into all-out riots. Mobs of thugs attacked police, fought with counter-protesters, hurled missiles, shouted far-right slogans, abused and physically attacked minoritised ethnic communities and, in some cases, set cars and buildings ablaze and engaged in opportunistic looting. In two of the most shocking incidents, sites of temporary migrant accommodation in Rotherham and Tamworth were subjected to arson attempts by feverish far-right gangs.

Great quantities of misinformation, alongside grisly footage of the violence, spread quickly on social media, propelling the disorder further. In some cases, gangs of men set upon people on the basis of their skin colour, or else vandalised or set fire to their vehicles and shops. Elsewhere, residential areas with



Oldham race riots of 2001

large immigrant communities were targeted with bouts of wanton vandalism, with doors kicked in and windows smashed.

The reaction from the government was forceful and swift. At the time of writing, at least 1,280 individuals have been arrested, more than 800 charged and several hundred already convicted and serving sentences. The overwhelming majority of sentences so far (with a few notable exceptions) have been between one and three years, generally for charges relating to violent disorder.

Throughout the decades since 1945 there have, of course, been other instances of major far-right violence and disorder. Examples since the turn of the millennium include the six-week Oldham race riots of 2001, the Dover riot of 2016 and the carnage brought to town after town (at great cost to the taxpayer) by the English Defence League (EDL) in the first part of the 2010s. However, the sustained level of violence during summer 2024, the number of people involved, and the sheer brutality of what took place is unparalleled in Britain in modern times.

The political period since the riots, both domestically and internationally, has not been tranquil. Nevertheless, given the chaos into which the country was plunged this summer, the speed at which the riots dropped from the news cycle is concerning.

For the far right, the riots were a disaster for several reasons. First, the mass arrests and imprisonment of activists pulled the rug from under the anti-migrant street movement, and acted as a major deterrent to others considering getting active. Second, polling in the aftermath of the riots has shown the public's contempt for the rioters, highlighting that when it comes to "optics" the riots have not served the far right well. Third, and related, is that for many people, the riots will have brought home the extent of the violent threat posed by the far right, as well as the harm caused by social media disinformation - something that is likely to hurt the far right, certainly in the shortto-medium term. And finally, the vast anti-fascist mobilisations around the country on 7 August, coupled with the abrupt cessation of far-right protests and the downbeat mood that swiftly set in within the movement, will serve as a reminder of the opposition to violent, far-right politics that still exists in Britain.

Still, many in the organised far right were buoyed by such an intense explosion of anti-Muslim and anti-migrant anger. For them, this spate of violence indicates that not only are their messages cutting through, but that there is potential in wider society for them to exploit.

#### A MANIFESTATION OF THE POST-ORGANISATIONAL FAR RIGHT

In many ways, the riots were a product of the modern, "post-organisational" UK far right. This has been a widely misunderstood feature of the riots, as blame for the disorder was initially laid at the door of the EDL (now nonexistent), or on far-right groups travelling into towns and cities to take part in violence, rather than locals.

Both of these explanations badly misconstrue the actual picture of events. Whilst figures from formal organisations did attend many riots and disturbances around the country – HOPE not hate has exposed the links between many convicted rioters and organised far-right groups, including Britain First, Patriotic Alternative, the National Rebirth Party, the North West Infidels and more – the events were overwhelmingly organised and populated by individuals unaligned to any formal far-right groups. This reflects the fact that traditional structures and organisations no longer hold the same level of importance or influence.

Modern technology and social media has enabled thousands of individuals to offer micro-donations of time, and sometimes money, to collaborate towards common political goals outside of traditional organisational structures. These networks lack formal leaders but rather have figureheads, often in the form of far-right social media influencers, such as Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson).



Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson)

The rioting exemplifies this shift in a number of ways. First, most organising appears to have been conducted organically through localised social media groups and by unaligned individuals. This will likely have led to a greater turnout than if the mobilisation effort had been helmed by a national far-right organisation, as local voices tend to increase the success of word-ofmouth advertising.

Second, many events organised in this manner lacked any clear leadership or structure beyond a meeting point and time. This meant that the traditional "march and speech" format of most far-right events was discarded, in favour of violence and destruction.

Finally, the manner in which the agenda shifted almost immediately from anger at Southport to a generalised anti-migrant, anti-Muslim message reflects the key preoccupations of the post-organisational far right. While there was no central organiser, the fact that many of the events recycled the same slogans – in particular, "Enough is Enough", "Stop the Boats" and "Save Our Children" – demonstrates their common wellspring.

Some commentators across the right have attempted to portray the lack of far-right organisational involvement in the rioting as evidence that the riots themselves were not "far right". This argument ignores this changed configuration of the UK's far right.

However, even setting this aside, the various actions throughout the riots – targeting mosques for damage, attempting to burn people alive in temporary migrant accommodation and inciting racial hatred online – were so heinous that anyone involved in them has rightly earned themselves the "far right" tag.

#### **"EVERY CITY NEEDS TO GO UP"**

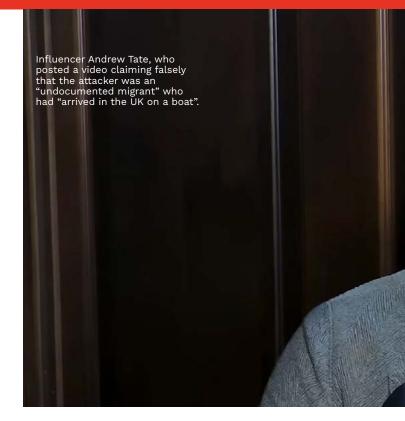
As is commonplace, immediately following the Southport attack an array of far-right and conspiratorial accounts began filling the perceived information vacuum with unverified assertions and inflammatory propaganda.

In particular, a dizzying number of claims and conspiracy theories about the attacker and their possible motives spread rapidly. This exacerbated an already challenging situation for the authorities and emergency services, to the benefit of nefarious actors intent on sowing chaos.

Chief among these was the misogynist influencer Andrew Tate, who posted a video claiming falsely that the attacker was an "undocumented migrant" who had "arrived in the UK on a boat". Tate broadcast these lies despite the fact that, by the time he had done so, the police had already publicised that the attacker was from Cardiff. This video was viewed over 12 million times before its eventual removal by X/Twitter.

Another such figure was the disgraced former actor Laurence Fox, who, in the immediate aftermath of the attack, posted a wholly uncorroborated claim that the man responsible was Muslim. Fox also stated: "We need to permanently remove Islam from Great Britain."

Such comments, alongside countless others, pushed tensions online to breaking point and fed into the offline carnage. This was further amplified by the likes of Daniel Thomas (AKA Danny Tommo), Tommy



Robinson's associate, who shared a video in the hours after the Southport attack claiming that "we need to do something very extreme" and "every city needs to go up". Two days later, Thomas would lead a demonstration at Whitehall at which more than 100 people would be arrested.

In making these videos and publishing unverified information, Thomas, Tate and many others began to shift the focus away from horror at the Southport attack and onto a broader anti-Muslim, anti-migrant, populist agenda. These became the unifying themes of the riots and disorder of the following days.

#### **CHEERLEADERS FOR CHAOS**

Revealingly, the disorder was actively encouraged by a number of individuals and groups who have spent years engaged in, or otherwise amplifying, targeted anti-migrant activism in many of the same towns subsequently beset by rioting.

The organised far right was divided over public support for the violence, with some in the movement wellaware of the possible repercussions of being seen to be encouraging or inciting violence.

One such figure was Mark Collett, the leader of fascist group Patriotic Alternative (PA), who made it clear that, despite supporting the "democratic right to protest" about the Southport murders, his followers ought not to attend demonstrations outside of mosques, calling them "counterproductive". Collett, his former PA colleague Alek Yerbury, and other more well-known figures of the far right also stressed the requirement for activists to not be arrested and imprisoned, due to the damage it would do to the movement in the short to medium term.

Others, however, were far less circumspect. One such individual was Steve Laws, the fascist influencer from Folkestone, Kent. As bricks and other projectiles battered police officers during the Southport riot, Laws, who has since joined the fascist Homeland



Party, tweeted: "Give 'em hell, lads", before celebrating the attack on the Southport mosque. Were it not for the police presence, this mosque would very likely have been subjected to serious criminal damage.

Furthermore, as far-right activists tried to incinerate migrants and staff trapped inside the Holiday Inn in Rotherham, Ashlea Simon, co-leader of the anti-Muslim Party Britain First, tweeted: "I don't think Rotherham residents came to play" followed by two "boom" emojis. Later that same day, Simon posted "BRITONS HAVE RISEN" flanked by flame emojis.

Laws and Simon have been involved in localised instances of anti-migrant activism for years. HOPE not hate has repeatedly raised concerns that this activism – both online and off – increases the likelihood of serious incidents at those same locations in the future. Responsibility for the disorder, then, sits not just with those who perpetrated the carnage up and down the country, but with an array of far-right figures who have actively inflamed tensions both during and prior.

#### REPERCUSSIONS

Labour's criminal justice response to the riots – coupled with the large anti-fascist turnout, especially on 7 August – did much to take the wind out of the far right's sails. The number of people arrested and imprisoned for their role in the riots has prompted an attempt by the far right to reshape the narrative, trying to distort public perceptions of the reality behind the sentences handed down.

This was an inevitable reaction which reveals an internal sense that the riots were a reputational disaster for the far right, something supported by polling, which has shown the widespread societal disgust at the violence. Nevertheless, the riots have revealed the extent of the violent racism simmering in British society, and its ramifications in communities up and down this country will take many years to fade.

# **THE LIVE-STREAM BLOWBACK**



An under-interrogated element of the riots is the role of live-streams on TikTok and other platforms and, for the creators, their negative externalities.

The overwhelming majority of those involved in the violence were men, and most of those convicted were men, predominantly under the age of 40, charged with crimes associated with violent disorder.

However, many women were also either on or close to the front lines during much of the disorder and, like many of their male counterparts, were engaged in live-streaming events. According to the innumerable live-streams witnessed during the period, it was clear that many young people were both propelled and excited by big viewing and engagement figures at riots around the country. This encouraged streamers to continue filming, and almost certainly motivated others to participate in covering the violence.

This had a dual outcome. On the one hand, these young people played a significant role in the promotion of the violence; a propaganda role that did much to raise tensions and inspire others to join the carnage. These streams were picked up and monitored enthusiastically both domestically and internationally, and were doubtless taken as aspirational by some.

On the other hand, this modern feature of social unrest has had an outcome diametrically opposed to what was intended. The ubiquity of phones and live-streams has acted like a drag net, collating a huge archive of evidence of wrongdoing. This has been a goldmine for authorities and activists, and has inevitably led to the arrest and conviction of many more of those involved than otherwise would have been the case.

# **11 DAYS THAT SHOOK BRITAIN: HOW**

The events of last summer's racist rioting spiralled out of control at an alarming pace. The far right brought violence and destruction to towns and cities across the country, in many places overwhelming the authorities, and temporarily destabilising the new Labour government. Below are the key flashpoints in the 11 days that shook Britain.

#### DAY 1 - MONDAY 29 JULY

**SOUTHPORT:** An horrific stabbing spree at a Taylor Swift-themed yoga and dance workshop in Southport leaves three young girls dead and several others, including two adults, wounded.

#### <u> Day 2 - Tuesday 30 July</u>

**SOUTHPORT:** A peaceful vigil takes place at Southport Town Hall from 5pm attended by several hundred people. Crowds gather close to Southport Mosque on St Luke's Road from 8pm. Quickly, the scene descends into chaos and a full-blown riot is underway. A police van is set alight and over 50 officers are injured after coming under sustained bombardment. The carnage continues until after 11pm.

#### DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY 31 JULY

MANCHESTER: A group of roughly 40 – some in balaclavas – congregate outside a Holiday Inn in Newton Heath, Manchester around 6pm. Objects are thrown at police, and asylum seekers at the hotel are verbally abused.

**HARTLEPOOL:** People begin gathering in the Murray Street area of **Hartlepool**, also around 6pm. Rioters launch projectiles at police and set a patrol car alight. Footage of what appears to be a random racist assault, and of rioters kicking in the front doors of people's homes, circulate online.

**ALDERSHOT:** Later that same evening, a breakaway group from a peaceful, 200-strong protest outside the Potters International Hotel in **Aldershot**, set upon the hotel, hurling projectiles and racial abuse. A police officer is injured.

**LONDON:** Tommy Robinson's associate, Daniel Thomas, holds an "Enough is Enough" demonstration on

**Whitehall** at 7pm. Over 100 are arrested for offences such as possession of offensive weapons, assaulting an emergency worker and affray.

#### <u> Day 5 – Friday 2 August</u>

**SUNDERLAND:** Large crowds gather in **Sunderland** from 7pm. A riot promptly ensues. Far-right slogans are chanted, and an attempted march on a mosque is blocked by riot police. A brawl breaks out and spirals into wider violence. A car is set ablaze and a Citizens Advice Bureau torched.

**LIVERPOOL:** At the same time, over in **Liverpool**, in one of the first counter-mobilisations, a few hundred anti-fascists gather to protect a local mosque from a planned far-right protest. The evening passes without serious incident.

#### DAY 6 – SATURDAY 3 AUGUST

**MANCHESTER:** Around mid-morning in **Manchester's** Piccadilly Gardens, a mob of a few hundred farright protesters clash with police. Fights break out, including an appalling group attack on a lone black man.

**BELFAST:** The morning also sees many hundreds of people – far-right protesters and anti-fascists confronting them – gather in the City Hall area of **Belfast**. An attempt to march on the Belfast Islamic Centre is thwarted by police. Violence and disorder break out elsewhere and several immigrant-owned businesses are attacked, including a cafe which is burnt down. Cars are set ablaze and clashes with police continue into the evening.

HANLEY, STOKE-ON-TRENT: Towards the middle of the day, hundreds of far-right activists in the Hanley area of **Stoke-on-Trent** attempt to reach two local mosques. Serious violence breaks out with a group of



# THE 2024 SUMMER RIOTS UNFOLDED

local Muslim men, and between far-right rioters and police. A false report that two men have been stabbed by local Muslims circulates online, sending tensions skyrocketing around the country.

**HULL:** A few thousand protesters amass in **Hull's** Victoria Square for a static demonstration in the early afternoon, before a mobilisation towards a site of temporary migrant accommodation. Sustained rioting follows as riot police battle mobs of young men, and thugs and vandals roam the streets. A car driven by a "foreigner" is set upon in an attack resembling an attempted lynching. Fires are set ablaze and looting takes place down the High Street.

**LIVERPOOL:** In the afternoon, a rally in **Liverpool** city centre spills into disorder that continues long into the night, as rioters attempt to force their way to another pre-announced meeting point outside a mosque on County Road. A large group of men attack an Islamic leaflet stall in the city centre. A group approaches the mosque, numerous fireworks are launched at police and a newly-built local library is set on fire.

**BLACKPOOL:** Close to 1,000 far-right activists clash with police on **Blackpool** seafront in the midafternoon sun, throwing objects and engaging in bouts of racist chanting. The demonstration coincides with the Rebellion punk festival happening in the town, leading to confrontations between anti-fascist giggoers and the far right.

**BRISTOL:** Ugly scenes break out in **Bristol** in the evening as far-right activists mobilise in Castle Park and engage in skirmishes with police and anti-fascists. Later, anti-fascists bravely position themselves between far-right thugs and the entrance to a hotel which was being used to temporarily house asylum seekers – fists and objects rain down, but they hold firm.

**Events also took place in:** Leeds, Portsmouth, Blackburn, Preston, Leicester and Nottingham

#### DAY 8 – SUNDAY 4 AUGUST

**ROTHERHAM:** Between 700 and 1,000 far-right protesters, a few of whom are accompanied by small children, gather outside the Holiday Inn in Manvers, **Rotherham**, from around midday, with some breaking windows at will. Riot police are quickly overwhelmed, and retreat under a hail of objects. A group of around 100 smash their way into the hotel and push a wheelie bin inside, which is promptly set alight. With support from neighbouring forces, the police eventually regain control, though with many officers sustaining injury. Subsequently, officers involved at Rotherham reported that they believed they were going to die during the carnage.

**MIDDLESBROUGH:** That afternoon, the situation in **Middlesbrough** intensifies into yet another riot, as mobs of masked men – some teenagers – maraud around residential areas, smashing windows of houses



and targeting vehicles for destruction. Police lines also come under bombardment, roadblocks are set up and a group of thugs stop cars at a four-way junction to check if the drivers are "white and English".

**TAMWORTH:** As evening arrives, the Holiday Inn in **Tamworth** becomes the target of another mob attack as several hundred men, women and children congregate outside. Hostilities with police ensue, before terrible acts of arson and intimidation unfold. Masked rioters smash windows and throw petrol bombs, scorching a side entrance hallway. Racist slogans like "fuck p\*\*\*s" and "get out England" are sprayed on the wall of the hotel.

**Events also took place in:** Bolton, Solihull, Sheffield, Weymouth, Cardiff, Aldershot and Lancaster

#### <u> Day 9 - Monday 5 August</u>

Sometime in the small hours, an aspirational hit list of targets, consisting of nearly 40 immigration law firms and asylum support organisations, is circulated on social media by an anonymous nazi. The list would provoke panic and large counter-mobilisations around the country. HOPE not hate would identify Andrew McIntyre, a nazi from Bootle with links to the fascist organisation, Patriotic Alternative, as the man behind the list.

**PLYMOUTH:** There are a number of arrests in **Plymouth** as far-right demonstrators and anti-fascists clash in the Royal Parade area in the evening. Around 150 police officers are deployed to contain the violence, several of whom are injured. A police van is also damaged.

**Events also took place in:** Darlington. In Burnley, a number of Muslim graves are also vandalised.

#### <u> Day 11 – Wednesday 7 August</u>

From around midday, an estimated 25,000 antifascists turn out to counter-demonstrations around the country in a display of solidarity that effectively marks the end of the rioting. The number of far-right activists that mobilise is tiny. This anti-fascist show of force, accompanied by unusually favourable frontpages, changes the popular narrative. The far right's momentum is stalled, and many activists become deflated, having been jubilant just days earlier.

# WHAT DO THE AUGUST 2024 RIOTS TELL US ABOUT MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN?

#### MISBAH MALIK

On 29th July, news broke of a horrific attack at a Taylor Swift-themed dance workshop in Southport, Merseyside. Axel Rudakubana has since pleaded guilty to the murder of three young girls and attempted murder of 10 others.

Whilst many across the country came together to collectively mourn, others chose to participate in the largest outbreak of far-right rioting and disorder in the post-war period. The speed of this escalation highlights the volatility around issues related to multiculturalism and the sheer volume of people across the UK who not only hold racist, anti-migrant and anti-Muslim views, but are also willing to engage in violence given the opportunity.

#### PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS MULTICULTURALISM

With much of the inflammatory rhetoric during the riots thinly veiled behind so-called "legitimate concerns" about multiculturalism, it is necessary to explore attitudes towards this issue more widely.

Our polling shows that public support for multiculturalism has been dropping over the last couple of years, following stabilised improvements over the last few decades. In January 2023, 34% of Britons believed that multiculturalism undermined British culture. This had increased by 10% to 44% in July 2024, just prior to the murders in Southport. This puts attitudes back in line with the immediate post-Brexit period and following the 2017 terrorist attacks, reversing the improvements made over the last five and a half years in just 18 months.

The inflammatory rhetoric pushed by far-right actors following the murders in Southport was so successful at instigating violence because attitudes towards multiculturalism were already so negative. Far-right actors were able to capitalise on these pre-existing divides, deploying rhetoric and narratives that had already been somewhat normalised amongst large swathes of the public.

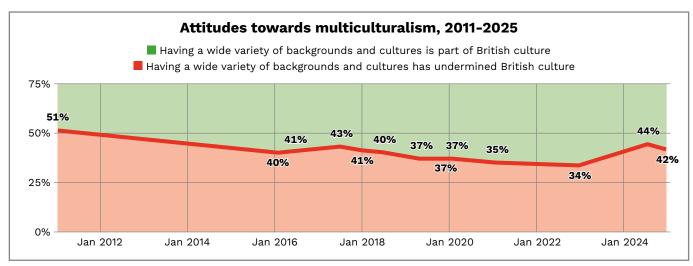
But how do these attitudes pan out today? Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, not much has changed. The physical violence may have ended, but attitudes towards multiculturalism remain worryingly negative. The percentage of those who believe having a wider variety of cultures and backgrounds undermines British culture has only decreased by 2%, from 44% during the peak of violence in August 2024, to 42% in January 2025.

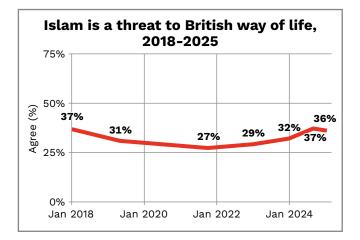
#### **PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO MUSLIMS**

HOPE not hate research from 2024 shows that attitudes towards multiculturalism are largely shaped by attitudes towards Muslims in particular, more so than other racialised communities. With this in mind, it is also necessary to dig deeper into how the public's view of Muslims played out during the riots.

Similarly to multiculturalism, attitudes towards Muslims were already negative prior to the events in Southport. In December 2023, 32% of Britons thought that Islam was a threat to the British way of life and in January 2024, 45% thought Islam was a threat to Western civilisation. Again, the far-right were so quickly able to exploit and inflame around the murders in Southport because attitudes towards Muslims were already hostile.

Our polling shows that between 2021 and 2023, the number of people who believe that Islam is a threat to the British way of life rose from 27% to 32%, reversing the improvements made under Home Secretary and then Prime Minister Theresa May. May's strategy of positive engagement with Muslim



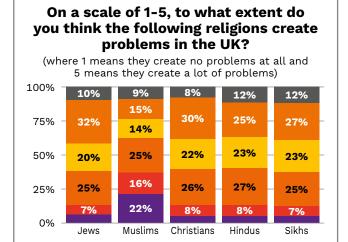


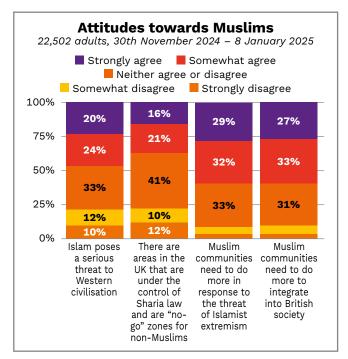
communities petered out after she left office in 2019, replaced by the indifference of Boris Johnson and then the open hostility of Michael Gove once he was appointed as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in September 2021. You do not need to look much further than his Celsius 7/7 book to understand why and how the "Overton window" shifted so far to the right under his direction, normalising ever more extreme anti-Muslim sentiment.

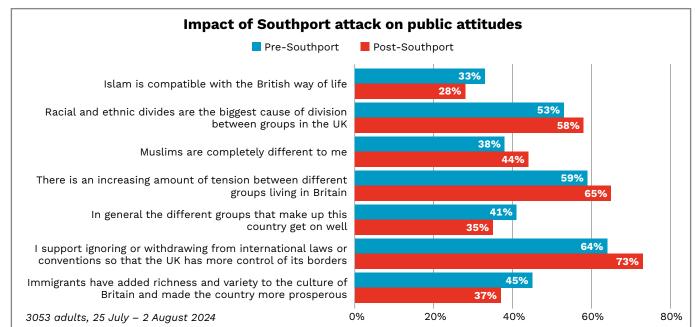
We also know that the riots triggered a further increase in hostility towards Muslims, migrants and multiculturalism. Our polling found that attitudes worsened in the immediate aftermath of the attacks in Southport to a statistically significant degree.

Our polling found a 5% decrease in those who think Islam is compatible with a British way of life, from 33% to 28%, and a 9% increase in people in favour of ignoring or withdrawing from international laws or conventions so that the UK has more control of its borders, from 64% to 73%.

Similar to multiculturalism, hostility towards Muslims has negligibly changed since the riots in August. Particularly as the topic of grooming gangs re-enters political, media and public discourse, it is of little surprise that our most recent polling finds that 22% of







the public think Muslims "create a lot of problems" in the UK, approximately four times higher than for any other religion.

In January 2025, 44% believed that Islam poses a threat to Western civilisation, in line with the results from the previous August. Furthermore, 37% believe areas of the UK are under the control of Sharia law, and 6 in 10 believe that Muslim communities should be doing more to stop Islamist extremism (61%) and integrate into British society (60%).

#### **"MULTICULTURALISM HAS FAILED"**

These worsening attitudes cannot be analysed in a vacuum, as they have been authorised and promoted by mainstream influential figures.

Stripped back, opposition to multiculturalism is a reaction to the demographic changes occurring in Britain. For many, this is a reaction to destabilisation they feel from the rapid changes occurring around them. However, for a small but extreme percentage, this is rooted in the perception that Britishness, and therefore Britain, should be exclusively white and/ or Christian. Regardless, this often takes place within conversations about "British values".

Former prime ministers David Cameron and Theresa May in particular constructed national identity in terms of a shared and cohesive set of "British" values, in pursuit of a new British identity that would unite an increasingly diverse population. However, adjacent to this work they were simultaneously chipping away at the foundations of cohesion. In 2011, Cameron used his first speech as Prime Minister to critique multiculturalism for creating communities that behave in ways that "run counter to our values". Similarly it was under May's tenure as Home Secretary that the "hostile environment" was born.

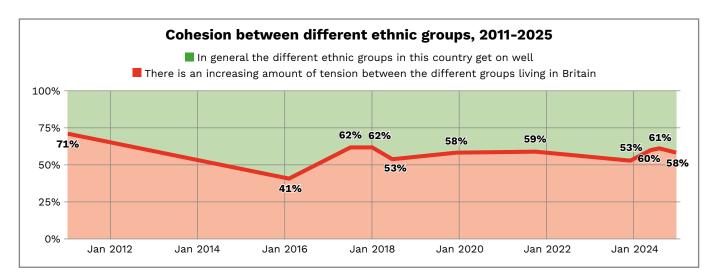
This discrepancy at the heart of government provided fertile ground for divisive actors to attack the concept of multiculturalism. The introduction of "British values" into mainstream discourse provided an opportunity to replace biological racism with cultural racism as justification for negative attitudes towards racialised communities – "they don't *look* like us" has been replaced by "they don't *act* like us". Those who oppose the demographic changes occurring in Britain have a loophole to articulate this racism through narratives of "Britishness" – the "crisis" of multiculturalism has become an acceptable means to oppose the realities of a demographically diverse Britain.

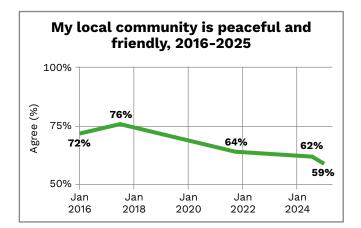
The riots were arguably the first time we saw such widespread and normalised use of the "multiculturalism has failed" narrative to justify calls for violence. In behaviour previously confined to the extreme fringes of the far right, people who had never before taken to the streets picked up bricks and smashed mosque windows in the name of defending their white supremacist view of the nation against the "threat" of multiculturalism and the diversity that comes with it.



Over the last few years this anti-multiculturalism and anti-Muslim agenda has become an increasingly mainstreamed narrative. Whether it be Suella Braverman as Home Secretary criticising the "misguided dogma of multiculturalism" as "toxic" for Europe, or Robert Jenrick claiming as part of his campaign for Conservative Party leadership that Britain is "under threat" from mass immigration and that "non-integrating multiculturalism" has "put the very idea of England at risk", or then Conservative MP and now Reform whip Lee Anderson accusing London Mayor Sadiq Khan of being controlled by Islamists, this inflammatory rhetoric has become increasingly normalised.

But crucially, this is not only confined to Reform or Conservative politicians. Although far less common and extreme, Labour have at times dipped their toes in this rhetoric. In 2007 Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced a "British jobs for British workers" policy, which many viewed as nativist and contrary to anti-discrimination laws. During the 2024 general election campaign, unnamed Labour officials were





reported to have made degrading and anti-Muslim comments about Muslims voting for independent candidates running on pro-Gaza platforms. More recently, Starmer echoed Conservative alarmism by accusing his predecessors of running an "open border experiment".

But this isn't a new phenomenon for Labour. As well as Gordon Brown's aforementioned "British jobs for British workers" policies, criticised by many as in opposition to anti-discrimination laws, there was also considerable backlash to Ed Miliband's "Controls on Immigration" mugs during the 2015 election, prompting the hashtag #racistmug to trend for a while.

#### **IMPACT ON COHESION**

As the riots displayed, attitudes towards multiculturalism and how they play out within communities are notably impacting cohesion between communities. Immediately after the riots, 61% of Britons believed there to be increasing tensions between different ethnic groups in the UK, an increase of 8% from the previous year. Despite physical violence fizzling out after two weeks, in January 2025 the perception of tension remained high, dropping by only 3% since the peak of violence in August.

Labour's criminal justice response to the riots was swift and heavy handed, effective in putting a stop to the physical violence on the ground. However, notably missing have been centralised efforts to actually address and repair the hateful attitudes that drove the violence, and the social relationships that were fractured as a result. Whilst we no longer have the government actively sabotaging cohesion for political gain, preexisting tensions, as well as the new divides forged by the riots, remain unaddressed. And arguably, the narratives about "two-tier policing" manufactured in response to the criminal justice response has actually fractured relationships further.

Additionally councils had seen dramatic reductions in core funding from government over the last decade and were facing a funding gap of £6.5 billion by 2024/25. Proactive cohesion measures that strengthen relationships between and within communities are often seen as unessential and are the first to be dropped in the face of financial difficulties. It is unsurprising therefore that since 2017 there has been a notable reduction in the number of people who think their local community is peaceful and friendly, from 76% to 59% in January 2025.

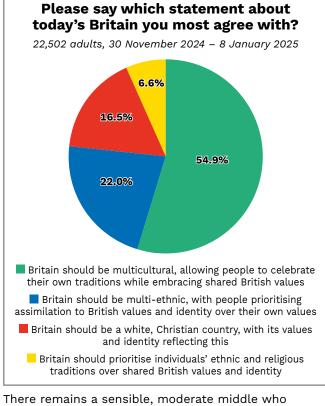
#### WHAT NEXT?

The events of last August exposed deep-seated racist, anti-migrant and anti-Muslim sentiments in the UK, highlighting the vulnerability of communities to farright agitation.

The need for a centralised strategy to address this growing rejection of the concept of multiculturalism and hateful attitudes towards racialised communities has been made painfully clear. Trigger events out of the Government's control that test tensions within communities will always occur, but failing to address hateful attitudes that already exist will only maintain volatility and leave us vulnerable to another bout of violence following a flashpoint.

The landscape is bleak, and there is undoubtedly a lot of work that needs to be done. However, there are reasons to be hopeful. Despite the hateful attitudes that drove the violence making headlines, there were also inspiring stories of communities coming together to condemn the violence and stand in solidarity with their neighbours.

It is only a small, although loud and active, group who think "Britain should be a white, Christian country" and that "Britishness" should reflect this. The majority (55%) support the idea of multiculturalism, and that people should be able to celebrate their own traditions whilst embracing shared British values.



There remains a sensible, moderate middle who actively want to build stronger communities and bridge divides. Forty per cent of Britons "want to get to know their neighbours better", a statistic that has remained stable since 2016 despite the efforts of many in the political mainstream to deepen divides.

But these communities cannot be left alone to do this work. They need to be presented with the opportunity, direction and, crucially, the funding to do so.

# **REFORM REFORMED?**

#### **GREGORY DAVIS**

When Nigel Farage announced last June that he would be returning to take up leadership of Reform UK ahead of the imminent general election, even he could not have imagined that the party would receive over four million votes and, six months later, be topping some polls and being seriously talked about as a possible government.

Reform UK's upturn in fortunes lie partly in Farage's charismatic leadership but also in the increasing disillusionment of voters towards the mainstream parties.

Farage replaced Richard Tice, who had managed to steer the ship for the preceding two years without major catastrophe and seen a small but steady rise in its polling, though was clearly not fulfilling its potential. It clearly underperformed in the 2024 local elections, which took place just weeks before Farage took over the party, picking up just two councillors. Given the general disillusionment with politics, it was widely believed that only the return of Farage could "super-charge" the party's prospects.

The speculation had been fuelled in part by Farage's own apparent indecisiveness. Just two weeks earlier he had ruled out a return, saying he would prefer to spend his time on a more important campaign – that of his friend Donald Trump:

"Important though the general election is, the contest in the United States of America on November 5 has huge global significance [...] I intend to help with the grassroots campaign in the USA in any way that I can," he said in late May.

Citing "a terrible sense of guilt" over disappointing his supporters, Farage finally announced that he would stand in the constituency of Clacton, Essex – despite having earlier questioned whether he could bear to "spend every Friday for the next five years in Clacton".

With their talismanic leader in place, Reform UK came in a strong third place with 14.3% of the vote, although in the warped reality of the UK's first-past-the-post electoral system this translated to just five seats: Clacton, Ashfield, Boston & Skegness, Great Yarmouth and Basildon South & East Thurrock.

Clacton and Ashfield were comfortable victories for Farage and Tory defector Lee Anderson, while Boston & Skegness and Great Yarmouth were much closer for Richard Tice and Rupert Lowe. Basildon South and East Thurrock was a nailbiter, with Reform's surprise victor James McMurdock winning the seat with a margin of just 98 votes.

Elsewhere, Reform UK candidates received more than 20% of the vote in 148 seats and came second in 98 seats, mostly in the North East, Midlands and South

Wales, with Labour taking first place in 89 of them. However, many of these were won with overwhelming majorities, and six of the seats where Reform came closest to winning were held by the Conservatives, sometimes in close three-way races with Labour.

#### **POWER AND POLITICKING**

Now with a foothold in Parliament for the first time, Reform UK set about grappling with the challenges that come with being a truly national party.

The election campaign had revealed the chaotic nature of the party's candidate selection, with at least 166 of its previously announced candidates dropped or swapped in the months prior to polling day.

While the reasons for most of these changes were not made public, there was a drumbeat of stories emerging from the work of HOPE not hate, various newspapers and online activists exposing shockingly unsuitable candidates that had somehow been selected to stand.

The Reform candidate for Derbyshire Dales, for example, was revealed to have posted on X/Twitter that "by importing loads of sub Saharan Africans plus Muslims that inter breed the IQ is in severe decline". Jonathan Kay, then-candidate for South Ribble, similarly stated that the UK was "importing so many 3rd world immigrants whose average nation IQ's are between 68-84, into a country whose indigenous populations IQ is 100".

Other candidates had attacked the Jewish community for their supposed role in founding communism and encouraging immigration, the latter a version of the White Genocide conspiracy theory that constitutes a key tenet of neo-Nazi movements worldwide.

Reform's then-candidate for Orpington, Mick Greenhough, argued on Twitter that "Ashkenazi Jews have caused the world massive problems" due to having "started socialism". Paul Carnell, thencandidate for Cannock Chase, recommended a pro-Nazi Holocaust-denial documentary as showing "the other history not taught in Zionist Indoctrination Camps (schools)".

It was especially notable that, in many cases, the candidates had published their loathsome views on public social media platforms under their own names, apparently unconcerned about whether such posts might preclude them from a Reform candidacy.

The embarrassments stemming from the party's abject failure to vet candidates did not end with the campaign. Just over a month after the election, it came to light that their surprise winner in Basildon South and East Thurrock, MP James McMurdock, had served a prison sentence for attacking an ex-girlfriend outside a nightclub.



# **REFORM: THE FAR-RIGHT PARTY**

Almost two thirds of public (60%) view Reform UK as a "far-right populist party", according to a poll of 7,000 people, conducted by Focaldata for HOPE not hate.

This figure is pretty consistent amongst all age groups, though there is some regional and income variation.

Amongst respondents in the North East, opinion is evenly split, with 51% agreeing Reform is a "far-right populist party", while 49% say it is not.

The proportion of people saying Reform is far right is less amongst lower-income households than it is amongst those with high household incomes.

In response to the revelations, McMurdock claimed that he had "pushed" the victim and caused her to fall over, and denied suggestions that he had kicked or punched her, saying that it was the "biggest regret of my life". Reform UK initially suggested that it had known about the conviction, but had selected him because the party "believes strongly that people can change their lives". However, when it emerged in December that McMurdock had in fact pleaded guilty to kicking the victim at least four times as she lay on the floor, the story changed somewhat. While insisting that the conviction was "irrelevant" to voters and quickly attempting to switch the topic to the number of TikTok followers he had, Farage appeared to suggest that the party had not in fact been aware of it.

"James McMurdock was one of those many candidates who wasn't vetted at all," Farage noted. "Look, I didn't know any of this when I took back over as leader."

The party made a risible effort to blame a professional vetting agency for this failure to perform even the most basic checks, despite admitting that they had selected and announced the candidates themselves and had only belatedly hired the agency when the first scandals had already emerged.

Nor has there been any sign of improvement in the party's internal processes. Just a few weeks prior to the national conference, at which Farage promised the party would "weed out candidates that are totally inappropriate" in order to build an "election-winning machine", the party appointed David Hyden-Milakovic as county-coordinator for Staffordshire.

Having already been exposed for his links to the neo-Nazi Patriotic Alternative group and his posts to an antisemitic TikTok channel, Hyden-Milakovic appears to have been subject to an internal disciplinary process that concluded in December and allowed him

# THE DEFECTORS

There have been a number of high-profile defectors to Reform UK since the election. They include:



ANDREA JENKYNS (former Tory MP)



**TIM MONTGOMERIE** (founder ConservativeHome)



MARCO LONGHI (former Tory MP)



RAEL BRAVERMAN (Suella Braverman's husband)

to stay in his role, but then resigned two days after HOPE not hate published a blog highlighting it.

Nonetheless, the replacement of Richard Tice as chair of the party, just one week after the election, appeared to show that the party perceived its chaotic organisation and highly-centralised and undemocratic structure as needing to change.

"This is just the beginning," Reform Chair Zia Yusuf announced just a week after the election. "The important work of professionalising the party, building national infrastructure and continuing to grow membership has already begun."

Tice was moved from Chair of the party to Deputy Leader, replacing Ben Habib in that role, which prompted the latter to become increasingly critical of Farage and the direction of Reform UK over the months that followed.

When Habib quit the party altogether on 29 November, Farage responded that it was a "champagne moment" to finally be rid of the "very bitter, very twisted" man, but his glib response might have been something of a misstep.

Habib is a popular figure on the radical right, perceived as being relatively intellectual but ideologically hardline, and many of his criticisms of the party are uncomfortable ground for Reform's supporters – and hard to refute.

Lee O'Shea, county organiser for the West Midlands, stated that Habib's departure had not gone down well

with the rank-and-file. Writing via a pseudonymous Twitter account, he replied to Habib's tweet suggesting that the news had ruined a meeting he organised: "Sad day, by coincidence I held a RUK meet last night. You are held with extremely high regard, many disappointed in @Nigel\_Farage". This news put a right downer on the event."

Habib is a vociferous critic of the Northern Ireland Protocol and Windsor Framework, for example, and insists that Brexit "is not done". For the faction that defined themselves by total intransigence on matters large and small during the Brexit years, it is uncomfortable territory to be facing allegations of realpolitik and betrayal from an erstwhile supporter.

#### **DEMOCRATISATION?**

But it is on the matter of party control and democratisation that Farage and Yusuf might find Habib's criticisms most stinging. In stark contrast to most political parties, which belong to their members in the form of an unincorporated association, Reform UK was registered as a private limited company in 2018, and is controlled outright by Farage with 53% of the shares.

In September 2023 Farage told the party conference in Birmingham that he had set it up in this way to remove the possibility of the party being "hijacked by extremists and bad actors" – later referencing Jeremy Corbyn as an example but perhaps also thinking of the rebellious cranks who plagued his leadership of UKIP.

Farage has decided, however, to give up his shares in order to hand control of the party to its members. Speaking at the Reform conference in September, he said: "You, the members, will own this party. You will own this party, not me. And we will have a board to manage the party, with significant elected representation from the members and that board will be there to safeguard how we're operating, to prevent entryism."

However, the new constitution represents only a small shift towards democratisation, and falls far short of the democratic nature of any comparable political party. According to the draft constitution circulated to members, the board that manages the party will consist of eight voting members:

- The party leader
- The deputy leader
- Three members appointed by the leader
- Three members elected by the membership

Such a structure hands considerable power to the existing leadership, and the constitution goes further in cementing Farage's role at the head of the party. A no-confidence motion in his leadership can only be proposed if more than 50% of the parliamentary party write to the party chairman – but only once the party has more than 100 elected MPs.

The restrictions on a membership-led effort to replace the leadership are equally stringent. For the membership to propose the motion, at least 50% must write to the chair to request it – meaning that on current membership numbers the chair's office would have to process at least 92,580 letters or emails in order to establish that the threshold had been reached. Habib was scathing in response, describing the draft constitution circulated to members as "badly drafted, incomplete and ill-thought-through". He suggested that the announced plan to convert Reform UK Ltd into a company limited by guarantee was not even legally possible, and that a new company would have to be launched.

By February 2025 there was no sign that the new constitution had taken effect. The party has not filed any paperwork with Companies House or the Electoral Commission to suggest any significant changes.

#### **ROOTS & BRANCH REFORM**

While announcing that ex-Tory MP Andrea Jenkyns had defected to Reform and would stand as their candidate for Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire, Farage stated that the party – which had previously done little to establish local support networks – was now pursuing the "Paddy Ashdown model":

"Paddy Ashdown was that dynamic leader of the Lib Dems who understood that until he'd won a significant number of district council seats and county council seats, you weren't even in the race to win parliamentary election seats or by-election seats [...] That is very much the model that we're following."

Since the general election last July, the party has made clear strides towards pursuing this strategy. Since announcing their intention to "professionalise and democratise" at the party conference in September, the party has set up hundreds of local branches, with more launching every week.

Reform UK now boasts 52 councillors across the country, not including parish or community councillors, as well as a further six who sit on Derby City Council as a local franchise, "Reform Derby". However, only a small number of these were elected under the banner of Reform.

Just ten of Reform's current roster of councillors have been elected as candidates of Reform UK, five of whom have been elected in by-elections since the general election. Another 24 Reform councillors were originally elected as Conservatives prior to defecting and the remainder as Independents or Labour.

As might be expected, Reform has not been too picky about who it lets in to the fold: in Derbyshire the party accepted two county councillors, Philip Rose and Alexander Stevenson, who had both been suspended by the Conservative Party: Rose for antisemitic social media posts and Stevenson for comparing the vaccine rollout to the Holocaust.

Both men would soon leave the party in acrimonious circumstances, defecting en masse with eight town and parish councillors. Ironically, Farage responded to their defection by accusing them of being an "out-ofcontrol branch" that had put forward candidates who had failed vetting.

Reform candidates at local by-elections have had a patchy response. The party has put up candidates for 86 of the 184 local by-elections since GE2024, of whom just seven were duly elected.

By-election losses or gains should not be taken as overly significant, however. Turnout is so woefully low in many that they are of little value in gauging the mood of an area. In December, for example, 18-yearold Kieran Mishchuk was elected for Reform in the Milton Regis ward of Swale Borough Council on a turnout of just 17%, with a vote tally less than half of that of his Labour predecessor in the seat.

The proportion of by-elections that the party contests has increased recently, however, and the creation of hundreds of constituency branches will likely mean a much more enthusiastic engagement with local politics.

Most of the areas in which Reform candidates are achieving breakthroughs are fairly unsurprising – mostly places which have seen strong results for UKIP or local independent groups over the past decade.

Other areas have been more surprising. The ward of Marton in Blackpool, for example, was won handily by Labour on a 51% vote share at the 2023 local elections, with the Reform candidate coming last on 9.5%. In October 2024, popular local Reform candidate Jim O'Neill won the seat with 38.7% of the vote.

While Reform has yet to win a seat on a local council in Wales, it is likely to be a key target for the party in the year ahead. Reform came third in Wales at the 2024 general election with 16.9% of the vote, failing to win any seats but coming second in 13 of Wales's 32 seats. Their closest results included the constituencies of Llanelli and Montgomeryshire & Glyndwr, where the party fell short by just 1,504 and 3,815 votes respectively.

But Reform's focus in Wales will now be very much on the Senedd elections that will take place in 2026. Farage has said his party aims to be the "main challenger" to Labour's dominance, and suggested that Reform should have a formalised structure, including a leader for Wales, in place by that point.

#### THE TRUMP CARD

One factor that is already proving complicated for Reform UK in the months ahead is their transatlantic relationships with the two radical-right figureheads of our age: Donald Trump and Elon Musk.

Farage has worked hard to hitch his wagon to Trump, frequently flying to the States in an attempt to curry favour. But whilst he revelled in Trump's win, Farage



did feel obliged to acknowledge that Trump is not a popular figure in the UK, though suggested that this unpopularity is largely a matter of "style" rather than well-substantiated fears about his policies and personality:

"Whether you like Trump's style or not – and many don't, many find him a bit outlandish, a bit New York for their tastes..."

If Trump's presidency is anything like as vindictive and chaotic as it has appeared so far, this association might provide some difficulty for the Reform UK leadership in the years to come. Trump is widely disliked in the UK, with just 18% of Brits favouring him to win the presidency. That number rises to 54% among Reform voters voters, whereas there were 26% who preferred Harris.

Another relationship that has already proved problematic is that with Elon Musk, the world's richest man. In December 2024 rumours began to swirl that he might be considering making a \$100,000,000 donation to Reform UK. Citing unnamed businesspeople and Conservative Party officials, The Times suggested that the owner of X/Twitter, Tesla and SpaceX might be considering a "f\*\*\* you Starmer payment" that could "open the door to near-limitless anti-government advertisements from Reform".

While the sourcing of the story and the sum was vague, Musk's antipathy towards the Labour government and sympathy towards Reform is wellevidenced, as is his track record of using his obscene wealth to pursue political goals.

Nigel Farage was quick to welcome Musk's support: "I am very pleased he's backing our party, even if reports of his potential financial donations are somewhat over-exaggerated," he said. "Whether we like everything he says or not, he's a hero."

Embarrassingly, he would then immediately be presented with an example of a dislikeable statement from his hero. Apparently peeved by Farage's distancing of his party from Tommy Robinson – like many within Reform itself – Musk tweeted: "Reform Party needs a new leader. Farage doesn't have what it takes."

#### THE PATH AHEAD

Reform's steady rise in polling since the general election, which has seen them come in first place in two separate polls in January, will be put to the test at the 2025 local elections. While several county council elections have been delayed by a year to allow for local government reorganisation, there are still many in which Reform expect to do well. These include Kent, County Durham, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire.

Reform will also be posing a serious challenge in the Greater Lincolnshire, Doncaster and Hull & East Yorkshire mayoral elections.

In addition to the council and mayoral elections, Reform will also be hoping to do well in a likely by-election in Runcorn, where the current MP Mike Amesbury recently pleaded guilty to assault.

These elections will be the first major outing for Reform's brand new network of constituency branches. It is too early to say how effective local branches will be at this stage; while some in Reform will have prior

# THE REFORM STAR

Reform UK's political rise is largely built around Nigel Farage, and while the party is professionalising and new figures are emerging, its success, now and in the future, will probably be based around its leader.

HOPE not hate polling finds that Farage is the most popular party leader in the UK. Thirteen per cent of the public "strongly like" Farage, and a further 20% "tend to like him". By contrast, the figures for Keir Starmer are 7% and 16% respectively. For Kemi Badenoch it is 5% and 15%.

Conversely, 43% of people dislike Farage, with 29% strongly disliking him.

For those who strongly like Farage, 52% describe him as a "man of the people", 51% "plain speaking" and 44% choose "intelligent".

The British public is evenly split on whether they think Farage is racist, with 51% saying that he is and 49% saying he is not.



experience campaigning for other parties, others might have a steeper learning curve. It is likely, however, that all will be fired up with the enthusiasm that comes with campaigning for a new party that is climbing the polls, a stark contrast to the position of Labour and the Conservatives.

While it is too early to predict election outcomes, as unpredictable events – local and global – upend our news cycles on a regular basis, the only thing we can say for certain is that Reform UK poses an immense challenge to those who reject the politics of division, and looks likely to do so for the foreseeable future.

# THE FIVE TRIBES OF REFORM UK

Reform UK, like all other major political parties, is made up of a broad coalition of voters, many of whom have quite different views from each other.

HOPE not hate and our data partners at Focaldata conducted a factor analysis of almost 4,000 people who say they would vote Reform if there was an election tomorrow, and we found five distinct Reform tribes.

#### TRIBE 1: WORKING RIGHT (22.5% OF POTENTIAL REFORM VOTERS)

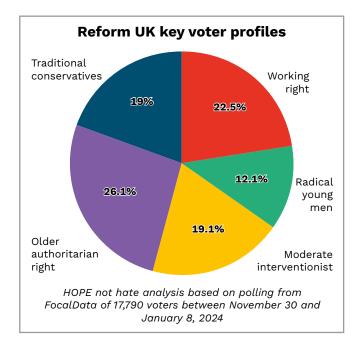
- Strongly pro-workers' rights, but also hold a very negative view of immigration, Muslims and climate change policies
- Likely drawn to Reform over immigration concerns
- Typically middle-aged and renters
- 86% have below degree-level qualifications
- Highly supportive of Tommy Robinson
- Nearly half (47%) believe violence can be justified in certain circumstances
- Over half of the people in this group (53%) believe that Britain should be a white, Christian country, with its values and identity reflecting this

#### TRIBE 2: RADICAL YOUNG MEN (12.1%)

- A group mostly drawn from the younger generation (ages 18-44), with a relatively high share of BAME people (these ethnicities are barely present in the other segments)
- Not anti-Muslim/immigration, and among the most likely to want both skilled and unskilled immigrants
- Tendencies towards antisemitism and conspiratorial thinking
- Much more likely to use social media for news
- 55% of this group (by far the highest among all segments) believe violence can be justified in certain circumstances
- Six out of ten in this group believe that feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed
- They are largely favourable towards more leftleaning political figures such as Jeremy Corbyn and George Galloway, but are also the segment most attracted to Andrew Tate

#### TRIBE 3: MODERATE INTERVENTIONIST (19.1%)

- This segment leans positively towards immigration, with members also being pro-worker and more pro-state
- They are largely in favour of multiculturalism, with 73% saying Britain should be multicultural (compared to 23% of Reform voters overall)
- The segment with the highest percentage of women (52%)



- Drawn to Reform due to a belief that other parties have failed
- 14% voted Labour in 2024.
- The least likely to agree that violence can be acceptable under certain circumstances
- They dislike Tommy Robinson and Andrew Tate more than other segments

#### TRIBE 4: OLDER AUTHORITARIAN RIGHT (26.1%)

- This group is pro-climate and anti-immigration, but also holds pro-public ownership and pro-state regulation opinions
- These people are largely older, with more than 60% being over 55 years of age
- 83% have below degree-level qualifications and two-thirds are home owners
- They are largely disillusioned with the political system and pessimistic about the future
- **53%** voted Conservative in 2019
- 60% are Christian (compared to 50% of Reform voters)

#### TRIBE 5: TRADITIONAL CONSERVATIVES (19%)

- Well over a third of this group's members are pension-age and 70% are older than 55
- More likely than other groups to own their house outright
- Voted heavily for the Conservatives in 2019
- They have favourable views of Kemi Badenoch and Elon Musk
- They are more likely than other voter groups to consume news via GB News

#### **STATE OF HATE 2025**



# CLIMATE DENIERS, CONSPIRACY THEORISTS, AND TAX-DODGING EXILES: THE PEOPLE WHO FUND REFORM UK

#### HARRY SHUKMAN

A year ago, Reform UK's finances looked anything but rosy. Richard Tice, the former property investor then in charge of Reform, was personally bankrolling it with £1.4m in loans. In fact, the party relied so heavily upon Tice that he alone supplied 80% of its declared funding. The party's fortunes dramatically changed on 2 June, when Nigel Farage announced he would replace Tice as leader and stand as an MP in Clacton. The week after, the party picked up £1.5m in donations. Now the party has big-name donors who have poured in hundreds of thousands of pounds to help achieve Reform's goal of overtaking the Conservatives.

Thanks to the new-found cash injections, Reform has staged a number of regional conferences and upgraded its London office, moving from a small central location described by one source as "more of a room", to plush new headquarters in Westminster freshly painted in the party's signature turquoise. The party has also gone on a hiring spree, expanding its communications, media, research, and operational teams.

However, Reform's new walking-around money poses major questions about the direction of the party. Its accounts, filed with the Electoral Commission, reveal a number of donors whose own views and financial interests raise alarms about what they hope to gain by funding Reform, especially as the party seeks to influence politics in a more reactionary, conspiratorial direction.

#### **"CLIMATE CHANGE NONSENSE"**

Many of Reform's big donors have a worrying attitude on the climate crisis. Since its inception as the Brexit Party, Reform has received more than £2.3 million from sources associated with either the fossil fuel industry or climate science deniers. According to DeSmog, the climate science misinformation watchdog, 92% of Reform's donations come from oil and gas interests, highly polluting industries, or climate science deniers.

Critics of Reform have asked if the party's receipt of donations from anti-environmental sources has affected their party line. As recently as 2022, Reform promised a climate policy of "Net Smart", developing wind, solar, biowaste, and tidal sources of energy. But the party's 2024 election manifesto reneged on its environmental pledges, claiming "renewables are not cheaper", and calling for fast-tracked new oil and gas licences in the North Sea.

In 2023, the party accepted £200,000 in multiple donations from First Corporate Consultants, a company run by the businessman Terence Mordaunt. At the time, he was chairman of the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), a climate-sceptic lobbying group based out of 55 Tufton Street. The GWPF has called increased atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide "a benefit to the planet". Both Nigel Farage and Richard Tice have repeated this line, the latter tweeting: "CO2 isn't a poison. It's plant food! We need to challenge the climate change nonsense!"

Holly Valance, the former singer and *Neighbours* actor, has given a total of £100,000 to the party. She has dismissed global warming as "cow farts", another expression used by Richard Tice. In an interview with GB News, Valance said: "The climate crisis, or lack of, is not a crisis." She further described climate policy as "just insanity, like smashing your head up against a wall every day". Valance is said to enjoy a close relationship with Nigel Farage as an advisor and friend, speaking at his 60th birthday party. Since donating to the party, she has been touted as a possible MP candidate for the future.

Valance is not the only donor whose generosity to the party has been rewarded with a senior role. Her husband Nick Candy, the luxury property developer, has pledged a seven-figure donation and been appointed party treasurer. Candy has pledged to secure more money than any other party in British history. Together with Farage, he hosted a 90-person fundraiser in January at Oswald's, a private club in Mayfair, where VIP tickets cost up to £25,000 each. Also present: the former Tory donors Bassim Haidar, Mohamed Amersi, and Myles Barclay attended, plus Rael Braverman (husband to Suella), Ant Middleton, Derek Chisora, the Duke of Marlborough, and the conspiracy theorist Lady Victoria Hervey.

Separately, Charlie Mullins, founder of Pimlico Plumbers and a tax exile now living in Dubai, has given  $\pounds40,000$  to Reform. He has announced he will soon stand as a parliamentary candidate for Reform. Mullins previously apologised for tweeting that "someone should kill" the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan.

#### LONDON-CENTRIC ELITES

Other sources of Reform's money belie its manifesto pledge to end government "by an out-of-touch, London-centric elite". Zia Yusuf, a multimillionaire tech entrepreneur, gave £200,000 to the party and became party chairman after the election. A former executive director of Goldman Sachs, Yusuf sold a luxury concierge app he created to the American bank Capital One, earning an estimated £31 million.

Robin Birley, owner of the private member club 5 Hertford Street, has given  $\pounds$ 50,000 to Reform. Birley's club, which counts Nigel Farage as a member, costs  $\pounds$ 3,000 per year to join.

Richard Smith, an aerospace businessman who owns 55 Tufton Street, the central London building home to a number of radical-right think tanks, is also a donor. His company has given £100,000 to Reform.

In 2023, Reform accepted a £10,000 donation from the multimillionaire financier Crispin Odey two months after he was accused in a Financial Times article of sexual misconduct by multiple women. The donation was initially registered as coming from the Independent Investment Management Initiative, a think tank formerly run by Odey, which Tice claimed was a "clerical error". Odey denies wrongdoing.

Between 2019 and 2023, the businessman Jeremy Hosking – who has supported Laurence Fox's Reclaim Party and the anti-vaxx former MP Andrew Bridgen – donated £1,578,000 to Reform and its predecessor the Brexit Party. He has around £108m invested in oil and gas, according to an OpenDemocracy analysis.

Among the largest donors to Reform is David Lilley. A metals trader (similar to Farage's pre-political career), Lilley gave £364,000 to Reform last year. According to DeSmog, Lilley is a major landowner in Russia, owning 12,000 hectares in Stavropol. "I have never made a secret of my assets in Russia," Lilley has said, adding that he has made no profit on the land since the invasion of Ukraine, and that he had furthermore been prevented from selling it by the Russian state.

#### **UNUSUAL CONNECTIONS**

Reform has further leveraged its connections to oddball benefactors. John Mappin, the conspiracy fantasist who owns Camelot Castle hotel in Cornwall, lent the party his property to host a meet-and-greet for southwestern election candidates. Although Farage did not attend, in a video advertising the event he praised Mappin as a "true hero" with "guts and courage" for rejecting an offer from the Home Office to house refugees and migrants at his castle. Mappin, who also canvassed for Farage in Clacton, shared a post on Facebook calling vaccines a "cluster bomb" that increases autism, diabetes, and cancer. He has also promoted the QAnon hoax that satanic paedophiles are influencing politics.

There are stranger sources of Reform finances altogether. One of the party's biggest donors is Fiona Cottrell, who has given £500,000 in two chunks. She is the aristocratic mother of George Cottrell, Farage's former chief of staff at UKIP and convicted fraudster. The former public schoolboy was arrested by American authorities in 2016 and served eight months in maximum-security prisons for offering to launder money on the dark web. He is regularly photographed at Farage's side.

Cottrell is said to divide his time between the UK and Montenegro, where he was named in an investigation about an allegedly illicit cryptomat. Cottrell denies wrongdoing and says he was subjected to a politically motivated attack.

On his official website, Cottrell describes himself as follows: "George Cottrell's biography paints a picture of a man driven by a quest for excellence, an unwavering commitment to his roles, and a genuine desire to make a positive impact." It further lists him as an affiliate of the Royal United Services Institute think tank, however a RUSI representative stated that Cottrell is just an ordinary member.

#### **ELON MUSK**

All these sums pale in comparison to the one that Elon Musk has reportedly considered. In late 2024, the richest man in the world was said to be mulling over giving \$100m to Reform. Musk met Farage for an hour at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago base, posing for a photo. Relations between the two men soured in an argument about Tommy Robinson, who, unlike Farage, Musk supports. Musk posted on X that Farage should step down as leader of Reform, saying he "doesn't have what it takes", further suggesting that the Reform MP Rupert Lowe might make a suitable replacement. In January, Farage said in an interview that he hoped to repair "broken fences" on an upcoming trip to the US.

#### **MEMBERSHIP MONEY**

A key source of Reform's money is its burgeoning membership. Other parties declare their membership income, but curiously Reform does not, so we can only guess its true value. It costs £25 a year to join Reform, and there are now more than 218,000 members, which could equal £5,450,000. This figure only provides the roughest estimate for membership revenue, as it does not account for the discounted £10 offer for under-25s (the number of youth members is another detail that Reform chooses not to disclose).

Peter Geoghegan, author of the Democracy for Sale website, has questioned the opacity of Reform accounts, particularly in 2019 when he identified a "black hole" in its finances. That year, the party declared 40% of its £18.9m expenditure as "other", with no additional explanation. This is highly unusual: other major parties only list a fraction of their expenditure in the "other" category (for instance, Labour said £1.5m of its £57m total was "other" expenditure). What exactly Reform did with that money is unclear.

#### THE BEST-PAID BRITISH MP

Nigel Farage's personal income makes him the UK's top-earning MP. In addition to basic annual parliamentary salary (£91,000), he also earns around £1.2m from his GB News appearances. He also earns money from Cameo (£15,451 in December 2024) and speaking engagements (£40,075 at an anti-tax

## **ON OTHER REFORM MPS' INTERESTS**



**Richard Tice**, MP for Boston and Skegness Shareholdings in seven companies, including Quidnet REIT, a proposal property company based offshore. Paid £11,685 per quarter for 25 hours per months of work

- **Lee Anderson**, MP for Ashfield £100,000 per year from GB News
- Rupert Lowe, MP for Great Yarmouth Thirteen declared shareholdings valued at more than £70,000 each, including gold mining and cybersecurity businesses

conference). One of his most lucrative engagements is at Direct Bullion, a gold company. In exchange for four hours of ambassador work per month, he is paid an annual salary of £189,300.

One of Farage's latest ventures is especially bizarre. Nigel Farage has been advertising a company called UK We Save which claims to sell consumer goods in bulk at discounted rates, such as nappies. It further promises to give at least 10% cash back to customers for each purchase. UK We Save has a skeleton website, with no terms and conditions page. The company did not answer our questions.

Interestingly, the aviation entrepreneur Christopher Harborne, a Thai-based donor who gave Reform £10m when it was known as the Brexit Party, has continued to support Farage, if not the party writ large. According to the parliamentary register of interests, Harborne paid for Farage and a staffer to fly and stay in the US for a two-day trip in July 2024 costing £32,836. Farage said he went on the trip to support a friend and "to represent Clacton on the world stage".

There already is a great deal of money influencing Westminster. Donors are able to effectively buy seats in the House of Lords by patronising the Conservative and Labour parties. An analysis by Transparency International found that in a ten-year period, 68 out of 284 nominations from political parties to the second chamber had given money to them. Worryingly, Reform seems to be offering donors the chance to also contest seats as MPs. "We will end the corruption of our government and politics," Reform's manifesto has pledged. The party wants to "make Britain a more democratic, accountable, and therefore more prosperous nation". This is a very strange way of going about it.

# **REFORM UK'S RISING SUPPORT AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE**

Photo: The Reform Daily / X



#### **ANKI DEO**

A new Multilevel Regression with Post-stratification (MRP) analysis conducted by Focaldata on behalf of HOPE not hate reveals that since July's general election, Reform UK's popularity has increased: they would now receive 21% of the total vote share "if a general election was held tomorrow". Fourteen per cent of 18-24 year olds who know who they would vote for intend to vote Reform.

MRP, which uses large national polling to estimate opinion down to a local level, is widely considered the most accurate analysis of opinion available.

Although Reform's young voter base is small, it is growing. A poll by HOPE not hate in January 2024 estimated that only 5% of 18-24 year olds were intending to vote Reform,<sup>1</sup> with YouGov's final estimate suggesting that 9% did vote for them in July.<sup>2</sup> With support now at 14%, and with only 11% leaning towards the Conservatives, Reform has swiftly become the right-wing party of choice for young people.

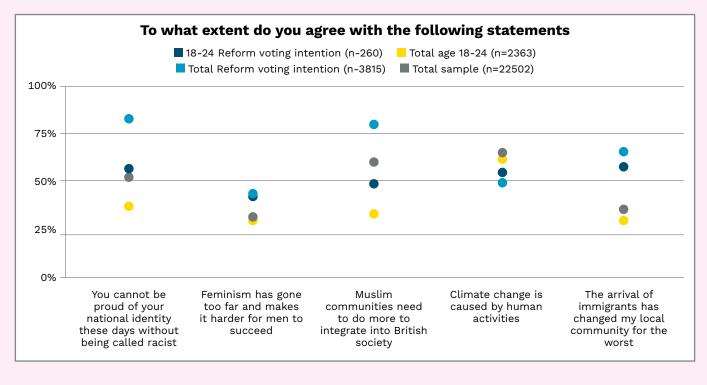
The party has made some efforts to target young people, including a heavy presence on TikTok (it is the most followed UK political party with 365,000 followers and almost four million likes) and political societies being set up at universities. Here, we examine young (18-24 year old) supporters of Reform UK, henceforth YSRs.

#### WHO ARE YSRS?

Looking at 18-24 year olds who would support Reform, they are majority male (61%) and reflective of the overall ethnic makeup of the UK, with 86% being white, 7% Asian or Asian British and 3% Black or Black British.

On social issues, YSRs are considerably more reactionary than the average for 18-24 year olds. However, their attitudes are softer than the average Reform voter across all of these topics, and particularly when it comes to Muslims and national identitv.

YSRs are more open-minded about community and Britishness than their older counterparts. Only 21% of YSRs think that Britain should be a white, Christian country, compared to 33% of total Reform voters. Thirty-eight per cent of YSRs would support





a local campaign to promote Britain's diverse and multicultural society and help people from different backgrounds connect (29% total Reform). This suggests that YSRs' reasons for supporting Reform go beyond immigration and multiculturalism.

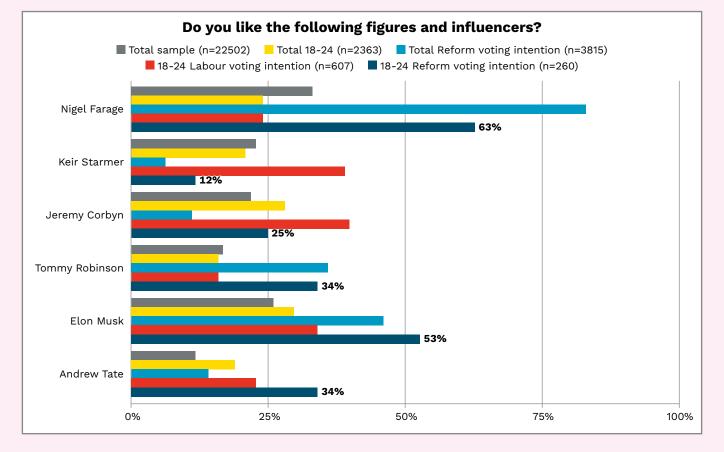
When it comes to policy, YSRs have some common ground with 18-24 year old Labour supporters. They are within 3% when it comes to their support for the regulation of water companies (29% YSR, 32% 18-24 Labour), building 300,000 new homes (33% YSR, 32% 18-24 Labour) and the establishment of GB Energy (26% YSR, 27% 18-24 Labour).

However, YSRs differ significantly from other young people in social policy areas, holding more conservative values. They are less likely than the average Labour voter, or than 18-24 year olds as a whole, to support improving workers' rights (31% YSR vs. 38% 18-24) and enforcing equal pay for minorities (26% YSR vs. 36% 18-24). YSRs are also more likely to be conservative on climate: only 22% support building more wind turbines (31% 18-24) and 42% think that the economic impact of achieving Net Zero by 2050 is too much to accept and there should be less ambitious targets (34% 18-24).

#### FARAGE AND OTHER FIGUREHEADS

Looking at YSRs' opinions of a variety of politicians and public figures, they have higher support for Elon Musk and Andrew Tate than their fellow 18-24 year olds and their fellow Reform voters, suggesting that this group in particular values outspoken individuals who are not strangers to controversy. The figure they like the most is Nigel Farage, who is liked by almost two thirds of YSRs (63%), although is less popular with that group than with Reform voters as a whole.

When asked what words or phrases best describe Farage, YSRs are most likely to select "proud" (30%), "man of the people" (30%), "intelligent" (29%), "freedom fighter" (23%) and "plain speaking" (21%). Their



perception of Farage as someone who is willing to advocate for the people, even against convention, might give them broader hope as their views on politicians as a whole are negative: two thirds (66%) of YSRs think that politicians don't listen to people like them.

YSRs are twice as likely to like Jeremy Corbyn than Keir Starmer, suggesting that there could be room for charismatic, representative and plain-speaking figures across the political spectrum to engage with them. However, given their penchant for reactionary and inflammatory figures and socially conservative attitudes, it will be more difficult for progressive messages to cut through.

#### WILL YSRS ACTUALLY VOTE?

Only 76% of YSRs are actually registered to vote in a general election, and only 55% say that they would be likely (8/10 or higher) to vote if an election was held tomorrow. By contrast, 55-64 year old Reform voters have a 98% registration rate and 89% would be likely to vote.

This raises questions for the impact that the YSR base would actually have on Reform's current electoral performance, but there are most likely years until the next general election. If Reform is able to encourage certain young people to register and have a voice politically, they stand to gain a lot.

Only a quarter (24%) of 18-24 year olds are satisfied that the political system in this country works well. When asked if they think parties have a clear sense of purpose, irrespective of preference, 18-24 year olds rate Labour and Reform equally in second place with 40%. Only 24% of undecided 18-24 year olds currently think that Reform has a clear sense of purpose Eighty per cent of YSRs think that Reform has a clear sense of purpose. They rate the Conservative (29%) and Labour (27%) parties around the same and the Greens only slightly higher (32%), suggesting that they see Reform as uniquely driven and communicative compared to the other parties. Knowing that we are in an era of voter volatility and switching allegiances, Reform UK does pose a threat to other parties when it comes to their young voter bases.<sup>3</sup>

Although the YSRs are a small voter base, and in some cases less reactionary than older Reform voters, they are worth watching as they grow modestly in number. There is still much to play for before the next general election, and although local election turnouts tend to be lower, the Welsh Senedd elections – where 16-18 year olds can also vote – will be a crucial test, and possibly an indication of things to come.

The statistics reported in this article come from a poll commissioned by Focaldata on behalf of HOPE not hate. The poll (n=22,502) was weighted to be nationally representative across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and was conducted between 30 November 2024 and 8 January 2025.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Polling by Focaldata for HOPE not hate, n=24952, 19 December 2023 - 16 January 2024
- 2 McDonnell, Adam. How Britain voted in the 2024 general election. YouGov, 8 July 2024 (https://yougov.co.uk/ politics/articles/49978-how-britain-voted-in-the-2024general-election)
- 3 Fieldhouse, Edward et al. Electoral Shocks: The Volatile Voter in a Turbulent World. Oxford University Press, 2019 (https://academic.oup.com/book/41032/)

### **REFORM UK: COUNCILLORS & BRANCH CHAIRS**

As Reform UK continues to expand its operation, win more council seats and fill positions in its nascent constituency branches, it will come up against a problem that far-right parties have faced since time immemorial: the party base.

The party suffered a sustained run of damaging stories about their poor-quality candidates in the run-up to the general election in July. Some of these were simply a result of shoddy candidate selection – such as the candidate with a conviction for kicking a dog – and did not necessarily speak to broader issues with the party.

But others were more representative of the political and ideological extremism that festers in the party ranks. The Swindon South candidate and presenter of the far-right media outlet Lotus Eaters, Beau Dade, was dropped after HOPE not hate revealed his sick fantasies of deporting "crying and shrieking" families and desire to shut down the BBC, Guardian and Daily Mail.

The candidate in Orpington, Mick Greenhough, was removed after HOPE not hate revealed that he had tweeted his desire to "remove the Muslims from our territory", while their candidate Ian Harris of Lewes had liked tweets calling for all Muslims to be deported and for Islam to be banned.

Despite the perpetual dog whistling and love of divisive politics, Reform's leadership knows that they cannot build a winning coalition of voters without appealing to centre-right voters who would be put off by the kind of extreme bigotry that exists within their ranks.

It was to these voters that Farage was speaking when, at the Reform UK conference in September 2024, he acknowledged that the slew of candidates exposed for extreme and bizarre views had damaged their chances at the general election:

"We weren't big enough, wealthy enough, professional enough to vet general election candidates properly [...] That amateurism let us down, we could have won a lot more votes."

Farage went on to promise that the party would be "vetting candidates vigorously at all levels" going forward. So how is the newly professionalised, democratised and vigorous party doing?

Not great, going by the choices they've made so far. In January, HOPE not hate revealed that David Hyden-Milakovic, whose extreme views and association with the neo-Nazi Patriotic Alternative group had already been exposed by the anti-fascist research group Red Flare, was now serving as Reform UK's County Organiser for Staffordshire.

Hyden-Milakovic stepped down from the post two days after we published our story, citing new "time constraints and other priorities". But it appears the party had already discovered the connection and allowed him to stay in post. Writing on Facebook in early December, he claimed that he had been subject to a "disciplinary review within Reform UK following unfounded claims regarding my involvement with external political organisations," but that the matter had then been resolved and he would be staying in post.

It's not just far-right politics that has the capacity to embarrass the party. Reform's base has a significant component drawn from the wackier end of the conspiracy theory milieu, many of whom were first drawn to the party through its vocal opposition to lockdowns.

Almost entirely hostile to vaccines, many conspiratorial Reform activists hold a lingering mistrust for Richard Tice and Dr David Bull for a televised conversation in which both men agreed with the idea of vaccine mandates for healthcare workers.

But it looks as though the party is happy for these members to take leadership roles in the party for now. Lee O'Shea, Reform's County Organiser for the West Midlands, is a firm believer in the conspiracy cult QAnon, as well as the ravings of David Icke and Alex Jones.

#### "Qanon, Agenda 21/30, David Ike, Alex Jones etc etc All ridiculed for speaking the truth." *Lee O'Shea, Twitter, 10 August 2023*

On both his publicly accessible Facebook account and an anonymous Twitter account under the pseudonym "Milo IQ", O'Shea has repeatedly endorsed the toxic conspiracy theory, which holds that President Trump is locked in a secret existential struggle with a cabal of demonic pedophiles.

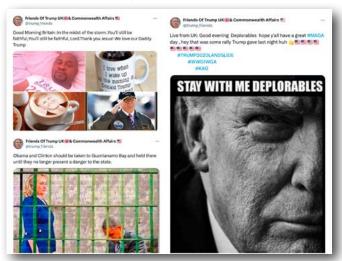


O'Shea's adherence to these beliefs appears to be causing him some discomfort in his role. In a post from January this year, he suggested that Farage might be "controlled opposition" and appeared to question whether Reform was the right place for him:

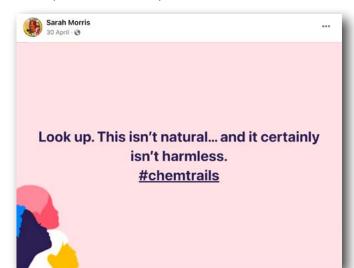
"When some claim Farage is controlled opposition n worse, it does make me think. I'm vexed, are Reform truly an alternative?"

HOPE not hate revealed prior to the election that Augustine Obodo, a fanatical Trump supporter, had regularly endorsed the QAnon conspiracy theory that sprang from Trump supporters during his presidency; his posts frequently use the abbreviated form of the QAnon slogan "Where We Go One We Go All" [WWG1WGA], and shares the movement's key principle that Trump's political enemies should be interned in Guantanamo Bay.

Following the election, Obodo was appointed chair of Reform's Bicester branch, only to be replaced shortly after. But he was not the only QAnon devotee holding a position in the party.



QAnon is not the only crankish theory with support amongst Reform activists. Sarah Morris, chair of Reform's Isle of Wight East branch, appears to be greatly concerned by the "chemtrails" theory, which holds that governments around the world are secretly spraying their citizens with toxic fumes disguised in the vapour trails of aeroplanes.



Apparently also concerned by clouds is Steve Rubidge, chair of Reform's Truro and Falmouth branch. On his Flickr profile, Rubidge has uploaded three photos of what appear to be normal cloud formations with the captions "weather manipulation" and "geoengineering", apparently in the belief that they are evidence of a conspiracy to control the weather.

A committed anti-vaxxer, Rubidge has also condemned the Covid-19 vaccine in the strongest terms, as well as the "sellout celebrities and journalists who pushed the death jabs on to us whilst they took a placebo for the cameras, foolishly thinking that they would inherit the Earth once the rest of us were dead."

The turbulent nature of the conspiracy theory milieu is already presenting the party with issues. Cllr Alex Stevenson of Derbyshire, welcomed into the party despite having been suspended for endorsing Andrew Bridgen's likening of the Covid vaccine to the Holocaust, recently abandoned the party along with nine parish councillors.



As Reform rushes to assemble a slate of candidates for the upcoming local elections, its newfound understanding of the importance of vetting will be put to a stern test. It seems unlikely, however that the party will be able to truly professionalise its operation without incurring the wrath of a significant chunk of its current base.

# FAMILY BUST-UP

Nigel Farage. Photo: Gage Skidmore Tommy Robinson. Photo: HOPE not hate

#### Nigel Farage's war of words over "Tommy Robinson" is part of a wider effort to de-toxify his politics, but it is not without risks. NICK LOWLES reports.

Last December it was rumoured that Elon Musk, the world's richest man, was prepared to support Reform UK to the tune of \$100m. Three weeks later, that potential funding appeared to be off the table, as the man who spent \$250m helping to get Donald Trump elected came out publicly against the Reform UK leader, posting on X: "The Reform Party needs a new leader. Farage doesn't have what it takes."

Incredibly, the public rebuke was over street thug Stephen Lennon, better known as Tommy Robinson.

Amidst a stream of tweets attacking the British government over their handling, or mishandling, of the grooming issue, Musk repeatedly backed Lennon, only to be furious that Farage took an opposite view.



Farage tried to play down the criticism from Musk, even doubling down on his attack on Lennon as a sign of his independence and refusal to be swayed by financial power. Of course, behind the scenes, Farage and his US supporters desperately tried to repair the damage and – ultimately – retain the prospect of funding.

The Reform leader's dislike of Lennon has a long history, but it is also reflective of his attempts to moderate his public views in order to appeal to a broader section of the electorate.

#### **MUTUAL DISLIKE**

Nigel Farage has long made his dislike for Lennon clear. In 2018 he stormed out of an interview in the United States when he learnt that the clip was to be used on Lennon's "Free Speech" video, which was part of the Day for Freedom rally.

A year later, as Farage rallied tens of thousands of supporters at a pro-Brexit demo in Parliament Square, a couple of hundred metres away a cocaine-fuelled Lennon was holding his own pro-Brexit protest.

Lennon was a latecomer to the Brexit cause. By his own admission he had not voted in the 2016 EU referendum, nor had he campaigned for Brexit at any stage. However, with the topic now dominating the political debate in the country, Lennon jumped aboard the Brexit cause, attaching himself to then-UKIP leader Gerard Batten due to their shared antipathy towards Islam.

In November 2018, Batten appointed Lennon as a

personal advisor on "rape gangs and prison reform". This in turn had caused a furious backlash among others in UKIP, including Nigel Farage, who had never liked Lennon. With many UKIP MEPs and NEC members resigning in disgust, Farage called for Batten to stand down as leader.

For Farage, Batten's involvement with Lennon was the final straw, and an indication that UKIP was prioritising street activism over electoral politics.

"The great irony of this change in approach is that it is happening at a time of maximum electoral opportunity for UKIP," Farage wrote in a column for the Daily Telegraph.

"With the Conservative and Labour parties having openly broken both their referendum and general election promises, UKIP should be riding high in the polls.

"With regret, however, I must admit that I now do not believe it will do so again. Mr Batten's obsession with Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (to use Tommy Robinson's real name) and fixation with the issue of Islam makes UKIP unrecognisable to many of us."

With Lennon blocked from joining UKIP, he decided to go it alone and stand as an independent candidate in the 2019 European elections, and when announcing this decision, he couldn't help but have a dig at Farage.

"Put me right inside the EU and they won't know what hit them," said Lennon. "They'll long for the days when it was just Nigel Farage.

"I admire what Farage achieved in the past. But at the end of the day, he's just another millionaire stockbroker who looks down at the working classes.

"And he's terrified of talking about issues like the Islamification of Britain.

"He won't fight the battle for the heart of our country – in fact he bad-mouths those who do."

Last summer, at the huge Tommy Robinson demo, Lennon clearly softened his public criticism of Farage when he asked which of his followers had backed Reform in the general election. A huge cheer went up in the crowd.

If Lennon was hoping that this display of support would soften the Reform leader's view of him, he was deeply mistaken. Days later, as rioting erupted, Farage was at pains to tell the media that Lennon was a troublemaker and was stirring up hatred to help incite the riots.

There is clearly no love lost between the two men. This is probably partly personality clashes, but it is also quite political. Both have big egos and both have been vying to be the main figures on the British right – albeit coming from quite different traditions.

Farage is clearly concerned that Lennon's violent past and aggressive language could alienate potential Reform voters. Lennon, meanwhile, thinks that Farage has sold out in order to achieve political success and so is refusing to say and do what is needed to deal with immigration and the threat of Islam.

### HOW REFORM VOTERS VIEW "TOMMY ROBINSON"

HOPE not hate's analysis of Reform voters have identified five distinct "tribes". The Working Right and Young Radical Men groups is strongly like "Tommy Robinson", while the Moderate Interventionists dislike him. Opinions amongst the two groups of older and more conservative voters, Traditional Conservatives and Older Authoritarian Right, are divided.

To what extent do you like or dislike Tommy Robinson?									
	GenPop	Working Right	Traditional Conserva- tives	Older Au- thoritarian Right	Radical Young Men	Moderate interven- tionist			
Net: Like	17%	55%	36%	32%	40%	19%			
Net: Dislike	42%	13%	31%	30%	23%	40%			
Neither like or dislike	24%	23%	27%	27%	30%	29%			
Never heard of them	17%	9%	7%	11%	7%	11%			

#### THE MODERATE REFORM VOTER

The Reform leader's desire to keep Lennon at arm's length would have been bolstered and even vindicated by evidence that more moderate voters are beginning to switch to Reform, many of whom utterly detest Lennon.

HOPE not hate's analysis of the current Reform voter has identified five distinct tribes. There are those who, as you would expect, have very hard-line positions on immigration and Islam, but there is also a growing group who do not. For these voters, it is the failure of the main two parties to deliver that is pushing them to Reform, rather than an antipathy to immigration.

Labelled the Moderate Interventionists, this group makes up 19% of current Reform voters, with most having come over to Reform since the General Election. Only 5% of Moderate Interventionists "strongly like Tommy Robinson", with a further 14% tending to like him. By contrast, 40% dislike him.

Contrast that to the Working Right group, who are most strongly opposed to immigration and Islam. A majority, 55%, support Lennon, with just 13% not supporting him.

Farage's repeated attempts to distance himself from Lennon, even after Musk's criticism, is quite calculated. The core anti-immigrant vote is probably between 15% of the British population, so to achieve the 30-35% Reform would need to win the next election requires the party winning over more moderate voters – including many who will strongly dislike Lennon.

The Moderate Interventionists is the fastest growing group of Reform voters, and given that they are actually more positive about multiculturalism and the need for community cohesion than the British population at large, Farage is moderating his views – publicly at least.

In September, Farage announced on GB News that it would be a "political impossibility" to mass-deport illegal migrants from Britain, which is the policy wanted by his hardcore supporters.

Preferring to focus on pulling Britain out of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and

creating policies to refuse asylum to anyone crossing the channel, he dismissed a broader policy of mass deportations of those already here.

"For us, at the moment, it's a political impossibility. I'm not going to get dragged down the route of mass deportations or anything like that. If I say I support mass deportations, that's all anybody will talk about for the next 20 years. So it's pointless even going there.

"It's a political impossibility to deport hundreds of thousands of people. We simply can't do it."

Farage has also sought to soften his position on Islam and British Muslims more generally. Speaking on the Winston Marshall podcast in November, the Reform leader said: "The nub of it is, we have a Muslim population in Britain growing at about 75% every 10 years, that's just where we are. If we politically alienate the whole of Islam we will lose. We will lose. "We will lose. By 2050 goodness knows what a terrible state we are going to be in."

#### **POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN FUTURE**

Farage's repeated attempts to put clear blue water between himself and Lennon are not without their risks. While the growing numbers of Moderate Interventionists now backing Reform might like this position, there are many who support the party who absolutely love the former EDL man. While Farage might believe that these voters have nowhere else to go, making it worth upsetting them on this issue, he cannot afford to alienate his base completely.

His detractors in and out of the party have leapt on this issue, criticising Farage for his position. One of these people is Ben Habib, the party's former codeputy leader before he was unceremoniously ousted by Farage and Richard Tice. Days after Elon Musk's attack on Farage, Habib also jumped into the fray.

"Shut up about Tommy Robinson," Habib told Farage on Talk TV.

In another interview on the same channel, Habib said Lennon was a political prisoner, and that as such he should receive the support of Reform.

When Farage claimed that Lennon had committed



Laura Loomer and Steve Bannon. Photos: Gage Skidmore

violence against women, Habib shot back. "It is utterly deplorable that @Nigel\_Farage should accuse Tommy Robinson of violence against women, especially given the current furore over gang rape gangs [sic].

"TR may have many many flaws (I don't know and cannot comment) but he has been at the forefront of calling out those gangs. Disgusting."

Another Reform critic of Farage's position is Howard Cox, the party's candidate in last year's London Mayoral contest. So angry at being told that he could not publicly support Lennon, Cox quit Reform.

Perhaps sensing the mood of the party membership or perhaps simply wanting to exploit Farage's discomfort over the issue, fellow Reform MP Rupert Lowe waded in with a more sympathetic tone.

Speaking to The Sun's Never Mind the Ballots YouTube show, Mr Lowe defended Robinson, saying: "I say he's not right for Reform, he doesn't want to be right for Reform, but he doesn't deserve not to be given the credit for the things that he's done."

Asked about Musk's false claim that Robinson is a "political prisoner" who has been locked up for speaking out on grooming gangs, Mr Lowe poured fuel on the conspiracy theory. "I don't know what he's done and why he's in prison," he claimed.

"I hope while he's in prison he's being treated like every other prisoner. I gather he's in solitary confinement. I don't know the ins and outs of that. I don't know whether it's right that he's in solitary confinement."

Disregarding the fact that Lennon asked to be in solitary confinement, Lowe has quite consciously trod a different path to that of his party leader. Bolstered by Musk's post that he would make a good Reform leader, Lowe was lukewarm in his loyalty to Farage when the row first broke out.

"I thank Elon for his kind comments," Lowe told the media. "I just want to do what is right for my constituency and my country – that is my only interest.

"Nigel is leader of Reform. He made Brexit happen, and for that I will always be grateful."

Hardly a ringing endorsement.

#### LONDON SHOWDOWN

Nigel Farage must hope that the dispute is behind him as the party's rise in the polls appears to have justified his position and the rift with Musk is resolved – at least publicly.

However, this is not to say that the row will not erupt again, especially when Lennon comes out of prison. Having been incarcerated during the public row, he will no doubt have a few choice words to say about Farage on his release.

Another potential showdown might occur in September, when Lennon plans to hold a free speech demonstration in central London in what will be his first public engagement after coming out of prison. Headlining the event will be Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief of staff and a leading force in the MAGA movement.

Another potential speaker is Lennon's close friend Laura Loomer, another MAGA favourite and a hard-line anti-Muslim activist.

While Bannon and Loomer's presence will undoubtedly excite Lennon's supporters, one person who will not be impressed is Elon Musk. Bannon and Loomer have nothing but contempt for the billionaire and have been leading the MAGA campaign against his influence. Their presence on a Lennon demo in London will annoy Musk, not least because he is part-funding Lennon's free speech crusade.

While Farage will attempt to stay clear of this impending fight, it is likely that he will be drawn in at some stage.

# THE OPPORTUNIST EXTREMIST: THE STRANGE RADICALISATION OF MATTHEW GOODWIN

REFORM

UK

Photo: Guy Corbishley / Alamy Stock Photo

#### JOE MULHALL

Writing for Chatham House in 2011, Matthew Goodwin asked, "What drives some citizens to abandon the mainstream in favour of populist extremists?" Since then, he has gone on to answer the question himself.

Today, Goodwin is one of the most influential radicalright figures in the country. His reactionary Substack has over 69,000 subscribers, he has his own show on GB News, and he is a vocal supporter of Nigel Farage's Reform UK, offering strategy advice and whipping up crowds at the party's conferences. Fulfilling a long-held dream, he is now a well-known media commentator, finally receiving the attention he always felt he deserved.

This wasn't always the case. Goodwin was once a serious academic working to understand the drivers of far-right extremism, and for most of his career relatively liberal, seen by colleagues as hard working, bright and ambitious. He produced a number of books and articles on the British National Party and the wider far right. He even sat on the government's Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group and wrote impassioned articles for The Guardian denouncing Islamophobia and warning of the dangers of far-right politics.

Sadly, this has all changed, and in recent years his rightward shift has seen him become a fully fledged radical-right activist.

#### RADICALISATION

Some have argued that Goodwin became radicalised after he "went native" or "drank the Kool-Aid" while studying UKIP for his two co-authored books, *Revolt on the Right* and *UKIP: Inside the Campaign to Redraw the Map of British Politics.* The argument goes that his time with Nigel Farage and other prominent UKIP figures actually served to redraw Matthew Goodwin.

The truth is more complex. Looking at Goodwin's earlier academic work, it is possible to discern a sympathy for the concerns of those who voted for farand radical-right parties. He has long argued that their anger was justified, or at least understandable, and that their supporters had been ignored by mainstream politicians. This certainly isn't a radical position and has been argued by many in social science and beyond for decades. The difference with Goodwin is that he's gone from sympathy for the voters, to sympathy with the far-right parties preying on them.

Yet there is another common thread that can be traced from his earliest days in academia through to today, one that explains his seismic political shift better than anything else. After speaking with a range of former colleagues and academics who have worked with or known Goodwin over the years, there emerged one common point. From his earliest days in academia, he was ruthlessly ambitious, supposedly motivated more by personal advancement than a love for or interest in the topic that he researched.

Goodwin's political shift is perhaps best explained by his desire for recognition. Numerous former colleagues recall his frustration at the speed of his advancement and a growing bitterness at those he blamed for it. This might seem odd for someone who gained a professorship in his mid-thirties but it was recognition from the golden circle of British universities – Oxbridge and the major London institutions, rather than his employer at the University of Kent – that he most desired. Other colleagues recall Goodwin's difficulty with taking criticism – necessary in the peerreviewed world of academia – with one calling him "aggressive, brittle and deeply insecure".

He allegedly felt that his politics, described by numerous colleagues as "working class Tory" at the time, resulted in discrimination against him. The "liberal elites" at these institutions were apparently preventing him from getting the jobs he deserved. This may go some way to explaining why he has now published two polemics about intellectual narrowmindedness in academia: *Values, Voice and Virtue* and *Bad Education*.

The fork in the road came in 2016 with Brexit and the election of Donald Trump. Former colleagues mention that he was appalled by the reaction of his peers to these events, feeling in some cases it was they who had been radicalised, not him. For Goodwin, it appears that this fed into his already existing prejudices. These were the same people – the new elite – who were thwarting his personal ambitions.

Despite being a professor, Goodwin wanted more. Colleagues from this time recall joking that he was always likely to become a TV pundit or MP. Finding that he had impressive access to the right of the Conservative Party and leading figures in UKIP, it seems Goodwin began to see a possible new market to exploit, new opportunities for fame and fortune.

With time Goodwin shifted from sympathy, to excusing, to outright support for the radical right. Yet Goodwin isn't a fanatic. He's more dangerous than that. He will say whatever he thinks will resonate with whatever audience he wants to rile up. It increasingly seems there is nothing he won't say, no foghorn he won't scream through, if he thinks it will get him more views and paying Substack subscribers. He's an opportunist extremist.

#### FOLLOWING HIS OWN BLUEPRINTS

The great irony of Goodwin's career trajectory is that his own academic analysis of the far right can be used to describe his activism.

Goodwin spent many years analysing what drives people towards the far right. He worked to understand the messaging that resonates most with people susceptible to this form of politics. As such Goodwin's rise to a major figure on the British radical right – or "popular extremist" to use a term from his earlier work – can actually be understood as him following the successful blueprint he identified and warned about. He knows which buttons to push, which narratives will cause maximum anger, which topics to highlight and which to avoid. He has essentially reverse-engineered his own research to build his own career as a radicalright influencer.

#### **RACE AND NATION**

While Goodwin's rightward shift has been evident for some years, it has certainly accelerated. During last year's racist riots – the most widespread outbreak of far-right violence in the postwar period – the extent of Goodwin's radicalisation became evident. In a post on



his Substack titled "What did you expect?", he framed the horrifying violence, which included people trying to set alight a hotel with asylum seekers inside, as an understandable reaction to "mass immigration". He described people at the riots as, "ordinary people, who feel like they are losing their country", who were trying to, "exercise their voice".

He also emphasised that the Cardiff-born murderer was "the son of immigrants from Rwanda", in a clear attempt to frame the horrifying attack as a result of immigration. When challenged about his comments on BBC Radio 4's Moral Maze it became clear that there is increasingly a racial element to Goodwin's conception of nationhood.

Similarly, in a 2024 Substack article about Britain's "demographic CRISIS", he warned that "the share of the country's population that identifies as "white British" is forecast to become a minority group around the year 2070," and that "those who oppose these great inflows and do not embrace the rapid ethnic change they cause wonder why it is that politicians seem unable to stop them". At no point does he explain why the decline of the number of "white British" people due to a rise in the number of "black British" or "Asian British" people is a problem. It's presented as self-evident.

Goodwin's slippage towards a racial conception of Britishness was laid bare when he claimed on GB News: "More than 50% of social housing in London is now occupied by people who are not British. This is not acceptable." In reality the percentage is actually about 14%. Goodwin's correction relied on the fact that 48% of social housing in London goes to families headed by people who were not born in Britain, many of whom are naturalised citizens. All of this hints at a conception of nationhood based on birth and race.

#### **ISLAM AND MUSLIMS**

Among Goodwin's more extreme positions are those concerning Islam and Muslim integration. Perhaps this should come as no surprise as his own research showed that "anti-Muslim sentiment is becoming a key driver of support for these parties, and that simply talking about reducing the numbers of immigrants or tightening border security will no longer satisfy the modern PEP [Populist Extremist Parties] supporter". Goodwin knew that Islamophobic rhetoric is a good driver of their support, and so could be a possible driver of his own.

Today he is keen to discredit the very notion of Islamophobia. On his YouTube channel, he describes Islamophobia as "the flavour of the month amongst the elite class". During a debate on GB News, he asked: "Do you not find the term Islamophobia problematic?"

In one of his recent videos, he said: "The reason this matters, perhaps to people like you watching this video, is because I think we can all sense that terms and social norms like 'Islamophobia', 'transphobia', 'xenophobia' or even 'hate' and 'far right' are now being inflated, are being widened, are being ballooned by the expert class to try and shut down discussion about issues they either think are not important or might challenge their power and their interpretation of our society."

This is a far cry from the earlier Goodwin who argued in The Guardian that "Islamophobia does not only affect British Muslims; it plays directly into the hands of extremists who claim that western societies will never accept Islam and its followers". As recently as 2013 he argued that "few serious commentators cling to the bankrupt idea that Islamophobia is not an issue, or is the product of oversensitive British Muslims". It's unclear whether this is an admission that he is no longer a "serious commentator".

#### THE NEW ELITE

In addition to trumpeting the dangers of Islam and the Muslim community, Goodwin also regularly lays blame at the feet of the elite, or his newly defined "new elite". Here we can also see him drawing from his own research into what makes far-right politics successful. Goodwin once wrote that "mainstream parties are lumped into a single 'corrupt' and 'out-of-touch' elite and are 'all the same?" They are attacked "for focusing on obsolete issues, while at the same time suppressing political issues associated with the real conflict between national identity and multiculturalism".

Goodwin said that populist radical-right parties "portray themselves as outsiders in the party system, as underdog parties that represent the true voice of a 'silent majority', and as the only organizations willing to address sensitive issues such as immigration and the integration of Muslims". Today it would be hard to find a better articulation of Goodwin's own reactionary and opportunistic rhetoric on his GB News show, or the strategy of Farage's Reform UK.

More recently, in his 2023 book *Values, Voice and Virtue*, Goodwin posits the existence of a "new elite", which he defines as people from Oxbridge or Russell Group universities living in big cities and part of the professional and managerial class. What unites them is a set of socially liberal or even radically-"woke" ideas. Goodwin seeks to redefine the elite from people with actual power to people with "radically progressive cultural values".

It's perhaps unsurprising that much of the blame for the emergence of the so-called "new elite" is placed upon "the Oxbridge and Russell Group college system", the same institutions that didn't give him the recognition he felt he deserved.

While he accepts in passing that "old elite – clearly – still exist", he fails to convincingly explain why the values of the new elite are somehow more powerful than the money and actual power of the old. For example, one section in society that seems to generally avoid his ire is the financial sector. Perhaps this can be explained by his sideline in providing speeches to practically every major financial

#### SECTION 3 - RADICAL RIGHT

institution in the world. His website proudly lists engagements at UBS, Deutsche Bank, JP Morgan Asset Management and Santander amongst dozens of other financial institutions.

#### **POLLING AS A WEAPON**

Goodwin often employs polling to buttress his reactionary politics and provide an air of scholarly legitimacy to his activism.

Yet in 2013, in an article for The Guardian, he warned readers that one of the problems faced by those opposed to Islamophobia:

"are unhelpful opinion polls, which either attempt to show how many Muslims sympathise with terrorists, or how non-Muslims don't like Muslims. They might be driven by good intentions but often inflame tensions and provide new ammunition to extremists. And worse, they are often inaccurate."

He continued: "If we are going to explore these kinds of questions then we need to make sure that we do it properly, with good data and in a way that does not inadvertently legitimise the narratives of extremists." He even went as far as suggesting such polls should be subject to peer review.

Sadly, Goodwin appears to have forgotten this lesson. In a recent Substack article titled "Shocking: what British Muslims think", he apocalyptically writes about exactly the sort of polling he previously warned about. Only now he describes it as "compulsory reading for anybody and everybody who has a serious interest in the future of Britain and the West more generally".

Since morphing into a radical-right extremist, Goodwin has regularly used polling to evidence his divisive, reactionary and apocalyptic positions. Yet reliability has proved something of an issue for his own company, PeoplePolling, which finished bottom of the list for accuracy at last year's general election.

#### **HYPOCRISY**

Among Goodwin's hypocrisies, there is one more egregious than any other.

Like much of the far right, Goodwin presents himself as a champion and defender of free speech. In one of his alarmist YouTube videos, he warns that the new Labour government "just declared war on free speech and free expression".

Under the previous Conservative administration, Goodwin fought to get the Higher Education Free Speech Act passed, which created a legal requirement for universities to promote and protect free speech on campus.

Despite claiming to be a fervent believer in free speech and a defender of academic freedom, Goodwin is also a vocal supporter of Viktor Orbán's Hungary. Last year he tweeted:

"I just spent 4 days in Hungary, a conservative country criticised by elites across the West. I saw no crime. No homeless people. No riots. No unrest. No drugs. No mass immigration. No broken borders. No self-loathing. No chaos. And now I've just landed back in the UK."

In an interview with a Hungarian news website he said: "The British elite often portrays Hungary as a country



BRIEFIN

Matthew Goodwin

#### How the Rise of National Populists Has Rattled Europe's Center-Right

Oct 15, 2018

EUROPE

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Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban delivers a speech at the European Parliament, Strasbourg, France, Sept. 11, 2018 (AP photo by Jean-Francois Badias).

in violation of EU laws, regulations and standards. But I think their country is just resisting the pressure to impose a liberal agenda represented by a narrow minority of Western countries."

Goodwin has also spoken at a number of events organised by the Mathias Corvinus Collegium, an Orbán government-aligned and funded private educational institution.

Hungary is a country where teachers have been fired for participating in acts of civil disobedience and where tear gas has been used against students protesting legislation to further centralise the public education system. Orbán's government has limited press freedom and facilitated media takeovers by investors sympathetic to his party, Fidesz. Goodwin seems more than comfortable to ignore all of this and praise the country while presenting himself as a defender of free speech and academic freedom at home.

#### A DANGER

It is easy to look at Goodwin's radicalisation as an amusing story of how ego and self-interest can drive someone to destroy their reputation. How a sad desperation for recognition can make some people do and say anything. A warning about the radicalising potential of the endless hunt for clicks and subscribers.

But Goodwin's willingness to do or say anything that will advance his own career actually makes him more dangerous. It doesn't matter if he actually believes the reactionary and extreme things he says. It's not really relevant if there is genuine conviction behind his increasingly irate and angry social media posts.

Goodwin's years of work to understand what makes far-right parties successful, and what angers their supporters to the point of activism, mean he knows which drums to bang, which topics to focus on, which language to use, which communities to target. The result is that he is now one of the most effective radical-right figures in the UK.

# **STRATEGIC OBSTRUCTION:** HOW EUROPE'S FAR-RIGHT PARTIES ARE BLOCKING URGENT CLIMATE ACTION

#### PALLAVI SETHI

Climate change is no longer a distant threat. It is here and it is deadly. In 2024, catastrophic floods and storms ravaged Europe killing over 150 people in Spain, causing €1.3 billion in damages in Austria, and displacing thousands in Poland and the Czech Republic. Storms wreaked havoc across Germany and Wales. Experts warn that without urgent action, climate change could kill millions in Europe.

Despite such devastating consequences, members of Reform UK continue to promote outright climate denial. In a recent Sky News interview, the party's Deputy leader Richard Tice absurdly claimed that there's "no evidence" human activity causes climate change and dismissed decades of scientific evidence as "garbage". Tice's remarks are not only factually baseless but dangerously irresponsible as he represents Boston and Skegness, a constituency which is one of UK's most vulnerable areas to rising sea levels.

This disregard for science is not occurring in isolation. A dangerous coalition is forming – one that thrives on misinformation, weaponises doubt, and aims to dismantle climate policies. The US-based Heartland Institute, a climate-denial think tank, is forming alliances with far-right parties, including Reform UK, to strengthen its regional influence in Europe and the UK. In December 2024, the group launched its new London branch where Reform UK leader Nigel Farage was the keynote speaker.

An analysis of recent national election manifestos of three far-right parties – Reform UK, Alternative for Germany (AfD), and Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) – along with messaging from the Heartland Institute, reveals a shared agenda: use climate misinformation to obstruct climate policies and sow doubt. Evidence also links the Heartland Institute to these parties and highlights an ideological alignment against climate action.

#### A CALCULATIVE RESISTANCE: HOW FAR-RIGHT PARTIES ARE REFRAMING CLIMATE POLICIES

The 2024 elections proved victorious for several far-right parties in Europe and the UK. Austria's FPÖ achieved its first national election victory since World War II. In Germany, AfD emerged as the second largest political party in the 2025 general elections, doubling its vote share from 2021. It is also the first far-right party to win a state election since the fall of the Nazi regime. Reform UK under Nigel Farage won five parliamentary seats during the general election.

All three parties share a common ideology centred on nationalism and sovereignty which shapes their position on immigration, Euroscepticism, and the environment. For instance, they portray the European Union (EU) as an overreaching entity that erodes national sovereignty, and depict immigration as a cultural and economic threat to national identity. They view the environment through an ethnonationalist lens and link land and nature to heritage and identity.

Now, they are using a similar strategy to block climate action. An analysis of the 2024 Reform UK, 2024 FPÖ, and 2025 AfD manifestos reveals a counter-narrative that reframes climate policy as an economic threat, an ideological agenda, and a tool of supranational control. They depict fossil fuels not as polluters but



as symbols of national stability and financial security. The recent political shifts, therefore, carry profound implications for global climate efforts.

#### **CLIMATE ACTION: FROM SCIENCE TO IDEOLOGY**

Reform UK initially rejected man-made climate change in its draft manifesto but later removed these unscientific claims from its final version. However, this did not stop party leader Nigel Farage from claiming, just days before the general election, that carbon dioxide is not a pollutant because it supports plant growth.

Austria's FPÖ generally avoids outright climate denial in its manifesto but instead engages with inflammatory language. It asserts that "environmental protection is more than climate hysteria" and promises to criminalise dissent by imposing "strict penalties" on "deluded" climate activists. Meanwhile, Germany's AfD openly rejects anthropogenic climate change in its manifesto.

These parties do not engage with the vast body of scientific evidence on climate change or debate effective mitigation strategies. Instead, they dismiss climate policies as ideological or extreme.

**Reform UK** – "Divisive woke ideology has captured our public institutions."

■ **AfD** – "The decades-long focus on ideology-driven 'climate policy'...have put Germany in a precarious energy policy situation."

**FPÖ** – "We need a de-ideologised energy policy that supports Austrian private households and companies instead of endangering their existence. Imports are decided on economic, not moral, interests." Over the years, the Heartland Institute has used the same narrative by villainising climate policies as "ideologically motivated regulations". The climatedenial group has even gone a step further by declaring that "there is no climate emergency".

This rhetoric shifts climate change from an urgent crisis into a cultural battleground where climate policies become ideological issues rather than scientific priorities. This reckless approach can increase public polarisation on issues of active policymaking, undermine trust in scientific institutions, and delay necessary action.

#### FOSSIL FUELS: FROM POLLUTERS TO PROTECTORS

Reform UK, AfD, and the FPÖ do not openly position themselves as opponents of climate action. Instead, they present themselves as defenders of economic stability. Climate policies, including subsidies, emission targets, and taxes on fossil fuels, are often portrayed as threats to industrial growth. At the same time, these parties frame fossil fuels as pillars of stability and security despite clear evidence that they are the primary drivers of climate change.

Reform UK's manifesto, for example, falsely blames net zero policies for rising energy prices and industrial decline. The party pledges to "scrap energy levies and Net Zero to slash energy bills", ignoring the fact that green subsidies are not responsible for soaring gas prices. Expert analysis has shown that these price hikes are caused by factors like post-COVID demand, severe winters, and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

#### **REFORM LEADERS IN THEIR OWN WORDS**

■ NIGEL FARAGE: "Mark my words. This isn't going to end with 20 mile an hour zones and low traffic neighbourhoods. No No. This is the beginning of climate lockdowns." (Nigel Farage, X, June 13, 2023)

■ **RICHARD TICE:** "The climate has changed for millions and millions of years. That's the reality, way before man-made CO2 emissions." (BBC Question Time, April 18, 2024)

#### **RUPERT LOWE:** "It's

disappointing that climate change has been blamed as the primary cause of these devastating bushfires by both our Parliament and other so-called climate experts. The cult of climate change marches on with no definitive evidence to support or deny the factual accuracy of their assertions." (EU Parliament, January 13, 2020)

■ LEE ANDERSON: "If we became net zero tomorrow, this country... it wouldn't make a blind bit of difference to the earth's atmosphere." (February 2024)

#### ANDREA JENKYNS: "No I

don't...I don't believe this whole Net Zero agenda. I think it's a way to tax people and so I don't believe this" (While answering the question "Is climate change to blame for Storm Bert?" Jeremy Vine, November 2024)

Similarly, AfD claims that renewable energy is costing taxpayers "enormous sums" and falsely blames wind power for rising grid costs.

The FPÖ dismisses decarbonisation as "utopian" and a threat to prosperity. All three parties frame oil, coal, and gas as indispensable security assets and advocate for greater reliance on fossil fuel production.

**Reform UK** – "Cheap, Secure Energy for Britain Start fast-track licences of North Sea gas and oil."

■ AfD – "... energy supply facilities such as Nord Stream 2 are the foundation of a competitive and future-proof industrial nation, but also information channels and lines"... "There is therefore no reason to restrict or even prohibit the necessary and sensible use of fossil energies (i.e. coal, natural gas, oil)."

**FPÖ** – "Renewable energy sources cannot cover all of Austria's needs. Russian gas will continue to make an important contribution to our security of supply." These parties take a populist approach by claiming to be the true voice of the ordinary people while branding climate advocates as evil elites. This argument ignores both the economic evidence of renewable energy and long-term costs of climate inaction. Though they claim to protect the working class, their position ultimately threatens financial stability.

#### **CLIMATE AGREEMENTS: FROM UNITY TO CONTROL**

Beyond economic suicide, Reform UK, the FPÖ, and AfD frame climate policies as an overreach of supranational governance. Climate agreements are framed as instruments of control rather than a coordinated effort to reduce emissions.

Both AfD and the FPÖ oppose EU sanctions against Russia and prioritise energy ties over geopolitical concerns. Both reject the EU Green Deal and cast it as an extension of EU control. AfD even advocates withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, viewing international commitments as a form of external control.

**Reform UK** – "Legislate to Scrap EU Regulations with Immediate Effect"

■ AfD – "We also want to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement... This also includes the EU's "Green Deal"

**FPÖ** – "The EU's 'Green Deal' is seriously damaging our economy."

The Heartland Institute echoes these views. Following Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, Heartland Europe hailed it as "a global return to pragmatic climate policy", questioning, "How soon will European nations follow?"

By distorting climate agreements as coercion, these parties are actively undermining the legitimacy of climate cooperation.

The analysis shows that Reform UK, AfD, and the FPÖ use a rhetoric to reject scientific consensus, distort economic facts and portray climate action as a threat to national sovereignty. Instead of engaging with evidence-based solutions, they rely on culture war tactics to polarise the public. These parties tap into Eurosceptic and nationalist views to push the false idea that external forces, such as pro-renewable governments or the European Union, are burdening ordinary people with high energy costs in the name of green policies. They frame to transition to renewables as an elite-driven agenda.

Their opposition to climate policies isn't just about fossil fuels, it is part of an effort to erode trust in scientific expertise and international cooperation.

#### **OPPOSING CLIMATE LEGISLATION THROUGH MISINFORMATION**

Reform UK, FPÖ, and AfD use climate misinformation to oppose policies. They frequently deny climate science and promote conspiracy theories.

In 2022, Reform leader Nigel Farage launched a campaign demanding a net zero referendum while promoting false claims. He strategically framed this as a democratic defiance against elite consensus. A year later, Farage circulated conspiracy theories, accusing the government of imposing "climate lockdowns". Reform UK's elected members are no exception. Deputy leader Richard Tice has repeatedly denied climate change and advocated for adaptation over mitigation, a stance echoed by the Heartland Institute. In fact, all five Reform MPs - Nigel Farage, Lee Anderson, Richard Tice, Rupert Lowe, and James McMurdock - have a history of spreading climate misinformation. The party is committed to recruiting more climate-deniers as it recently welcomed ex-Tory MP Andrea Jenkyns, director of the infamous climate-denier group Net Zero Watch.



	<b>Climate Position</b>	Renewable Energy	Fossil Fuels	Climate Agreements
REFORM	Climate change has happened for millions of years.	Scrap Net Zero. Scrap climate-related farming subsidies.	Fast-track licences of North Sea gas and oil.	Legislate to <b>scrap</b> <b>EU Regulations</b> with immediate effect.
AfD	Climate change has <b>existed at</b> <b>all times</b> .	Wind turbines fundamentally pose a threat. AfD opposes unrealistic EU CO2 reduction targets.	Supply facilities such as <b>Nord Stream 2</b> are the <b>foundation</b> of a competitive and future-proof industrial nation.	We want to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement, the EU's Green Deal.
<b>FP()</b>	Environmental protection is more than <b>climate hysteria</b> .	The <b>climate bonus</b> , a completely <b>meaningless</b> redistribution of money.	Russian gas will continue to make an important contribution to our security of supply.	The <b>EU's "Green</b> <b>Deal"</b> is seriously <b>damaging our</b> economy.

A comparative analysis of energy policies: key themes from three party manifestos on climate change, renewable energy, fossil fuels, and climate agreements.

Similarly, AfD members, including party leader Alice Weidel, have routinely denied climate change and presented climate policies as economically harmful. In 2023, AfD launched the "Heizhammer" (heating hammer) campaign to oppose the proposed Building Energy Act and falsely claimed that the Act would ban existing heating systems. Ultimately, a diluted version of the law was passed. The party also firmly opposes wind energy. In the run up to the 2025 general election, Weidel promised to remove wind farms, calling them "windmills of shame". Experts criticised Weidel's remarks and accused her of distorting facts. The party has even falsely linked farmer protests to opposition of green policies.

In Austria, FPÖ leader Herbert Kickl has repeatedly described climate policies as "climate communism". Kickl has also undermined climate science and

### **REFORM CANDIDATE LEADS CLIMATE SCEPTIC GROUP**

Andrea Jenkyns, Reform UK's candidate for the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral election, is a Director of Net Zero Watch (NZW), a campaign group set up to oppose Net Zero targets. Net Zero Watch was created by the Global Warming Policy Foundation, the UK's most significant climate change denial group. NZW recently called for more fossil fuel extraction and the building of new coal-fired power stations. attacked the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world's leading scientific body on climate. Such scepticism extends to the party's broader rhetoric as FPÖ members falsely claimed that combustion engines are cleaner than electric vehicles and that Austria's National Energy and Climate Plan would cause poverty.

#### STRATEGIC CLIMATE OBSTRUCTION

The Heartland Institute is strategically collaborating with far-right parties including Reform UK to dismantle climate policies. It has deepened its ties with Nigel Farage who attended the group's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Chicago and was later the guest of honour at its European launch in December. The climate denial group has also cultivated strong ties with AfD. An undercover CORRECTIV investigation exposed Heartland's efforts to undermine climate measures, spread disinformation, and collaborate with young AfD affiliates like YouTuber Naomi Seibt in Germany. Building on these connections, Heartland expanded its reach to the European parliament. In 2023, MEPs and FPÖ members Harald Vilimsky and Roman Haider invited Heartland president James Taylor to speak against climate policies in the EU parliament.

In addition to its growing political alliances, Heartland is also closely working with other anti-climate European organisations. This includes Germany's European Institute for Climate and Energy, with which it has co-sponsored events like "Rebutting the United Nations' Climate Delusion".

The growing alliance between far-right parties and climate-denial groups isn't just about ideology. It's a strategic effort to stall climate action. These groups are spreading misinformation, exploiting economic anxieties, and distorting scientific truth. The time to confront this climate deception is now. The stakes have never been higher.

**Pallavi Sethi** is a Policy Fellow (Climate Change Misinformation) at the Grantham Research Institute.

### **POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT**



#### CALVIN ROBINSON CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Calvin Robinson is a far-right commentator and evangelical priest who developed a following largely through his weekly show on GB News, "Calvin's Common Sense Crusade", which often saw him wearing his priest's cassock on air. Robinson mixes his strict interpretation of Christian morality with an anti-immigrant and conspiratorial outlook that has become increasingly extreme over time, for example repeatedly calling for an end to non-Christian migration to the UK.

In 2023, he was sacked by GB News after leaping to the defence of his friend Laurence Fox, following the

latter's abusive on-air tirade against the journalist Ava Santina. He took his show to the Lotus Eaters, where he spoke to the Christian nationalist Joel Webbon – who has called Judaism a "parasitical" faith – to criticise Jews as opponents of Christianity. Robinson has posted on X about how he recognises "Talmudic Judaism as a problem".

Robinson was appointed lead spokesman for UKIP in August last year, and left the UK shortly after for Michigan, where he became a priest at an Anglican Catholic church in Grand Rapids. His ministry did not last long. In January 2025, he mimicked Elon Musk's apparent Nazi salute at an anti-abortion event. Robinson, who defended his actions as a joke, was defrocked. He continues to co-host an occasional podcast with Laurence Fox.

#### SECTION 3 – RADICAL RIGHT

#### LAURENCE FOX AND RECLAIM Categories: Independent activist

Laurence Fox is a former actor and musician who since 2020 has carved out a career as a radical-right provocateur and aspiring politician. His views came to attention following an appearance on BBC's Question Time in 2020, when he dismissed the idea that racism played a part in media hostility towards Meghan Markle. He soon capitalised on the controversy that followed, launching a career as a commentator and establishing the Reclaim Party that year, which he dubbed as a "UKIP for the culture wars".

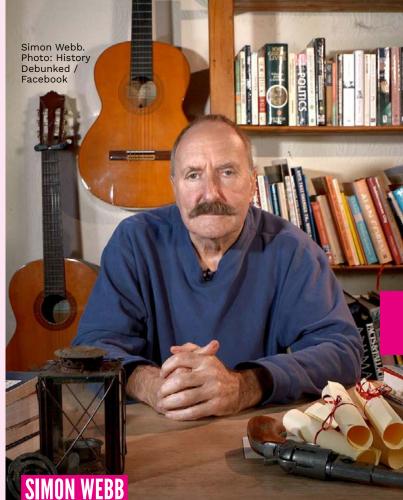
Fox's political ambitions have been dogged by administrative issues and derisory election results. In 2021 he received just 1.9% of the vote in the London mayoral election, despite the endorsement of Reform UK and a significant media profile, and in 2023 he pulled in just 2.3% in the Uxbridge by-election. Fox's attempt to run for London mayor in 2024 ended when his nomination paperwork, entered moments before the deadline, was deemed invalid due to errors. He was ultimately able to contest the London Assembly election but lost his deposit after winning just 0.5% of the vote. The spring election was one of Fox's many embarrassments last year. In April, he was ordered to pay £180,000 to two people he had libelled by referring to them as paedophiles on X.

He also has a media career as a commentator, but was sacked from his GB News job in late 2023 after a misogynistic rant against the journalist Ava Santina. Since then, he has taken to posting increasingly inflammatory messages on social media. After the Southport stabbings, he said: "We need to permanently remove Islam from Great Britain." He furthermore declared "war" against Keir Starmer and "immigrant barbarians" before leaving the country to go on holiday to Cork, Ireland.

There are significant doubts about the viability of Reclaim going forward. The party is exclusively bankrolled by pro-Brexit businessman Jeremy Hosking, who has donated £4.6 million to date.

Reclaim Party Ltd, the private company that controls the party, was almost struck off by Companies House at the start of 2024 after failing to file its accounts, and Fox has stated that the leaders of Reform UK and the SDP have both approached Hosking to solicit his support and abandonment of Reclaim.





#### CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

History Debunked, run by Simon Webb, is a YouTube channel with 240,000 subscribers. It publishes videos about the perceived decline of Britain and the socalled "blackwashing" of British history.

Webb addressed the Traditional Britain Group Christmas social in 2022, and told his followers to vote for the English Constitution Party, a conspiracy theorist organisation, in the local elections that year.

Webb has received funding from Andrew Conru, the tech entrepreneur behind the Human Diversity Foundation. Thanks to a grant, Webb wrote a book on race science called *The Equalitarian Dogma*. He has become increasingly known as a race science author, writing for Aporia Magazine and appearing on the podcast of Edward Dutton.

Last year, his Substack – which has 5,000 subscribers – began to publish a number of articles about racial differences in intelligence. In one article, he wrote: "White people, by and large, know that black people tend not to be as articulate and bright as they are themselves, and simply adjust their conversation and behaviour towards them accordingly."

Webb's articles assert that black people are incapable of deferring gratification and being on time. In another post, he writes that "black people seem to prefer to operate in groups", and make excessive noise "either by shrieking and shouting or playing loud pop music". He has also suggested that black people belong to a different species and asserted that Muslims are "working from within to subvert" the nations of Europe.

#### SARGON OF AKKAD/LOTUS EATER MEDIA Category: Media Outlet

#### LEADER: CARL BENJAMIN (AKA SARGON OF AKKAD)

The Lotus Eaters is a podcast and media platform set up by misogynistic influencer Carl Benjamin (AKA Sargon of Akkad). Benjamin first came to notoriety via his YouTube channel, which was involved in the so-called "Gamergate" phenomenon, in which misogynistic video game enthusiasts mounted harassment campaigns against female game developers and journalists.

Benjamin has courted controversy ever since, being banned from social platforms for the use of racial slurs and infamously stating that he "wouldn't even rape" the Labour MP Jess Phillips. In 2018, Benjamin joined UKIP under the leadership of Gerard Batten and stood as a candidate in the 2019 European elections. He is also a repeat speaker at the Traditional Britain Group conference.

The Lotus Eaters' website hosts a wide array of text, audio and video content, some free to view and some placed behind a paywall for subscribers, and it has eight regular contributors across the platform.

These include Beau Dade, a Reform candidate sacked after HOPE not hate exposed his article calling for the deportation of a "foreign plague", and Harry Robinson, who has called for the raising of a white racial consciousness in Britain. Connor Tomlinson, who has said the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory is "real", interviewed the former prime minister Liz Truss on the website last year.

#### TURNING POINT UK Leader: Nick Tenconi Category: Organisation



Turning Point UK (TPUK) is the British offshoot of the influential American far-right group Turning Point USA. TPUK launched in 2019 with some fanfare and much derision. The group was intended to emulate the success of its American parent group in mobilising young conservatives on college campuses, but failed to create any organic presence in universities here and had essentially been moribund for some time.

However, following the addition of COO Nick Tenconi (now UKIP leader) to the group, it appears to be in the process of reinventing itself as a streetprotest organisation, and was a visible presence in the demonstrations against drag queen storytelling sessions in 2022 and 2023.

A report by Red Flare last year documented the connections between TPUK and football hooligan groups like Pie and Mash Squad and the Democratic Football Lads Alliance. TPUK signed a "patriot declaration" with Patriots of Britain (an anti-migrant group), Students Against Tyranny (a conspiratorial youth organisation) and Antifa Public Watch (a farright social media operation). Tenconi spoke at a public demonstration in January 2025, calling for the detention and deportation of "all Islamists" and "all migrants who are here to colonise".



The UK Independence Party, better known as UKIP, is a far-right party that played a leading role in pushing for the UK to leave the European Union. Founded in 1993 as a single-issue Eurosceptic campaign group, the party began to perform well in local and national elections under the leadership of Nigel Farage, and it was UKIP's growing popularity in the years leading up to the 2015 general election that prompted then-Prime Minister David Cameron to promise a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU if given another term.

However, the party has since faced a catastrophic fall in fortunes, with its vote share and income dwindling to the point of oblivion. It faced relentless infighting and ten changes of leadership between the resignation of Nigel Farage in 2016 and the election of leader Neil Hamilton in 2021. In January last year, Hamilton stepped down and Lois Perry, a climate-sceptic campaigner, briefly took over. She resigned after 34 days, citing a bad case of pneumonia (and has since re-emerged as director of the British offshoot of the Heritage Foundation, an American climate-denial pressure group).

Nicholas Tenconi, the head of Turning Point UK, is now UKIP's leader. In a podcast in January 2025, he admitted being sentenced for a fight outside a nightclub. A media report from his 2011 court case mentions Tenconi punched a victim in an apparent drunken argument over a cigarette, which led to the victim being kicked on the ground.

UKIP entered 24 candidates at the general election, just over half the 43 it put up in 2019. They included Voice of Wales's co-founder Stan Robinson, who has previously called for a journalist to be castrated with a "rusty blade". All but one lost their deposits. UKIP also performed badly in the local elections, putting forward just 16 candidates, including the conspiracy theorist Leo Robinson, who has told his followers to prepare for war with "death jab agents".

However, while UKIP remains a marginal force, it does appear to have stabilised over the last year and has welcomed in former Reform UK supporters who are angry at Nigel Farage's refusal to offer support to Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson). While the numbers are small, it has seen the rank-and-file membership of the party grow for the first time in some years. Tenconi has also begun to hold regular demonstrations which attract relatively small numbers.

A far cry from its heyday as a major force on the right, UKIP is now a small and increasingly extreme far-right party.

Photo: Anything Goes With James English

DAN WOOTTON CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

A former celebrity journalist at The Sun, Dan Wootton joined GB News in 2021 to host a discussion show. He was suspended and ultimately left his job after an incident on his programme in which Laurence Fox made sexually offensive comments about a female journalist.

His new online outlet is named "Dan Wootton Outspoken" and includes a YouTube channel with 292,000 subscribers, and a Substack with 38,000 subscribers. Wootton interviews figures familiar in the radical and wider far right, such as Laurence Fox, Nick Tenconi, and Calvin Robinson.

#### THE MALLARD Category: Media Outlet / Magazine

The Mallard is a small right-wing blog set up in 2016 that has published a printed magazine since April 2021. Describing itself as

"conservative", the outlet is far to the right of even the current incarnation of the Conservative Party and gives voice to a niche brand of "High Tory" philosophy, popular among some right-wing university students and few others.

Despite the efforts to maintain a somewhat mainstream appearance, articles reveal that The Mallard's authors share much in common with more lowbrow outlets of the far right; a contributor argued in October that London's pro-Palestine demonstrations raised "a question of race; the preservation of the White British," while editor-inchief Samuel Martin complains of "anti-whiteness" and endorses anti-migrant tweets from the fascist activist Steve Laws on X/Twitter.

In March, an article previously written by Lotus Eaters host Benjamin "Beau" Dade was uncovered by HOPE not hate. In it, he fantasised about deporting "millions" of British citizens so the country could "rid itself of the foreign plague we have been diseased with".

#### A FORCE FOR GOOD Leader: Alistair McConnachie Category: Organisation

A Force For Good (AFFG) is a Scottish self-described "pro-UK campaign group and think tank" headed by former UKIP organiser, Alistair McConnachie.

McConnachie was forced out of UKIP in 2001 for engaging in Holocaust denial. He was paid by the Orange Order for "social media services" ahead of the 2014 independence referendum, and also addressed the tiny but extreme TradSoc conference in 2019.

Under the AFFG banner, McConnachie produces a regular, but little-viewed, stream of video content, with guests including David Clews of Unity News Network, David Kurten of the Heritage Party and Niall Fraser of the Scottish Family Party. McConnachie has himself appeared on far-right shows, including Voice of Wales in 2024.

McConnachie and AFFG are active in Scottish street politics, for example holding counter-demonstrations against pro-independence marches and supporting anti-trans demonstrations. In 2023, when asked by a reporter at an anti-republican protest, McConnachie stood by his assertion that "gas chambers [were not] used to execute Jews", and that eyewitness accounts had been "revealed as false or exaggerated".

He is also founder of Independent Green Voice, a tiny political party that has fielded former BNP activists Max Dunbar and John Robertson as candidates. In 2021, the group was accused by the Scottish Greens of having cost them seats, due to the similar name and logo possibly confusing voters.





#### **REFORM UK** Category: Political Party Leader: Nigel Farage



Reform UK is the relaunched political project that started life as

the Brexit Party in 2019. The party had a successful first outing at the European elections in that year, in which then-leader Nigel Farage led the party to the highest vote share, at a time of deep dissatisfaction with the Conservative Party and Labour. The party then had a fairly disastrous entry in the general election in December of that year, after entering into a pact with the Conservative Party and grudgingly pulling candidates from every constituency with a Conservative incumbent.

Following the departure of Farage and its relaunch as Reform UK under new leader Richard Tice, the party made little headway in living up to its initial successes. Tice and his policies aroused little enthusiasm, and remained stuck around the 5% mark in national polling despite a substantial drop in support for the Conservative Party.

However, the return of Farage in the weeks prior to the general election changed things dramatically. Having spent three lucrative years hosting a primetime show on GB News and appearing on I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!, Farage returned to retake the leadership of the party, a u-turn on his earlier decision to prioritise campaigning for Trump's reelection instead.

With their talismanic leader in place, Reform UK came in a strong third place with 14.3% of the vote, although in the warped reality of the UK's first-past-the-post electoral system this translated to just five seats: Clacton, Ashfield, Boston & Skegness, Great Yarmouth and Basildon South & East Thurrock. Indeed, the party

#### KATIE HOPKINS CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Katie Hopkins is a provocative far-right former columnist and current social media figure. First coming to attention as a particularly unpleasant contestant on BBC series The Apprentice, Hopkins launched a career as a talking head on discussion shows, frequently called upon to provide offensive commentary on issues around race, class, weight and many other topics.

Her career in mainstream media, including stints as a host on LBC and columnist for The Sun and Daily Mail, slowly ground to a halt after her increasingly extreme statements went beyond what her respective employers could tolerate. This included a particularly notorious column for The Sun in 2015, in which she referred to migrants as "cockroaches" and "feral humans", and a tweet calling for a "final solution" following the Manchester bombing in 2017.

Like many far-right influencers, Katie Hopkins expanded influence into new audiences during the pandemic by consistently downplaying the severity of the virus and opposing lockdowns and the vaccine. already held Ashfield following then-Conservative MP Lee Anderson defecting to Reform in March 2024.

Since the election, the party has conducted a number of drastic changes. These have included the controversial replacement of chairman Ben Habib with millionaire donor Zia Yusuf, as well as promises to "professionalise and democratise" the party – translating into the formation of almost 400 constituency branches.

Reform has also steadily grown its number of councillors to 52, the vast majority of whom have defected from the Conservative Party; just eleven of its councillors have been elected under the party's banner and its by-election record is improving but still patchy.

Reform's steady rise in the polls since the general election, which has seen them come in first place in two separate polls in January, will be put to the test at the 2025 local elections. Many pollsters overstated Reform's vote share prior to the 2024 general election, and the lower turnout at local elections might see less-engaged prospective Reform voters stay home on the day.

However, it will also be the first major outing for Reform's brand new network of constituency branches. It is hard to say how effective local branches will be at this stage; while some in Reform will have prior experience campaigning for other parties, others might have a steeper learning curve. It is likely, however, that all will be fired up with the enthusiasm that comes with campaigning for a new party that is climbing the polls, a stark contrast to the position of both Labour and the Conservatives.

For more on Reform UK see the articles earlier in this report.



Hopkins has launched another run of live shows for 2025, with dozens of sell-out events scheduled at small venues starting in April. These include appearances at HOPE Sussex, the conspiracy-oriented "autonomous community" set up by Matt and Sadie Single, former British National Party officials.

Hopkins has also continued her longstanding alliance with Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), recording a video address for the crowds at his London rally in June and later working with him and others on "The Pledge", a petition that sought to "reclaim our nation's identity, its Christian traditions, culture and values" and "resist tyranny".

#### SECTION 3 - RADICAL RIGHT

#### ENGLISH DEMOCRATS Category: Political Party Leader: Robin Tilbrook



Founded in 2002, the English Democrats is a farright party that calls for the creation of an English parliament. Its chairman is Robin Tilbrook, a solicitor and perennial failure at the ballot box. Tilbrook frequently promotes the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory and has denounced the Jewish financier George Soros for his apparently "evil record and baneful influence".

Following the collapse of the British National Party (BNP) in the early 2010s, the English Democrats attracted former members of the fascist party, and at one point Tilbrook estimated that a tenth of its membership originated from the BNP. To followers of the English Democrats, Tilbrook frequently promotes a book written by Nick Griffin which claims that Jews control the media.

A friend of Mark Collett, the leader of the fascist Patriotic Alternative (PA), Tilbrook has also appeared on PA livestreams and advised audiences on how to avoid scrutiny from the Prevent counter-radicalisation programme.

In September 2023, the party announced an alliance with UKIP, registering the "Patriots Alliance" with the Electoral Commission. Two candidates stood under the name in the 2024 general election.

However, in June 2024, HOPE not hate revealed that the English Democrats had also struck a secret deal with PA. Collett, under pressure from his members for his failure to register PA with the Electoral Commission

#### HEARTS OF OAK Category: Media Outlet

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Founded in February 2020, Hearts of Oak was originally presented as an alliance between far-right and libertarian activists, including Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), Carl Benjamin (AKA Sargon of Akkad) and a number of former UKIP activists, including ex-leader Gerard Batten.

In 2023, HOPE not hate revealed that Peter McIlvenna and fellow co-founder Alan Craig had long been members of the secretive organisation called the New Issues Group, which worked to push anti-Muslim politics and met secretly on the parliamentary estate.



as a political party, offered his members the chance to stand in the general election under the banner of the English Democrats. Four candidates took up this deal, and ultimately none of them polled higher than 1% of the vote. The so-called "migrant hunter" turned fascist activist Steve Laws also represented the party in Dover & Deal, receiving just 185 votes (0.4%).

In 2009, the party established the Workers of England Union (WEU), a trade union popular among conspiracy theorists and the far right. While WEU claims that it is "not affiliated to any political party", Tilbrook sits as WEU Chairman, and the WEU General Secretary is Stephen Morris, a perennial candidate for the English Democrats party in Greater Manchester. Niall McCrae, a far-right activist and conspiracy theorist, is a representative of WEU and addressed the PA conference last October to advertise the organisation.

Today, Hearts of Oak is little more than an outlet for McIlvenna to produce video podcasts interviewing other far-right activists and commentators such as Tommy Robinson, Calvin Robinson, the Austrian identitarian leader Martin Sellner and David Kurten from the Heritage Party. McIlvenna has also been a regular at Robinson's demonstrations over the past year.

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## **RACE SCIENCE**

The race science movement, long thought to be populated by ageing cranks within the wider far right, is back.

A new generation of young and active campaigners advancing the misuse of science for racist purposes has arrived. Unfounded claims that racial differences – above all those in intelligence ~ are the cause of genetic factors have rarely been so popular in the mainstream.

Race science accounts on social media are regularly reposted by Elon Musk and other tech entrepreneurs, while graphs purporting to identify a national average of IQ scores are frequent fodder for viral extremist accounts.

Last year, HOPE not hate investigated the popularity of biological determinism, which also extends to asserting the superiority of men over women and rich over poor. It led to the uncovering of the Human Diversity Foundation, a private, US-registered company funded by a wealthy tech entrepreneur.

The obsession with IQ, genetic differences, eugenics – all of which are scientifically spurious at best – in discussion with racial differences now form a growing part of far-right discussion.

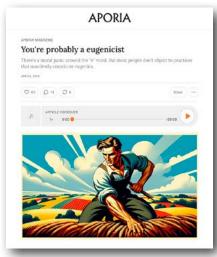


#### HUMAN DIVERSITY FOUNDATION Category: private company

The Human Diversity Foundation (HDF) advances race science. It is the successor to the Pioneer Fund, an American eugenics organisation created in 1937 that developed ties to Nazi Germany and disseminated propaganda on its behalf. Registered in Wyoming for privacy reasons, HDF is led by Emil Kirkegaard, a Danish race scientist, and Matthew Frost, a former religious studies teacher from the UK.

Kirkegaard and Frost separately manage the two main arms of HDF. The first is an underground research team that publishes articles in OpenPsych and Mankind Quarterly, both race science journals. Kirkegaard's team consists of approximately a dozen authors, one of whom is Davide Piffer, an Italian race scientist who referred to African immigrants as "gorillas" and had his paper cited in the manifesto of the 2022 Buffalo terrorist who killed 10 people.

The second arm of HDF aims to reach a larger audience through its media outreach. It includes Aporia Magazine, a race science publication that Frost founded. He told an undercover reporter for HOPE not hate that his intention was to be read "by the elite, people aspiring to the elite, people who accidentally



end up becoming the elite because they're so crazy or entrepreneurial they make it big". By getting elite readers to accept the principles of race science, such as that races are distinct biological categories and can be ranked by traits like intelligence, he ultimately hopes to impact policy.

#### MATTHEW FROST Category: Influencer

Matthew Frost (AKA Matt Archer) used to teach religious studies at a private school in west London. He set up Ideas Sleep Furiously, a race science blog, in 2021 and left his job to run it full time, selling it to Emil Kirkegaard and rebranding it to Aporia Magazine. The website pledged it would "not cower beneath





HDF also hopes to incorporate far-right content creators into its business to oversee their editorial output. Edward Dutton is one such example. The company organises his livestream ideas, books his podcast interview guests, arranges his documentary film production, all in exchange for a salary.

HDF has also enlisted Erik Ahrens, an Alternative für Deutschland communications worker, to expand its stable of influencers. With Frost, he has created an audiobook app called Liegent, which summarises texts by Charles Murray, Alain de Benoist, and Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber. The aim is to give far-right content creators an advertising partner, providing them with an additional source of revenue. In return, HDF expects an element of control of their editorial output. Ahrens, who has launched a similar scheme in Germany, calls the scheme "economics as coercion". Edward Dutton and Thomas Rowsell (AKA Survive The Jive) have promoted Liegent adverts.

the god of political correctness". Central to the website is the concept that fixed racial groups exist, and that there is a discernible hierarchy between them based on genetic factors. Frost, in conversations with our undercover reporter, discussed his enthusiasm for the "remigration" of Africans from Europe.

With his HDF colleague Erik Ahrens, the Alternative für Deutschland activist, Frost has devised a membership club scheme for devotees of race science to pay large sums of money to meet Edward Dutton and Neema Parvini. This project is called Neo Byzantium, and Frost and Ahrens have taken inspiration from the Nazi SS and the cult of Scientology to manage their members.

In 2024, Frost announced he was stepping back from day-to-day editorial duties at Aporia, although he still manages live events and remains the administrator of the group's Telegram channel.

#### EDWARD DUTTON CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Edward Dutton (AKA The Jolly Heretic) is a British YouTuber and proponent of pseudo-scientific "race science", a school of thought purporting that intelligence and other characteristics are almost entirely biologically determined, and vary significantly between "races" of people. Dutton taught at University of Oulu in Finland but was removed after an investigation by the university found him guilty of plagiarising a student's dissertation.

Dutton has since taken to vlogging and independent eugenicist research and commentary. He has written for a number of fringe far-right journals, including the Quarterly Review and race science outlet OpenPsych. Since January 2019, he has sat as editor-in-chief of the notorious Mankind Quarterly and become a prominent individual in international race science circles. He spoke at the Traditional Britain Group conference in 2022.

His often childish tone does not seem to have impeded his success on YouTube. The channel has 118,000 subscribers and 13 million views as of January 2025. On it, he publishes monologues that espouse racist views with a scientific veneer. He also interviews far-right figures such as Jared Taylor, Nick Fuentes, and Laura Towler and more mainstream figures such as Lionel Shriver, Douglas Carswell, and Amy Wax. Unlike many of his contemporaries and despite his extreme views, Dutton has so far avoided a YouTube ban by steering his audience towards his Substack for unexpurgated uploads.



In 2024, HOPE not hate revealed that Dutton is an employee of the Human Diversity Foundation (HDF), a US-based company advancing race science led by Emil Kirkegaard. Dutton has ceded editorial control to HDF in exchange for a salary. As a content creator in HDF's stable, he benefits from a more professionalised channel, better recording equipment, and the use of a podcast studio. He has also produced documentarystyle videos filmed in the US and Spain. His audience on his Substack, launched in 2023, has grown to 14,000 subscribers, and is the platform's 10th most popular "science" newsletter.

# TOMMY'S BACK WITH A BANG



#### JOE MULHALL and NICK LOWLES

There were mixed fortunes last year for Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), with highs including his largest-ever demonstration and a significant rise in his public profile, but then ending the year with another substantial spell in prison.

Since 2019, Lennon had become an increasingly marginal figure on the British right. Plagued by legal and personal problems, he was spending much of his time abroad and had a fraction of the influence he once enjoyed. This changed dramatically in 2024, as he once again became a national figure of discussion, with his name sung by enormous crowds and his face splashed across national newspapers.

The power of Lennon's divisive rhetoric was tragically revealed during the summer riots, the worst outbreak of far-right violence in the post-war period. As racists smashed up town centres, attacked mosques and threatened asylum seekers, his name was chanted at protests across the country. While he later sought to distance himself from the violence, his years of activism and his aggressive rants in direct response to the Southport murders encouraged people to take to the streets.

Lennon's resurgence was largely triggered after being reinstated on X (formerly Twitter) at the end of 2023, which allowed him to once again reach enormous numbers of people with his propaganda, raise funds and drive activism on the streets.

The culmination of all this was a huge demonstration in central London, in July, just two days before the Southport murders, at which he flagrantly broke a legal injunction, making an already likely imprisonment an inevitability. In October, Lennon finally received an 18-month prison sentence after pleading guilty to contempt of court.

However, while his imprisonment was a victory for HOPE not hate, it has once again raised his profile significantly, primarily because of vocal support from Elon Musk.

#### **TOMMY ROBINSON IN 2024**

In October 2018, Lennon produced a video accusing a young Syrian refugee, Jamal Hijazi, of being a violent

#### SECTION 5 - TOMMY ROBINSON

school bully. This came shortly after footage had gone viral of Jamal being pinned to the ground and having water poured over him.

Jamal vehemently denied the allegation and instructed lawyers to begin legal action, and in April 2019 papers were served. A court case followed and, as predicted, Lennon lost and was ordered to pay Jamal £100,000 in damages and all reasonable legal costs. Unsurprisingly, Lennon declared bankruptcy rather than paying what he owed.

That wasn't the end of the story. The court also placed an injunction on Lennon that barred him from publishing a long-trailed, self-produced documentary titled *Silenced* about the case in which he repeated his libel. He was also told categorically that if he repeated any of the claims publicly he could face prison.

Lennon seethed over this for the next two years, increasingly furious and embarrassed that he had so publicly lost the case. In May 2023 the pressure became too much and he released the film via a third party, while pretending publicly that it was leaked without his knowledge.

We knew Lennon was lying, and we had amassed a huge amount of evidence that proved it. We had tracked his movements over a period of months, watched and transcribed dozens of hours of his interviews, catalogued thousands of messages by him and his colleagues at MICE Media, that together proved he was central to the libellous film's release.

Keen to ensure that Jamal got the justice he deserved, and to try to stop Lennon repeating his fabricated claims more widely, HOPE not hate collated the evidence into an 80-page dossier and submitted it to the Attorney General. We believed that the research we had collected was more than enough to start contempt of court proceedings against Lennon.

In June 2024 the Solicitor General finally launched legal action against Lennon for breaking the injunction.

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Once legal action had been taken, Lennon clearly decided he had nothing to lose. With our ever-growing dossier of evidence it looked increasingly likely that he was facing prison.

However, despite Lennon's impending legal problems it wasn't all bad news for him. In late 2023 he was reinstated on Elon Musk's X and found himself once again able to reach huge audiences online.

Losing his platform in 2020 contributed to a period of declining relevance, exacerbated by a range of personal and legal problems. Once back on X, he began to rally his supporters in ever bigger numbers.

#### **MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS**

In June 2024, Lennon organised his largest demonstration since 2018 in central London. Organised as a vehicle to screen his new documentary, *Lawfare*, about so-called two-tier policing and Britain's supposed slide into totalitarianism, roughly 6,000 people attended.

The event drew significant numbers from the football hooligan world, with firms travelling to London from across the country in numbers not seen since the Football Lads Alliance demonstrations of 2018.

After several hours of idling at Victoria Station, the march set off late and made its way towards Westminster. Lennon walked behind a banner reading "This is London not Londonistan," a reminder of





the Islamophobic intentions that underpin all of his activism. This was backed up by racist chants of "Allah Allah, you're a C\*\*\*" by some of the crowd. Pictures showed a banner being unfurled by supporters of the fascist group Patriotic Alternative in support of their convicted activist Sam Melia.

The livestream of the event, which at times attracted an audience of hundreds of thousands, showed that numerous old EDL stalwarts had returned to the streets including the convicted violent robber Guramit Singh and former London EDL leader Roger Firth. Also in the crowd was the British race science YouTuber Edward Dutton.

Once the crowd reached Parliament Square they settled in for over five hours of speeches and film screenings. Not learning from his previous events, Lennon played the whole 90 minutes of his new documentary to an increasingly restless audience. The meandering film covered everything including supposed two-tier policing, Covid lockdowns, hate speech legislation, Black Lives Matter, trans rights, the threat of Islam and pro-Palestine demonstrations.

This was compounded by a staggering long list of farright speakers who addressed a rapidly thinning crowd, included Laurence Fox, former UKIP leader Gerard Batten, Carl Benjamin of Lotus Eaters, James Harvey (AKA Students Against Tyranny), Lewis Brackpool and Sydney Jones as well as video messages from Katie Hopkins. At one point Lennon unveiled a banner in support of fellow convict Donald Trump.

The following month, Lennon held another even larger demonstration, again in London, with most estimates placing attendance between 20-30,000 people. Across that one day, Lennon's X reach was a staggering 58 million people [see box].

While marching, Lennon thanked Elon Musk on the livestream for returning his account on X. Since getting his account back, Lennon now has over 1.2m followers.

The crowd were once again forced to stand around for hours while a who's who of Britain's radical and farright social media scene gave similar speeches to the June demonstration.

However, there were moments of unintentional comic relief. There was a string of musical interludes with Pastor Rick and the Patriots adding an out-of-time electric guitar to "Land of Hope and Glory", a cringeinducing hair metal song called "We Are The Patriots" by WATPatriots and some shouting from Louise Distras.

Remarkably though, just 48 hours before he was due in court to face a hearing related to the contempt of court proceedings, he decided to broadcast the whole of *Silenced* to the massed crowds on vast screens in Trafalgar Square.

"Now you can take me to court," he screamed from the stage:

"They think they are putting me on trial, I just put you on trial to the world. [...] Death, prison or glory, we will never submit to your lies. They may plan to take me to court and put me in jail. [...]



Nearly a million people have watched that film so far. Share it with everyone you know. They want to send me to jail, the world will know I told the truth. Your gagging order only works if we allow you to gag us."

Clearly aware that the evidence against him was too strong, he sought to take control of the situation and save face with his supporters. The days of pretending it was leaked without his knowledge were over.

Lennon made things even worse for himself when he failed to appear at the court hearing, instead fleeing the country. Unsurprisingly, in light of the screening, the Attorney General's office launched a second serious legal action for contempt of court.

#### **LENNON FACES JUSTICE**

At 3pm on Friday 25 October, Lennon handed himself in at Folkestone police station. He was charged and bailed under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, having failed to provide the pin to his mobile phone. However, while at the station Lennon was remanded in custody ahead of a separate contempt of court case, which took place at Woolwich Crown Court.

Despite his absence, Lennon's long-planned "Unite The Kingdom" rally still took place in central London a few days before, having been rearranged from the original 12 November date. Attracting roughly 15-20,000 people, the event was significantly smaller than Lennon's previous event in July.

While the number of attendees remains extremely concerning, the event highlighted the lack of a credible figurehead to step into Lennon's place should he end up receiving a prolonged prison sentence.

Then on Monday 28 October, Lennon appeared at court and admitted committing contempt of court by repeating the false allegations against Jamal. Lennon received an 18-month custodial sentence, with Judge Mr Justice Johnson stating that the breaches of the injunction were not "accidental, negligent or merely reckless" and the custodial threshold was "amply crossed".

Despite claiming that he is a victim of persecution, Lennon has no one to blame but himself. He libelled a young Syrian refugee and has spent years evading justice. He knew the consequences that came with breaking the injunction, which is why he lied about being involved in the film's release.

Once justice loomed, he threw caution to the wind and publicly broke the injunction in front of thousands of people. Lennon has always thought that he is above the law. He has made a career out of lying and trying to get away with it.

This hasn't stopped his supporters from being outraged and branding him a political prisoner. Sadly, any hope that his incarceration would provide some respite from Lennon's headline-grabbing behaviour proved overly optimistic.

#### CATAPULTED ONTO THE WORLD STAGE

In the run up to Christmas, Urban Scoop sent journalist Vicky Richter to AmFest, a hardcore MAGA activist weekend, organised by Turning Point USA head Charlie Kirk. Amongst those speaking out in support

# **EYES ON LENNON**



On the day of Lennon's huge demonstration in central London, his online interactions reached record numbers:

- Total views of his X posts 58.6m
- Total interactions (retweets, replies and likes) -1.45m
- On posts mentioning his film Silenced 9.7m
- Total interactions on posts mentioning the film – 197,000
- Number of other accounts mentioning either @TRobinsonNewEra or "Tommy Robinson" on X: 159,000

of Lennon in short interviews with Richter was Kirk himself, but also Jack Posobiec, Riley Gaines, Stephen Davis and of course, Steve Bannon.

But it was Elon Musk's public support for Lennon that really catapulted the Englishman onto the world's stage.

"Why is Tommy Robinson in a solitary confinement prison for telling the truth? He should be freed and those who covered up this travesty should take his place in that cell," tweeted Musk on X as part of a flurry of statements about UK politics and Lennon directly.

Musk has even agreed to pay Lennon's legal costs.

Not only has this brought Lennon to the attention of millions of people who had not previously heard of him, but it has undoubtedly filled his coffers too.

Lennon's team are planning a large demonstration in central London in September where they hope to get several of these MAGA leaders over to speak.

This also raises the prospect of Lennon trying to get into the US later this year to generate huge amounts of money through a speaking and fundraising tour. His team have even floated the idea that Lennon could meet Musk to thank him in person.

Perhaps setting the groundwork for this, Lennon's Urban Scoop has recently taken on two US-based "citizen journalists" to produce more US-focused content and even launched a US podcast, called Battlefield USA.

While Lennon will not be released until early July, his team are building his media empire to ensure he has even greater reach and influence on his release. In addition to the US, Urban Scoop is increasing its UKbased reporters and film capacity and even producing material for the Brazilian market.

With Musk's backing, Lennon will continue to be a major political figure on the British far right.

# **BETTER KNOWN, BUT MORE DISLIKED**

#### NICK LOWLES looks at what the public think of Tommy Robinson

Stephen Lennon, better known as Tommy Robinson, might be better known and backed by the richest man in the world, but his popularity is where it was 12 months ago and, in fact, more people dislike him now.

Polling of over 22,000 people conducting between December and January has found that 81% of British adults have heard of Tommy Robinson, up from 66% in a similar-sized poll at the same time last year.

However, despite his increased name recognition and the support given to him from Elon Musk, just 6% of people strongly like Lennon, with a further 10% tending to like him. This is exactly the same level of support that Lennon received in our previous poll.

What has changed though, is the number of people who dislike him. Twelve months ago, 38% of people disliked him, with 27% strongly disliking him, while this has now risen to 42%, with 31% strongly disliking him.

Support for Lennon is strongest amongst males. One in five British males have some level of support for him, whereas amongst women it is just 13%.

Men between the ages of 25 and 34 are the most likely to support Lennon, with 15% saying they strongly like him and 22% saying they tend to like him.

Conversely, support is lowest amongst women over 65, with just 3% strongly liking him and a further 4% saying they tend to like him.

Interestingly, those who like Lennon tend to be more affluent. Two in five of households with incomes in excess of £100,000 a year like him, whilst the figure is 20% amongst households with an income between £70,000 and £99,000.

Amongst those where the income is  $\pounds45,000$  or less, support for Lennon is down to 14%.

When asked how likely they were to support an antiimmigration and anti-Islam street movement led by Tommy Robinson, 9% of the public said that they were "very likely" to support it, with a further 9% saying they were "quite likely".

Amongst men between 25 and 34 years of age, a third

(32%) said that they would support such a movement, while amongst the 35-44 age group this figure was 30%.

However, support for such a movement dropped by half if the movement's protests and demonstrations became violent or attracted people keen on violence.

While it is encouraging that Lennon's growing recognition is actually eliciting more disapproval than approval, the levels of awareness of Lennon and the numbers liking him are worryingly high. He is clearly among the best-known far-right figures of the postwar era and his support amongst men under 45 is deeply concerning

#### How likely or unlikely would you be to support an anti-immigration and anti-Islam street movement led by Tommy Robinson?

Column %	Total				
Very likely	9%				
Quite likely	9%				
Neither likely or unlikely	21%				
Quite unlikely	11%				
Very unlikely	44%				
Don't know	6%				
Net: Likely	18%				
Net: Unlikely	55%				

To what extent do you like or dislike Tommy Robinson?							
	2024	2025					
Strongly like	6%	6%					
Tend to like	9%	10%					
Neither like or dislike	24%	24%					
Tend to dislike	11%	11%					
Strongly dislike	27%	31%					
Never heard of them	24%	17%					
Net: Like	15%	17%					
Net: Dislike	37%	42%					
Column n	22496	22499					
Column Population	22496	22502					

	All age groups by gender split											
	18-24 Male	18-24 Fem	25-34 Male	25-34 Fem	35-44 Male	35-44 Fem	45-54 Male	45-54 Fem	55-64 Male	55-64 Fem	65+ Male	65+ Fem
Net: Like	24%	11%	37%	24%	29%	17%	17%	10%	15%	8%	10%	7%
Neither like or dislike	25%	26%	27%	29%	25%	28%	25%	29%	20%	25%	16%	22%
Net: Dislike	33%	29%	30%	28%	38%	34%	47%	39%	55%	44%	61%	47%
Never heard of them	18%	35%	6%	20%	9%	21%	10%	22%	10%	23%	12%	24%

MONACOR

Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson) has surrounded himself with a tight team of friends and political colleagues, who, between them, run most of his business and political operations. Some have been with him since school days, whilst others are far more recent recruits to help him expand his growing media operation.

We have split Team Tommy into three distinct groups: first, Team Tommy core – his most loyal lieutenants, many of whom have been with him for 10 years or more. Next is the Urban Scoop team – made up of those who help deliver his media operation. Finally, there is the Team Tommy eco-system – individuals and groups that align themselves to Lennon, but are politically active in their own right and are in other organisations.

#### ΤΕΑΜ ΤΟΜΜΥ

#### **ADAM GREARY**

Having been with Lennon since the start, Greary runs the back-end of the political and fundraising operation. Nicknamed "Nem", Greary directs operations in the background and is largely unknown to the wider Tommy supporter base.

#### **ANDRE SAMSON**

An old school friend of Lennon's, Samson runs a clothing company that Lennon is a silent partner in. While having no public role within Tommy's political activities, Samson has long been involved in Team Tommy WhatsApp groups.

#### **CRAIG FOWLER**

Better known by the name Jack Dawkins, Fowler runs Lennon's social media output. Newcastle-based, Fowler has strong racist and antisemitic views and is a big supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

#### **RICHARD INMAN**

A former soldier, Ingram now organises the protests for Lennon and coordinates the research and surveillance. Ingram is a member of the UKIP national executive.

#### LIAM GILLETT

Adam Greary

Host of The Dozen podcast, Liam Gillett (better known as Liam Tuffs) is one of Lennon's closest allies. As well as a vocal supporter online and regular speaker at Lennon's demonstrations, he has been a central figure helping Lennon to get off and stay off drugs. When Lennon was imprisoned last year, it was Gillett who hosted the demonstration in his absence.

Craig Fowle

#### **GURAMIT SINGH**

Nottingham-based Guramit Singh has been with Lennon since the early EDL days and today co-runs the operation whilst Lennon is in prison. A convicted armed robber, Singh has recently launched Predator Hunter, which tracks down and exposes child abusers.

#### **LISA REYNOLDS**

US-based Lisa Reynolds has been a key part of Team Tommy since the Free Tommy demos in 2018 when she helped oversee funding for his demonstrations from the Middle East Forum. Reynolds helped organise the screening of his film Silenced in Florida and personally lobbied Elon Musk to allow Lennon back on X.

#### **TONI COLLINS**

Toni Collins, better known as Ginger Toni, plays a key admin role behind the scenes at Urban Scoop and acts as chief steward on Lennon's demonstrations. Along with Lennon's former PA, Hel Gower, Ginger Toni has aggressively gone after his opponents within the far right.



Lisa Reynolds

Toni Collins

Andre Samson

#### **URBAN SCOOP**



James Harvey

#### DANNY ROSCOE

Roscoe has produced podcast and video content for Urban Scoop and has recently been instrumental in organising much of Urban Scoop's merchandise. He now co-hosts a new podcast with Brother Wendell, called the Two Coconuts.

#### **VICKY RICHTER**

A self-described "distinguished German SpecOps PsyOps Veteran" turned independent journalist, Vicky Richter joined the Urban Scoop team in the summer of 2024 after producing a film about Lennon's last weeks of freedom. Reporting from the US, Richter interviews leading MAGA Republicans for Urban Scoop.

#### SAMMY WOODHOUSE

Despite once being heavily attacked by Lennon supporters for denouncing his exploitation of the grooming issue, former child sexual exploitation survivor Sammy Woodhouse joined the Urban Scoop team in July 2024. However, within six months and with no explanation, she left and is now reporting for Rebel News.

#### DON KEITH

Host of The Real Beef, US-based Don Keith recently formally joined Urban Scoop after interviewing Lennon last year for his podcast and spending time together in Spain, shortly before the Briton's imprisonment. Recently announced a regular US-based podcast on Urban Scoop.

#### **BROTHER WENDELL**

Youtuber Brother Wendell has been following Lennon's demonstrations for several years but only recently became part of the Urban Scoop team. In addition to the Two Coconuts podcast, produced with Danny Roscoe, Wendell has taken over the filming work for Urban Scoop.

#### **JAMES HARVEY**

Founder of Students Against Tyranny, James Harvey dedicates much of his time to fighting "wokeness" on university campuses. However, he is also a journalist for VoxPopuli and Lennon's Urban Scoop. He is a regular at Lennon's demonstrations and close associates with Voice of Wales.

#### **THE ECO-SYSTEM**

#### PAUL THORPE

Paul Thorpe former luxury watch expert turned Stephen Lennon-supporting YouTuber. He is also the founder of UNITE UK, a "patriotic movement that aims to unite 'everyone' who shares our love for traditional British values and British culture." Thorpe has interviewed Lennon and attended and spoken at several of his demonstrations.



#### **MAHYAR TOUSI**

An Iranian-born YouTuber and founder of Tousi TV. His YouTube channel, which has 767k subscribers, posts regular videos on a range of far-right topics. In recent years he has become a close ally of Stephen Lennon, attending and speaking at his demonstrations.

#### **RIKKI DOOLAN**

Formerly a homeless busker, "hooked on a Rock 'n Roll lifestyle of drugs and alcohol", Doolan is now a pastor at Spirit Embassy church in London. As well as being UKIP's Spokesperson for Culture and Art he has become an ardent supporter of Lennon, performing his brand of Christian rock music at his demonstrations in 2024. In 2023 he was exposed by Al Jazeera for being part of a money-laundering scheme involving Zimbabwean gold.



#### **VOICE OF WALES**

#### Voice of Wales (VoW) is a far-right media outlet run by Dan Morgan and Stan Robinson, which creates a range of content including articles, videos, livestreams and social media output. VoW was present at Lennon's film screening in Telford in January 2024, as well as his London demonstrations in June and October.

#### **GERARD BATTEN**

Former leader of UKIP, Batten became notorious after leading his organisation in an explicitly anti-Muslim direction and appointing Lennon to an official position within the party. He has long been a staple at Lennon's demonstrations.

# TERROR TEENS: FAR-RIGHT TERROR THREAT REMAINS HIGH

#### DAVID LAWRENCE

Far-right hatred can explode into violence. The countrywide rioting this summer was just the most dramatic recent example of this fact, which is also evidenced by the high numbers of extreme right-wing activists sentenced or convicted under anti-terror laws in 2024.

Twenty-one individuals were sentenced for far-right terror-related offences last year, with a further two convicted and awaiting sentencing, comparable to the record year of 2023. Convictions have remained fairly stable over the past four years, although this is at a far higher rate than in the 2010s.

In addition, 19% of Prevent referrals for the year ending 31 March 2024 concerned extreme right-wing ideologies, outstripping cases of Islamist radicalisation (13%) yet again. For the year ending 30 June 2024, 29% of those incarcerated for terror offences held extreme right-wing views, roughly matching previous years.

Continuing a disturbing trend, all of those convicted or sentenced for far-right terror offences last year are men and many are very young, with 43% aged 22 or younger at time of sentencing and over a quarter (26%) of them teenagers. At least two young offenders appear to have radicalised during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

In only two cases did offenders actually carry out an attack. One was Callum Parslow's horrendous attempted murder of an asylum seeker last April. The second was Cavan Medlock's assault on a law firm representing asylum claimants in 2020. He received an indefinite hospital order last December, following the repeated postponement of his trial due to his declining mental health. Both attacks were, mercifully, non-fatal.

However, several individuals were convicted of planning attacks, including the teenage neo-Nazi Mason Reynolds' plot to suicide bomb a Brighton synagogue, and Alan Edward's planned attack on a local LGBT+ group in Falkirk. Edwards is one of several jailed this year who stockpiled an array of weapons.

The rest are terror-related cases, such as distributing terrorist manuals, encouraging attacks online, promoting a banned organisation or, in the case of Colin McNeil, providing a website that facilitated such offences. Convictions of this kind have risen dramatically since the banning of National Action (NA) in December 2016 and the subsequent proscription of three NA "alias" organisations and five other groups. This mechanism for prosecuting the extreme right has been coupled with more proactive policing in this area. Several of



Alex Edwards (above) and Mason Reynolds



those jailed last year had, among other offences, shared material from NA or another banned group.

It appears that all, with the possible exceptions of Vincent Charlton and Cameron Finnigan, were "selfinitiated terrorists", operating without material support or personal direction from a terrorist organisation. Self-initiated terrorists can be challenging to identify and intercept, as their motivations are often highly individual and their actions unpredictable.

Nonetheless, several were influenced by, or have had affiliations to, extreme far-right organisations. These include the Goyim Defence League, a transnational and extremely antisemitic propaganda network, and the British Hand, a now-defunct terrorist outfit exposed by HOPE not hate in 2020. On the other end of the spectrum, Cavan Medlock (outlined in depth elsewhere in this report) is a former member of UKIP and the Conservative Party, and remained a vocal supporter of relatively mainstream figures like Nigel Farage despite his descent into violent neo-Nazism.

One outlier is Piotr Kucharski, who was convicted after claiming membership of the Wagner Group,

the Russian mercenary organisation banned in 2023. Kucharski, who had threatened people at a Viking reenactment event with a knife, wore white supremacist insignia to his court hearing and police found Nazi memorabilia at his home.

Many of those listed below have also been convicted for additional non-terror offences, especially race or anti-LGBT+ hate crimes. This includes the 19-yearold Alexander Edwards (formerly Hutton), who beat a transgender woman unconscious while shouting "Heil Hitler". Despite his youth, Hutton has several previous terror convictions relating to his role in the British Hand.

As usual, a disturbingly high proportion (at least 22%) also carry convictions for child sex offences. This includes posessing child sexual abuse material – sometimes in enormous quantities – and, in the case of Axl Scott, sexual assaults of young girls. In addition, Callum Parslow has a history of stalking and harassing women online, sending his victims – one of whom was 17-years-old – messages involving sexually-motivated murder, torture, rape, extreme racism and more.



#### THE BANNING OF TERRORGRAM



In April 2024, "Terrorgram" became the sixth extreme right-wing group to be proscribed in the UK. Terrorgram is not an organisation in any formal sense, but a loose network of terror-promoting fascist channels, groups and accounts operating on the messaging app Telegram.

Since the 2010s, Telegram has been the platform of choice for neo-Nazi terrorists, with its perceived commitment to secrecy, minimal moderation and relative ease-of-use lowering the barrier for engagement in extremism and enabling new networks to flourish.

This includes Terrorgram, a militant accelerationist network that promotes violence and sabotage, usually with the aim of destroying the supposedly Jewish-controlled "system" and sparking a race war. The Terrorgram network has extended the reach of pre-existing organisations, such as the Atomwaffen Division (AWD, banned in 2021) and played midwife to new transnational outfits, such as the Feuerkrieg Division (FKD, banned in 2020).

Following police crackdowns and Telegram's (very limited) moderation efforts, the Terrorgram network now relies less on promoting brands such as the AWD and FKD, or even identifying with the label "Terrorgram". However, the loose network continues to pursue its core aim of inspiring terrorist acts, for instance celebrating far-right mass murderers as "saints" and enabling the easy access of terrorist manuals.

The belated banning of Terrorgram (HOPE not hate first detailed the network over five years ago) may nonetheless pressure Telegram to take action against the violent ideologies flourishing through its software. Founder and chief executive Pavel Durov has already pledged to be more compliant with government requests following his arrest in France this September, amid an investigation into the platform's use for sharing child sexual abuse images and drug trafficking. This will likely force extremists onto other platforms, such as the encrypted messenger SimpleX Chat.

At present, however, Telegram remains an important facilitator for the extreme far right, evidenced by the fact that many of the terror convictions in the UK last year relate to offences committed on the platform.



The degree of overlap between far-right terror and child sex offenders is not purely coincidence. A current of sexual sadism runs through the extreme right, and the neo-Nazi Satanist group Order of the Nine Angles (O9A) – elements of which encourage terrorism, sexual violence and paedophilia under occultist trappings – has had an outsized influence on segments of this milieu.

The teenagers Vincent Charlton and Cameron Finnigan are cases in point. Charlton was convicted last year of disseminating terror publications and possessing hundreds of indecent images of children, including videos of very young children being raped. He was also immersed in the 764 cult (described in depth elsewhere in this report), an online child-exploitation circle linked to O9A that, among much else, coerces young people to harm themselves on camera. Police found extensive messages between Charlton and a 13-year-old girl in the US, including a video of her cutting his name into her body.

Finnigan pled guilty to possessing a terrorist document in October. He was also convicted of encouraging a woman to commit suicide for an online audience and possessing indecent images of children. A court heard that Finnigan was "preparing for an attack against a single homeless individual".

O9A and 764, like much of the extreme right, operate transnationally, and UK terrorists continue to draw inspiration from overseas attacks. In particular, the 2019 Christchurch massacre, in which a lone gunman live-streamed his murder of 51 worshippers at two New Zealand mosques after publishing his manifesto online, remains an enduring influence. Six years on, Brenton Tarrant's attack is an aspiration for budding far-right terrorists across the globe, and many of those convicted in the UK last year had celebrated the atrocity.

The veneration of overseas killers is partly due to the absence of mass killings by far-right terrorists in



Britain since the London nail bombings of 1999. This is partly due to the scarcity of firearms, as well as the efforts of law enforcement, anti-fascists and other activists, and sheer luck.

British terrorists continue their attempts to address the lack of guns by constructing their own with 3D printers. While the production of functional weapons remains challenging even for those with access to a 3D printer, manuals and schematics for building firearms and explosives are continuously improving and easy to access on platforms like Telegram. Jack Robinson, a 20-year-old neo-Nazi from Portsmouth, had used a 3D printer to manufacture a FGC-9 MK II semiautomatic, a weapon described in court as "very close to completion".

#### **MORE IS NEEDED**

As the public debate around immigration and Muslims has toxified, the British far right has gained confidence. This has occurred alongside a general sense of pessimism pervading much of the country, exacerbated by the after-effects of COVID-19 lockdowns and the cost-of-living crisis. With vast quantities of terrorist material so easily accessible online, it is sadly unsurprising that some British men continue to sink into a violent subculture that promotes and organises towards terrorism.

Having moved decisively against formal organisations like National Action, the government is now attempting to strangle terrorist funding (as with the targeting of Blood & Honour), and grappling with more diffuse online networks (as with the banning of Terrorgram).

However, the modern threat is amorphous and everchanging. Groups, brands, networks and online spaces can quickly flourish and dissolve, and many individuals are practiced at evading detection. Counter-terror policing has yet to fully adapt to this new landscape. Despite high figures for yet another year, the individuals brought to justice in 2024 are likely just the tip of the iceberg.

#### THE BLOOD & HONOUR ASSET FREEZE

On 8 January 2025, the Treasury announced a full asset freeze of Blood & Honour (B&H), the neo-Nazi punk music network, on the grounds that it is suspected of "promoting and encouraging terrorism, seeking to recruit people for that purpose and making funds available for the purposes of its terrorist activities." The designation also extends to "any aliases it operates under e.g. 28 Radio and Combat 18".

The use of this kind of sanction to counter farright terrorism is unprecedented. The fact that B&H (founded in 1987) and Combat 18 (founded in 1991) have not previously fallen foul of counter-terror policing on an organisational basis is a sign of the state's shifting attitudes. C18, the neo-Nazi skinhead group closely linked to B&H, has openly pushed a terrorist strategy for decades and has been linked to terror attacks and many other acts of violence both in the UK and overseas. It would undoubtedly be banned if it emerged today.

However, both B&H and C18 are shadows of their former selves, and it is unclear whether this designation will meaningfully aid terror prevention today.



# ROGUES' GALLERY

A total of 23 individuals influenced by far-right ideology were convicted and/or sentenced for terror-related offences in 2024, writes DAVID LAWRENCE.

#### **KRISTEN PERSEN**

In January, Kristen Persen (22), of Cardiff, received four years, eight months behind bars for six counts of sharing terrorism material and four counts of collecting terrorism information.



Police found white supremacist propaganda and manuals for the manufacture of firearms and explosives on his laptop, as well as material that glorified banned far-right organisations and "a large amount of clothing, flags and stickers illustrating and supporting right wing views".

#### **KIERAN TURNER**

In February, Kieran Turner (36), of Earby, Lancashire, received two years and eight months behind bars for encouraging terrorism, two counts of disseminating terrorist publications and seven counts of stirring up racial hatred.



Turner used Gab, Bitchute and Facebook to spread extreme material, including claiming that "Britain needs 650 Thomas Mairs", referring to the assassin of Jo Cox MP. He also praised the banned groups National Action and the Sonnenkrieg Division and celebrated the Christchurch massacre, sharing the killer's manifesto.



In March, Harry Parris (22), of Plymouth, received two years, nine months imprisonment for four counts of encouraging terrorism and six counts of possessing material useful to terrorists.

The judge claimed Parris had joined an "extreme rightwing organisation actively promoting a violent National Socialist ideology including political terror and in particular the murder of Jewish people". He possessed bomb- and gun-making manuals and administered a neo-Nazi Telegram channel that featured direct calls for action. He posted an image of himself performing a Nazi salute, a voiceover video of the Christchurch massacre, posts calling for the extermination of Jews and more.



#### **VINCENT CHARLTON**

In March, Vincent Charlton (17) of Gateshead received two years, four months imprisonment for disseminating terrorist publications, four counts of possessing documents useful to a terrorist, and for making and possessing indecent images of children.

Charlton, who was associated with the 764 network, uploaded 939 documents to a single Telegram channel, including bomb-making and terror manuals, and promoted the Order of the Nine Angles. He also possessed footage of the Christchurch massacre, and answered affirmatively when asked whether he would "blow up a school".

Police also found his messages with a 13-yearold girl, including a video of her cutting his name into her body, and videos of very young children being raped.



#### SECTION 6 - NAZI TERRORISM

#### **ADRIAN MONK**

In May, Adrian Monk (33) of Malton Place, Derby, received five years, two months behind bars for 10 offences of possessing information useful to terrorists.



Documents relating to extreme right-wing ideology, homemade guns and explosives were found in his former home in Staffordshire. Among them were titles on "ethnic cleansing".



#### RYAN JACKSON

In June, Ryan Jackson (31) from Barnsley received two years, six months behind bars for: five counts of possessing information useful to a terrorist; disseminating a terrorist publication; three offences of making indecent images of children; possession of prohibited images of children; and possession of extreme pornographic images.

Jackson was a member of the Oaken Hearth, a small, short-lived, violence-promoting fascist Telegram group. Six other members have received a combined total of over 40 years imprisonment for terrorism and firearm offences.

Police also found his collection of terrorist publications and "over 900 indecent images of children, and over 200 extreme pornographic images involving animals".

#### **EDWARD GRIFFITHS**

In June, Edward Griffiths (44) of Coalville, Leicestershire received four years, six months behind bars for encouraging terrorism and two counts of dissemination of a terrorist publication.



Griffiths had sent videos of the Christchurch massacre, claiming that he would "love" to carry out a similar attack. Griffiths also spoke about individuals he would like to kill. The judge noted that Griffiths had "white supremacist views".



#### **MASON REYNOLDS**

In June, Mason Reynolds (19) from Brighton received eight years imprisonment for possessing an article connected with the preparation of terrorism, five offences of possessing information useful to a terrorist and a further five for disseminating terrorist publications.

The neo-Nazi had drawn up a plan to suicide-bomb a synagogue in Hove on a Jewish holiday. He was an admin of a Telegram channel which venerated far-right terrorists and shared explosives and 3D gun-making manuals. Speaking of the Christchurch killing, Reynolds wrote "It'd be 10x better seeing Jews get killed". He also promoted material of the Atomwaffen Division, an international terrorist organisation banned in the UK.

#### **AXL SCOTT**

In July, Axl Scott (22) of Greenock received 18 months behind bars for five terrorrelated offences and possession of a stun gun, as well as multiple sexual assaults against young girls.



He also possessed guides for constructing explosive devices, a video depicting a terrorist act, smoke grenades, a blank-firing pistol and a 3D printer. He was involved in extreme-right Telegram groups, and sent pictures of himself making Nazi salutes and wearing a swastika armband.

#### **ANONYMOUS 16 YEAR-OLD**

In July, a 16-year old boy from Stockton-on-Tees received a three-year youth rehabilitation order for five offences of possessing information useful to a terrorist, three counts of dissemination of terrorist publications, and racially aggravated criminal damage.

The boy had filled notebooks with extreme far-right slogans, including references to the Atomwaffen Division. He was active in extreme right-wing groups on Telegram, and had added a soundtrack to footage of the Christchurch massacre. He also possessed the Christchurch killer's manifesto, *The Turner Diaries* and a video of himself throwing a petrol bomb and wearing a skull mask.

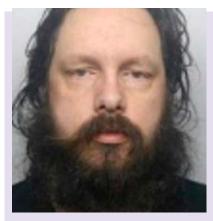
#### **STATE OF HATE 2025**

#### **COLIN MCNEIL**

Colin McNeil (46) from Leeds received seven years behind bars for four dissemination offences, having provided an online website that facilitated others to obtain terrorist publications.



McNeil benefited financially from the two websites he operated, and continued to actively administer them after knowing they were being used to distribute terrorist publications. The sites glorified Hitler and honoured racist mass murderers. Notably, McNeil's sites were also used by international terrorists, including Payton Gendron, who went on to murder 10 people in a racist shooting in Buffalo, US, in 2022.



#### **GARETH WAITE**

In August, Gareth Waite (47) of Ceredigion, Wales received nine years, nine months in prison for four offences of disseminating a terrorist publication and two counts of

possessing material useful to a terrorist, as well as supporting a proscribed organisation.

The neo-Nazi had shared National Action material, alongside extreme, antisemitic and violent content, including neo-Nazi strategy documents and *Mein Kampf*.

#### **ALEX EDWARDS/HUTTON**

In September, Alexander Edwards (formerly Hutton, 19) of Swansea, was jailed for five years, four months for assaulting a woman due to her transgender identity, disseminating terrorist material



and having a bladed article in public. He had also breached a criminal behaviour order for a previous offence of distributing terrorist material in 2022.

Hutton kicked his victim unconscious while shouting "Heil Hitler", before uploading videos gloating about the unprovoked attack. Hutton wrote "bomb and kill them all" and sent Atomwaffen Division content to a young woman.

Hutton had previously avoided prison at age 14 for his role in the British Hand. He had also made a bomb hoax about a school at age 13 and sent racist messages to a mosque.

#### **ROBERT TAYLOR**

Robert Taylor (43) of Farnworth received four years behind bars for numerous terror and race hate-related offences.

This included repeatedly filming himself abusing Jewish people in public, including references



to the Holocaust. He also shared National Action propaganda and distributed antisemitic posters, stickers, fliers and graffiti around Bolton. On his devices, police found guides on manufacturing explosives.

Taylor was associated with the Goyim Defense League (GDL), a transnational antisemitic network.



#### JACK ROBINSON

In October, Jack Robinson (20), of Portsmouth, received six and a half years behind bars for attempting to manufacture a FGC-9 MK II semi-automatic firearm, three counts of

possessing information useful to a terrorist and four counts relating to indecent images of children.

Robinson used a 3D printer to construct the weapon, which was described in court as "very close to completion". Police also found over 1,000 gun cartridges, weapon scopes, a large knife and body armour, as well as handwritten antisemitic material and Nazi memorabilia.

Online, Robinson adopted a username that included the words "kill all Jews", and possessed more than 400 documents with information on explosives, and more than 800 indecent images of children, on his laptop.

#### **CAMERON FINNIGAN**

In October, Cameron Finnigan (19) of Horsham, West Sussex, pled guilty to possessing a terrorist document, an act capable of encouraging or assisting suicide, possession of indecent images of a child and two counts of criminal damage.



Finnigan, who was involved in the 764 group, possessed a "kill guide" and had also encouraged a woman to commit suicide to be live-streamed to his his online associates, sprayed his graffiti tag "Acid764" across his hometown and vandalised a car.

He denied a charge of causing unnecessary suffering to an animal, after he appeared to have tried to strangle a cat on video; the charge was ordered to lie on file. Court had previously heard that he had discussed attacking a homeless person who was living in a tent.

#### **GABRIEL BUDASZ**

In October, Gabriel Budasz (24) of Weston-super-Mare received 12 years behind bars for four counts of encouraging terrorism, six counts of possessing information useful to a terrorist and of disseminating a terrorist publication.



At his home, police found extreme right-wing paraphernalia, including books and masks, and parts of a gun that he had produced via a 3D printer. Court heard that he wanted to emulate the Christchurch killer.

On Telegram, he had sent a video that contained detailed instructions on how to make a bomb with household items, and had also made extreme racist, homophobic and antisemitic statements.



#### **CALLUM PARSLOW**

In October, Callum Parslow (formerly Blake-O'Brien, 32) of Worcester was convicted of attempted murder after stabbing an Eritrean man in the chest and hand at a hotel in Worcester. Parlsow claimed in court he had

intended to stab "one of the Channel migrants". The neo-Nazi, who has a tattoo of Hitler's signature, spent weeks planning his attack, including writing a manifesto that took aim at "the Jews, the Marxists and the globalists". At his home, police found other weapons alongside a Nazi flag and copies of *Mein Kampf*.

He is also a prolific online stalker who received 30 months in 2018 for targeting 10 women, including teenage girls. He used numerous fake social media accounts to send his victims messages involving sexually-motivated murder, torture and rape and other material. He was arrested again last year for sending sexual and racist messages to another woman.

#### **PIOTR KUCHARSKI**

In November, Piotr Kucharski (49) from Watford received two years and six months after claiming that he had fought for the Wagner Group in Ukraine.



Kucharski attended a Viking re-

enactment event in Suffolk wearing combat clothing bearing the insignia of the Russian mercenary group, which is banned in the UK, and was arrested after threatening attendees with a knife.

Kucharski wore extreme right-wing insignia to his court hearing, and police found a picture of Hitler, a copy of *Mein Kampf* and other extreme material at his home.

#### **OWAIN ROBERTS**

In November, Owain Roberts (19) of Newport received four years, nine months for constructing a gun with a 3D printer.

Roberts also sent messages referencing Hitler and indicated that he wanted to hurt Jewish people and Muslims.



Police also found bullets, body armour, knives and the ingredients for explosives at his home, alongside Nazi posters.



#### DANIEL NIINEMAE

In November, Daniel Niinemae (41) from Newport received three years, six months behind bars for possessing a document useful to a terrorist.

Niinemae was found with a bomb-making manual and had exchanged racist messages with another convicted terrorist. Niinemae's messages included propaganda from a neo-Nazi terrorist network.

Niinemae has numerous prior convictions, including several for burglary.

#### **CAVAN MEDLOCK**

In December, Cavan Medlock (32) of Harrow, London received an indefinite hospital order after preparing a terrorist attack on an immigration law firm in September 2020. His trial had been repeatedly postponed due to his declining mental health.



Medlock's actions and political history are detailed elsewhere in this report.



#### **ALAN EDWARD**

In December, Alan Edward (55) of Falkirk received 10 years for four terror offences, including possession of weaponry in order to commit a terrorist act. He was also found guilty of racism, antisemitism, Holocaust denial

and statutory breach of the peace.

The neo-Nazi had plotted an attack on a local LGBT+ group, possessed a document that glorified Anders Breivik and had promoted National Action material.

Police found an "armoury" at his home, including: a crossbow, knives that bore Nazi insignia, a tomahawk, a samurai sword, a stun gun, a skull mask, pellets and ball bearings.

### THE ONLINE EXPLOITATION CULT GROOMING TEENAGERS TO VIOLENCE



Cameron Finnigan's bedroom with satanist imagery. Photo: Counter Terrorism Policing South East



#### PATRIK HERMANSSON

Cameron Finnigan was just 19 when he was convicted of preparing to murder a homeless man living in a tent near his home in Horsham, West Sussex. He was also found guilty of trying to manipulate a young woman into killing herself. "The only risk I was concerned about," he later said in a police interrogation, "is if she went through with it and I got caught."

In 2023, a 17-year-old German teenager named Nino Luciano went much further. A video uploaded to Discord and then spread across "gore" websites shows him walking up to an 74-year-old woman, saying "Hello" to her, and then stabbing her to death. He had earlier attempted to kill an elderly man by pushing him down a staircase, but he survived.

Finnigan pleaded guilty to encouraging suicide, possessing a terrorism manual, and possessing indecent images of a child in January this year. But while he was convicted under terror legislation, his actions did not have a clear political motive. Luciano's motives are similarly complex.

Finnigan went by acid764 on Telegram and Luciano by Tobbz764. They were part of an online network called 764 that revels in violence and suffering for its own sake. Those tied to 764 chase the thrill of inflicting pain, coupled with a hunger to carve out infamy as the most unhinged members in the group chats on Telegram, Discord and Wire that form part of the network.

Its members are primarily youths and young adults. So are their victims. 764 is an online extortion community focused on grooming and ultimately forcing young people to harm themselves and others. A large amount of the material shared is child exploitation material. The focus on children is practical as the group deems them easier to influence and extort. Members also revel in targeting children to make the outside world disdain them even more.

The network is made up of hundreds of chat groups across a range of platforms and spans the US, Europe and South America. Subgroups and individuals within it strive for notoriety in the community through outdoing others. Videos of their crimes are meticulously recorded and shared in the groups.

It is a broad network where the groups are only loosely affiliated and might not subscribe to all aspects of what originally made up 764. Over time the network has morphed and parts have shifted its focus away from online harms to direct offline attacks such as those by Luciano.

#### **ESCALATING VIOLENCE**

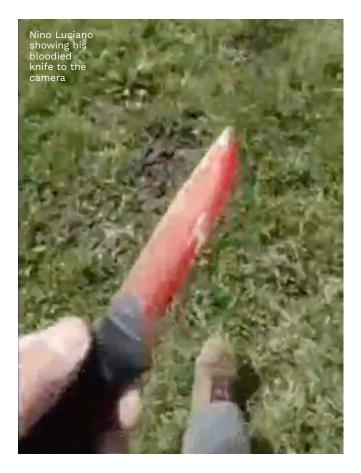
Since 2021 a number of arrests by individuals affiliated to 764 have taken place across the US, where it originated, and Europe. In the US there have been at least 13 arrests related to 764, with all being charged with child exploitation material, and two school shootings where the perpetrator had connections to 764. Eight of these have been 20 or younger. In Europe details of cases are scarce because perpetrators tend to be minors and more often relate to violent crime. Cases of child exploitation material are nevertheless common.

One of the youngest of these perpetrators was a 14-year-old from Stockholm, Sweden, who was arrested in 2024 after attacking mostly elderly people on eight different occasions by sneaking up on them from behind and stabbing them late at night. He filmed most of the attacks. The 14-year-old went by the moniker Slain764 in the network and ran the local section of "No Lives Matter" (NLM), a group affiliated with 764 focused on offline violence.

NLM has members in multiple European countries, including the UK. Finnigan was, according to Telegram messages seen by HOPE not hate, also part of NLM.

According to the BBC, at least four British teenagers have been arrested in connection with the network. In addition to Finnigan, Vincent Charlton, 17, was jailed for terrorism offences and having videos of a girl cutting his name into her body in 2023.

764 is likely the most extreme and organised example







Vincent Charlton

of a disturbing trend of children and young people being radicalised online through an obsession with gruesome material and death rather than a well defined political ideology. In July last year, the UK was shaken by the murder of three young girls in Southport. Crimes committed by a teenager who, like Finnigan and the Swedish teenager, lacked a clear ideological motive but had immersed himself in violent online content before stabbing three children to death.

This shift is playing out against the backdrop of an increasingly violent online environment with laxer moderation becoming the norm and social isolation having allowed especially young people to submerge themselves in these extreme communities. Wars in Ukraine and Israel-Palestine have further accelerated the spread of violent images, with footage of realworld atrocities flooding the internet. In communities like 764, such images are not viewed with horror but as inspiration, fueling a cycle of desensitization, competition, and escalating cruelty.

#### **EXPLOITING THE MOST VULNERABLE**

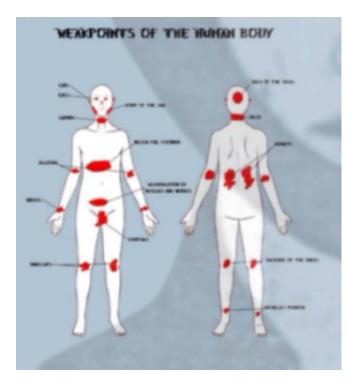
764 appeared in January 2021 and was created by American teenager Bradley Cadenhead, then 16 years old. Cadenhead had spent much of his childhood in the disturbing online world of torture and "gore" content, videos and images depicting extreme violence, suicide, death in general, plus tortured and mutilated bodies. 764 took shape within the "Com" network, a criminal online community focused on extortion.

In the 764 Discord chat room, Cadenhead and others began sharing material they had collected

while extorting other minors, and shared advice on how to do it. The group targeted vulnerable people online, often focused on mental health or LGBT+ communities. A manual released by NLM tells readers that "the best women to target are ones that have depression or mentally ill ones".

Targets are groomed and persuaded into sharing personal details and sexual material. Under threat of sending the content to their family and friends the victims are then forced to commit ever more extreme acts. This can start a spiral that in some cases has led to victims taking their own life, in other cases they have themselves been forced to participate in the targeting of others. Victims have been forced to carve the usernames of their abusers into their skin, attack their siblings and kill their pets. In 2021, Samuel Hervey, a 25-year-old from Minnesota, was pushed to suicide by self-immolation by a 15-year-old girl connected to 764. His death was livestreamed for an online audience.

Over time, 764 has increasingly taken inspiration from Order of Nine Angles (O9A), the Nazi satanist cult originating in the UK that has grown into a subculture phenomenon whose extreme aesthetic and transgressive image have been adopted by far-right accelerationist groups. The group has also been tied



SECTION 6 - NAZI TERRORISM

JENL



Anywhoro, anytimo, any way.

S

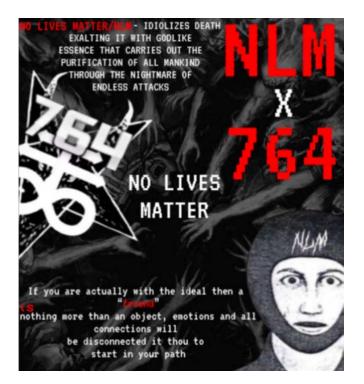
to terrorism, torture and child exploitation material. In 2011, Ryan Fleming, who ran a local chapter of O9A and was part of Nazi terror group National Action, was jailed for the sexual assault of a 14-year-old boy, who he had imprisoned and tortured.

There is little indication that 764 has deeply engaged in the texts and ideology of the O9A. But its aesthetic can easily be adopted for shock effect. Moreover, O9A, which infamously describes how to ritualistically "cull" (murder) people and how to select a deserving victim, provides language and a justification for the otherwise theoretically superficial 764.

764 and similar communities show that there is an attraction to embracing transgression and extremity. In 764, willingness to commit extreme acts and disdain for the mainstream has built a small, select group. An NLM chat on Telegram exposed by Expo last year urged members: "You who are outcasts from society, you who feel bullied, you who feel mistreated. Stop thinking like a victim. Stand up for yourselves and create pure panic and terror in society. Always remember, you are the predator."

#### NIHILISTIC ACCELERATIONISM

While 764 and NLM borrow heavily from far-right



#### S1NLM

accelerationist groups, especially in terms of aesthetic and strategy of documenting and spreading records of their violence online, they do not fit neatly into the far right. It has led researcher Marc-André Argentino to label it "Nihilistic Accelerationism" because while their methods align, their goals are not the same. 764 does not seek to "instate a white imperium", as Argentino writes, but primarily wants to cause chaos.

But just because an attacker is not primarily ideologically motivated does not mean that extremist ideologies do not play a role in the violence. The Southport killer had a copy of an Al-Qaeda training manual without otherwise engaging with Salafi-Jihadism but according to a senior official interviewed by The Guardian he was "absolutely obsessed with genocides".

Even without ideological dedication, extremist ideologies still give direction, a strategy to copy and material to build mythos on. For the disturbed mind they provide something to aspire to. A desperate and mentally ill perpetrator needs to somehow decide who is deserving of their rage.

764 groups have increasingly begun reproducing farright ideas as justifications for its violence. The NLM document is riddled with references to Order of Nine Angles and uses the same terminology for its victims.



Pain this is what unites us above all. Pain in the Past that this world has caused us. Pain in The Present, because it does not stop. And the Pain in the future, which we will return to this world a hundredfold. This ball is definitely worth washing ith the bloods of million of scum and degenerates so hat the morning of the new day is clean and beautifu



O9A justifies violence and even death because of its hatred of those whom it considers to be people of lower standing, and believes that through acts of violence its followers evolve into god-like creatures. After he murdered the 74-year old woman, the German teenager Luciano wrote on Telegram: "I feel like God. I can decide who lives and who dies."

764 have also taken on an antisemitic conspiracy theory common in far-right accelerationist circles as well as in the O9A. Members believe that Christianity and its ethics are a Jewish invention aimed at weakening Western society and must be overcome through violence.

Looking closer at members also complicates the picture. According to court documents, Finnigan shared images containing O9A symbology and made one reference to Hitler but did not otherwise seem to have taken part in far-right spaces. He instead had a background in gore and child exploitation communities and would later join the "Com" network network and eventually 764 within it.

Luciano, on the other hand, directly engaged in fascist Telegram chats in 2021. In them he used racist slurs against black people and posted a message saying "heil hitler!" in October 2021. He also allegedly chose his victim based on his belief that she was a Roma person. But before joining 764 and taking "Tobbz764" as his alias he used the username "HVRTCORE" on Telegram. Hurtcore, a portmanteau of the words "hardcore" and "hurt", is a term used for the most extreme forms of child exploitation material.

#### HARD TO ESCAPE THE VIOLENCE ONLINE

The 764 phenomenon appeared at a time in which violence material and gore content online have become more accessible. Violent online material and even extreme gore communities are by no means new, but content originating in them appears to be increasingly spread on regular social media platforms while young people spend more time in front of their screens.

A recent survey by the Youth Endowment Fund identified TikTok as the platform where teenage children are most likely to encounter real-life violent content, with 30% of all 13 to 17-year-olds reporting exposure to physical violence on the platform. X/ Twitter was also identified as one of the platforms where people are likely to encounter real-life violence.

Wars in Ukraine and Israel-Palestine have at the same time provided another steady stream of gruesome content. This makes it increasingly hard to protect oneself from violent material online.

What sets 764 and some gore communities apart, however, is how the desensitising effect is not an accidental or slowly moving process, but deliberate. The groups wants to intentionally shock and numb its participants and watch the fallout as entertainment. In this context, fascism, other extreme ideologies, and even paedophilia become effective tools to provoke. But the difference between being a dedicated Nazi and someone so fascinated by its horrific violence that one seeks to replicate it is only an interesting question in theory. It still helps motivate violence and it spreads the ideas to new and younger audiences.

### HOW HOPE NOT HATE SECURED THE CONVICTION OF THE WORST INSTIGATORS OF THE SUMMER RIOTS

6 January 2025 saw the sentencing of Andrew McIntyre, a key architect of the racist violence that took place this summer for incitement to seven and a half years in prison for violent disorder and possession of a knife. The sentence followed his identification by HOPE not hate and his subsequent arrest on 9 August.

McIntyre, a previously little known neo-Nazi activist who had short-lived memberships of fascist groups such as Patriotic Alternative and Vanguard Britannica, played an outsized role in inflaming the riots that broke out in Southport, the wider Merseyside area, and then across the country in the days following





the murder of three young girls at a dance studio in Southport on 29 July.

Within hours of the attack, McIntyre began urging people to gather outside a mosque in Southport at 8pm the following night, with a chilling quote that foreshadowed the events that would follow:

#### QUOTE: "time for a 👌 TIME FOR WAR"

In quick succession, McIntyre then created a TikTok account and Telegram channel to promote the protest, calling the latter "Southport Wake Up". These would rapidly gain traction, the Telegram chat amassing over 13,000 subscribers within a week. McIntyre's incendiary and violent rhetoric set a violent tone that resonated throughout the ensuing unrest.

Despite being arrested for possessing a knife during the Southport riot on 30 July and released on bail the following day, McIntyre continued to incite violence. He targeted mosques in Liverpool, calling for attacks on specific dates, and disseminated a list of 39 locations across England, primarily asylum service offices, to be targeted on 7 August. This list, accompanied by flame emojis and advice on concealing identities, went viral, heightening fears and prompting closures of businesses and schools in the identified areas.

McIntyre's clear intent to spread hate and violence made it imperative that he was identified and arrested as soon as possible. It was clear, however, that he would not be an easy target for us to identify.

His use of Telegram, a notoriously under-moderated and uncooperative social media platform, and habit of cycling quickly through anonymous accounts meant that his digital footprint would be difficult to trace. We would eventually make a breakthrough by recognising his unique spellings of certain words, and use these to locate other accounts that belonged to him, which were now deleted but saved in archive format.

While he had been careful not to post any identifying information on the accounts he used to incite violence in Southport, he was less careful in previous years and we were able to use geolocation to identify his exact address and pass this on to Merseyside police.

We also uncovered more information about McIntyre's character and history on the far-right, learning that he had previously been a member of the fascist groups Patriotic Alternative and Vanguard Britannia, and that he had waged a similar effort to instigate a riot in Kirkby, Merseyside eighteen months earlier.

#### **DECENTRALISED HATE**

McIntyre's campaign was of course only part of the reason for August's riots, and he was not the only one agitating for carnage. But his case is particularly illustrative of how social media — and particularly under-moderated platforms like Telegram — can facilitate violent extremism.

McIntyre, despite being essentially an unknown figure on the far right, was able to quickly assemble an audience of thousands. This was in part due to his extensive experience of Telegram and thus a familiarity with the many UK-based far-right chat groups on there that he knew would be fertile ground to share content from his channel.

McIntyre had embarked on some short-lived memberships with formal far-right organisations, but he was essentially a product of the wider extreme right milieu that exists on platforms like Telegram. He shared his posts widely in a variety of chat groups, including local conspiracy theory-activist groups, a far-right Odinist group and the channels of far-right influencers like James Goddard, Alek Yerbury and the Traditional Britain Group.

It has never been so easy for extremists to assemble an audience of thousands, and the features of platforms like Telegram and Twitter mean they can do so at a speed that leaves the authorities scrambling to catch up. It is vital that the authorities keep up with the developments on these Wild West platforms, and that efforts persist to force the platform owners to crack down on the violent extremism that infests them.

#### Ohno

do not organize action online. thats to be done in person... all electron...

We started the southport and liverpool riots, all it took was a telegram and a tiktok account



15:23

# THE CURIOUS STATE OF ANTI-

#### **By ANKI DEO & MARCUS NORTH**

In 2024, anti-migrant activism – a key focus for the far right in recent years – underwent changes.

Across the first seven months of 2024, the antimigrant movement was stagnant, lacking clear direction and with a fairly low, albeit steady, level of activity. This collapsed almost entirely following the racist riots of the summer.

This resulted from a combination of factors, including fatigue, a wariness of arrest and a reassessment of tactics. Reform UK's mainstream rise, a lack of clear leadership and an online war against the Labour government and other national priorities also all played a role.

This slump bucked the trend of what had previously been a year-on-year rise in anti-migrant activism, particularly in 2022 and 2023 under the Conservative government. In addition to the usual protests, of which there was an explosion in early 2023, both years saw significant activity by so-called "migrant hunters": individuals who film at migrant accommodation sites for social media engagement.

Additionally, 2023 witnessed the birth of the round-the-clock protest encampment as a new tactic. This

originated at the Stradey Park Hotel in Llanelli, before being calamitously copied outside the main gates of RAF Scampton, Lincolnshire for over 100 consecutive days.

In previous years, there had also been a concerted effort by established far-right organisations, such as the fascist Patriotic Alternative (PA), to steer local groups of self-described "concerned citizens" to the far right. In this they were assisted by an assortment of community-based far-right activists and an online constellation of accounts and aggregator pages that amplified posts about alleged criminal behaviour from newly-arrived people or distortions regarding planned asylum accommodation sites.

Whilst these organised fascist and decentralised online elements still exist, the shift away from the specific anti-migrant activity of previous years also reflects the situation the country finds itself in: one in which a toxic discourse around migration and multiculturalism is now mainstream.

#### **JANUARY TO JULY**

2024 began with the crumbling of the anti-migrant blockade outside the main gate of RAF Scampton, which had been earmarked as a potential site of



# MIGRANT ACTIVISM IN 2024

temporary accommodation for people awaiting asylum application decisions.

Beset by infighting and populated by various unsavoury figures from across the far right, "Scamp Camp" hoovered up time, energy and resources from the movement. Ultimately, the main gate blockade, which operated 24/7 for over 100 days, descended into an embarrassing farce that culminated in an apparent attack by a masked group from one protest faction on another. This was the natural conclusion of weeks of internal rancour, and it repelled locals who had had concerns about the proposed use of the site.

The weeks and months spent battling the elements and each other had taken its toll on many of the leading figures, some of whom retreated from activism for a period. This fatigue, coupled with a lack of leadership, meant that it became impossible to maintain the level of activism of previous years. Simultaneously, activists across the far right questioned the utility of street protests, given their lack of tangible results in most cases.

However, as the Scamp Camp collapsed, a localised campaign in Hampshire gained traction. Throughout 2024, Rushmoor People First (subsequently Rushmoor First) organised at least 20 protests split between



Alan Leggett (AKA Active Patriot)

proposed accommodation sites in Aldershot and Farnborough. The majority of these were modest in size, with attendance generally between 20 and 60, although two over the summer reached around 200. The group itself is small but loud, and has also taken to aggressively berating their local Labour politicians via social media, email and in person.

Whilst not quite as high-profile as Scampton, these protests did occasionally gain the attention of the wider far right and were attended by groups including PA, UKIP and the Youth Alliance, a new neo-Nazi group. HOPE not hate also revealed that figures previously involved with the National Front, various English Defence League (EDL) splinter groups, Britain First and other extreme outfits had joined the campaign.

Finally, the first half of 2024 also featured the usual "migrant hunting" video output from the likes of Amanda Smith (AKA Yorkshire Rose), Alan Leggett (AKA Active Patriot) and a range of YouTube "auditors", who have made the transition into "migrant hunting" in search of higher engagement figures. Together, these activists – and occasionally Britain First – made over 100 visits to sites of temporary migrant accommodation over the seven-month period.

As has become commonplace, this content was recycled through far-right social media channels and fed into broader narratives about refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

#### **AUGUST TO DECEMBER**

However, from early August onwards – in the aftermath of the worst outbreak of far-right violence in the post-war period – all localised anti-migrant

### TRIGGER EVENTS

We use the term "trigger events" to describe incidents that generate large-scale reactions. These reactions spread beyond the individuals involved in the event to those in the in-group attacking the outgroup: what some social psychologists call "vicarious retribution". In the case of anti-migrant hatred, trigger events are most commonly crimes committed or alleged to have been committed by people of migrant backgrounds.

Trigger events prompt a flurry of hateful activity, and in some cases hate crimes and even riots. They can lead to a deepening of hatred in areas where there were already high levels of support for the far right, or it can increase anti-immigration sentiment in areas where this was previously measured as low.

It is extremely difficult for a community to process these tragic events, and this is made even harder when politicians, activists and divisive figures hijack the memory of an event to push a political agenda. That said, it can be difficult to balance highlighting the weaponisation of the event with condemning the crime itself. Brushing aside concerns about children's safety or violence against women and girls is not only counterproductive for progressives, but feeds into conspiracy thinking.

We have seen the impact of trigger events most clearly in the UK with the Southport riots, but also, for example, in Knowsley, Surbiton, Ipswich and Newquay in 2023 as well as Stoke and Walsall in 2024. Predicting which trigger events will prompt disorder is not as straightforward as assessing the locations, severity or credibility of the allegations or existing community tensions. It requires giving both public services and third sector organisations at the local level the time and resources to regularly feed in their insights.



campaigns effectively collapsed and migrant hunting ceased, albeit temporarily in the case of the latter.

Back in 2023, the riot outside the Suites Hotel in Knowsley acted as a precursor for six weeks of some of the most consistent anti-migrant activity then seen, with activists taking to the streets repeatedly. Aside from the initial riot, those six weeks passed relatively peacefully and meant that an opportunity remained for garnering a broad base of support in communities around the country.

In contrast, last summer's racist rioting was a reputational disaster for the far right, alienating many who had previously been sympathetic to some of the anti-migrant messaging, and leading to a disinclination to be associated with the mindless thuggery.

However, this was not the end of the story. Such was the extent of the racist violence, arson and destruction that, for those involved, there were always set to be repercussions. As the days and weeks rolled on, the far right reeled from the government's swift criminal justice response to the riots.

The government's countermeasures not only took many activists off the streets, but also contributed to a wariness in the movement, causing many to take a backwards step and wait to see how the dust would eventually settle.

This led to the second reason behind the collapse in anti-migrant activism. With street activism ceasing, the battle began to be waged primarily online, with innumerable conspiracy theories about Keir Starmer and the government – as well as blatant distortions about the arrests – pumped onto social media.

Whilst the Prime Minister was branded an "authoritarian" and a "communist" by the far right, online anti-migrant activists began to coalesce around a set of national issues that they considered to be all linked to Starmer and the Labour government.

The propaganda war, as well as reducing opportunities for arrest (whether real or concocted), moved activists away from a specific anti-migrant focus into a battle against the government. Consequently, the antimigrant movement has sought to weaponise issue after issue to attack the Labour government, issues which have blended with the conspiracy, distortion, lies, opportunism and misunderstanding that characterise far-right social media, intensifying anger and resentment.

These issues have included: Labour's policy on pensioners' winter fuel payments, a bizarre conspiracy theory about Arla milk, the farmers' protests in London, the demand for another national grooming enquiry, a conspiracy about the far right being victims of "two-tier policing", the early release of prisoners, a conspiracy about Starmer's family life, distortions regarding the imprisonment of far-right rioters, and the belief that the government has covered up "the truth" about the Southport murderer.

Such is the animosity towards Starmer and Labour from the anti-migrant movement and the wider far right, that each of these issues has been heralded as *the* thing that will topple the government. Such claims are intensified by social media commentators claiming to have received "inside information" about a particular situation, prompting frenzied speculation and a collective sense of

#### SECTION 7 – ANTI-MIGRANT & ANTI-MUSLIM



James Cleverly claimed that migrants were "queuing up in Calais" waiting for a Labour government to drop the Rwanda asylum plan. Photo: Ben Dance / FCDO

anticipation, despite amounting to little.

Consequently, these frequent episodes have fostered a broader narrative across the far right that various huge national issues are being covered up in order to limit the extent of a backlash. This narrative has similarly gained traction within anti-migrant politics too, with the government considered to be concealing the "true level" of migration into Britain, as well as the volume of crimes committed by immigrants.

#### **REFORM UK & MAINSTREAMING**

There is, however, a third explanation for the decline in anti-migrant activism in the second half of 2024.

In some ways, the meteoric rise of Reform in the July general election has acted as a vehicle through which those who may have previously been involved in anti-migrant activity can now voice their disdain for immigration policy. Winning five seats and coming second in 98 more, Reform emerged as the loudest anti-immigration voice within the UK.

Immigration is one of several priority issues for the British public, and all parties in last year's election campaign attempted to address this. Many antimigrant activists – though by no means all – think that Reform is the party willing to go far enough on immigration to satisfy them. This includes "migrant hunter" Amanda Smith (AKA Yorkshire Rose), who encouraged her followers to vote for Reform in 2024's general election.

This mainstreaming has been occurring for years across right-wing media and politics. A hostility to "the other" has crept in through the Conservative Party, and through elements within Labour too. The election campaign rhetoric was polarising and sensationalist, presenting immigration as dangerous and undesirable. During a leaders' debate, Starmer accused Rishi Sunak of being "the most liberal prime minister we've ever had on immigration", whilst James Cleverly claimed that migrants were "queuing up in Calais" waiting for a Labour government to drop the Rwanda asylum plan. The impact of this has been to drag the conversation further rightwards. And with regular focus on antimigrant issues from the likes of Andrew Tate and Elon Musk, those who hold anti-migrant attitudes find their views represented, unchecked and reinforced at the highest levels.

Of course, it would be misleading to claim that political parties addressing migration have straightforwardly satisfied the organised far right into inactivity. Whilst some think that politicians do not go far enough, others doubt whether they will act on their words. The result is that dedicated far-right, anti-migrant activists are rubbing their hands as the language and framing associated with the most extreme elements in society creeps ever further into that of the main parties.

#### CONCLUSION

In terms of community-based anti-migrant activism, 2024 bucked the trend of preceding years. Whereas the previous two years have witnessed an increase in activity with regular protests, so-called "migrant hunting" and the more recent 24/7 blockades, activism in 2024 was much more sporadic.

Whilst the lines have always been blurred, there was a substantial shift in the discourse in 2024, which extended anti-migrant views from the asylum process and small boats to overall migration, integration and multiculturalism, with a particular focus on Muslims.

The riots were themselves both an explosion of antimigrant activism and a product of the mainstreaming of anti-migrant rhetoric. They were also the inevitable conclusion of years of targeted anti-migrant activism in communities around the country, as well as the continued use of migrants as political footballs in the broader political discourse. Unless we properly get to grips with the content of migration's public debate, we cannot rule out more violence in the years to come.

# THE RADICALISATION OF AN ANTI-IMMIGRANT TERRORIST

DAVID LAWRENCE and MISBAH MALIK analyse the political motivation and radicalisation path of Cavan Medlock, a neo-Nazi who launched a terror attack on an immigration lawyer.



ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2020, Cavan Lee Medlock arrived at the north London offices of Duncan Lewis Solicitors, a firm best-known for representing asylum claimants. He had a knife, handcuffs, gaffer tape, Nazi and Confederate flags and the intent to attack a solicitor.

After asking for the solicitor by name, Medlock lunged at a receptionist with his knife before being subdued by staff, claiming that he had come to kill the solicitor during a stream of extreme racial abuse.

Medlock told officers that a "white genocide" was underway and that he had intended to take the solicitor captive and to plant the Nazi flag in the firm's window as a "rallying cry to other nationalists". He said: "When politics fails and the people have no alternative, I think violence is the only natural progression."

At the time of his attack, Medlock was considered fit to speak to police by a nurse. However, an attempted trial was postponed and eventually abandoned after he was assessed to be mentally unfit to stand. He was found in court to have prepared a terrorism attack and received an indefinite hospital order last December.

Medlock was fuelled, in part, by the anti-immigrant sentiment that runs through mainstream political rhetoric and the reactionary press. Medlock told police he had targeted the immigration chief of Duncan Lewis after they were named in a Daily Mail article three days earlier. This followed a campaign by the Home Office, then under Tory governance, against "activist lawyers", i.e. firms that had successfully challenged deportation and detention cases of migrants and refugees.

However, HOPE not hate can reveal many further details of Medlock's political history and journey towards terrorism. From extensive analysis of his social media, we can reveal that Medlock – who claims to have been a member of UKIP and then the Conservative Party – engaged extensively with the far right online, including with Mark Collett, one of the UK's best-known neo-Nazis.

Medlock developed an intensely conspiratorial worldview through which he understood migration to be part of a Jewish plot against white Europeans. He maintained these extreme racist views, and abused and threatened his perceived opponents, while continuing to support prominent Brexiteers, including Jacob Rees-Mogg and Nigel Farage.

His long history of extreme and violent posting – under his own name – begs the question of whether the authorities should have done more to prevent his attack.

#### **BREXIT, UKIP AND THE TORIES**

Cavan Medlock was a dedicated Brexiteer and, from 2013, a member of UKIP. In April 2016, he was photographed in London staffing a stall for GrassRoots Out, a pro-Brexit campaign bankrolled by the former UKIP donor Arron Banks. Medlock later claimed that he "delivered 20k leaflets to help secure Brexit in London".

He also claims to have defected to the Conservative Party in October 2016, prompted by Diane James's election as UKIP leader, but remained a follower of Farage. We have recorded 56 replies, retweets, quote tweets or other mentions of Farage from Medlock's account between July 2016 and July 2018.

By the summer of 2017, Medlock had adopted the language of treachery that became common during post-Brexit debates. For example:

"Yes there are traitors within the conservative party, Soubry, Ken Clarke and others, @johnredwood or @JReesMoggMP for PM." – 13 June 2017

"A civil war would separate the patriots and the traitors, the nationalists would fight for they're homeland and destroy the globalist filth" - 8 June 2017

Medlock quickly grew dissatisfied with the Tories, writing in August 2017: "What a fool I was, we need a new nationalist party." He later asked: "Why can't Nigel [Farage] start the nationalist party we all need?"

#### **CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND THE FAR RIGHT**

Medlock consumed much of his political content on YouTube, writing in December 2018: "I haven't watch tv new [sic] for 2-3 years [...] use YouTube a lot now."

This may explain his familiarity with various far-right social media influencers then active on the platform. This includes Stefan Molyneux, a Canadian white supremacist who styles himself as a self-help guru. Between March 2017 and January 2019, we recorded 51 replies, retweets or other mentions of Molyneux from Medlock's account.

Medlock was also a follower of Mark Collett, a key British promoter of the "white genocide" conspiracy theory who now leads Patriotic Alternative, a neo-Nazi group. Between August and November 2017, we recorded 22 replies, quote tweets or mentions of Collett on Medlock's Twitter account, and further engagements on Facebook.

### Cavan Lee Medlock ► Mark Collett

5 Oct 2018 · 🏜 · Happy Birthday, sorry for being late I got a 3 day ban from posting.

Mark Collett liked this post

Medlock sending Collett birthday wishes on Facebook

By the summer of 2017, Medlock was regularly pushing far-right conspiracy theories and overt antisemitism. This includes referencing the "JQ" [Jewish Question] and the "Cultural Marxism" theory that alleges that sinister left-wingers are subverting institutions to undermine the West. In particular, Medlock ascribed to the "Kalergi Plan" theory, a variant of the "white genocide" theory that claims that "elites" – often said to be Jewish – are orchestrating demographic changes in order to weaken and replace white Europeans.

"@RaheemKassam @Nigel\_Farage I ordered a copy last night, hey could Nigel sign my copy of [Farage's book] purple revolution, also could he talk about the Rothschilds and Kalergi etc." – 15 August 2017

"@Jacob\_Rees\_Mogg The non whites will reach majority in Engd [sic] by 2060 as reported by the Daily Mail, once they reach majority they will kill the white men/boys and rape the white women and fuck us out of existence!, we have a duty to preserve the English people and thereby England." – 19 March 2018

He would later reference *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, a notorious antisemitic forgery. Commenting on a July 2019 episode of "The Jacob Rees-Mogg Show" on LBC, he wrote:

"☆♥\$\$\$##Ang the swine Bercow and the rest of the traitors in parliament \$#\$ Kalergi plan for white genocide and a world government run by Rothschild must be stopped! We lost ww2, read protocols of learned elders of zion."

#### **GRIEVANCE AND VIOLENCE**

Conspiracy theories are attractive, in part, because they can provide scapegoats for personal grievances. Medlock frequently contacted far-right figures on Twitter to vent his frustrations and request advice about his life, including his low wage, insecure employment and lack of romantic success, as well as perceived decline in Harrow. He blamed such issues on immigration, feminism, LGBTQ+ rights and supposed discrimination against white Britons.

#### **"ACTIVIST LAWYERS": FROM THE HEART OF GOVERNMENT TO EXTREMIST VIOLENCE**

Medlock's assault was not random. He told police he had targeted the immigration chief of Duncan Lewis after they were named in a Daily Mail article three days earlier.

Immigration law firms – so-called "activist lawyers" – had been at the centre of media hysteria in the weeks preceding the attack. Reactionary press articles and government statements had repeatedly demonised those working to support the human rights of migrants and refugees, specifically firms that had successfully challenged deportation and detention cases.

The Medlock case is a story of how anti-migrant campaigns can incite violence.

The use of the term "activist

lawyers" to attack UK immigration lawyers first appeared in August 2020, when the Home Office, then under Priti Patel, began a concentrated programme of charter flights to EU countries to remove people who had claimed asylum under the Dublin Regulation. This was based on the misinterpretation of the regulation that people seeking asylum are obliged to claim in the first safe country they enter, which is not the case.

Duncan Lewis had challenged forced removals and grounded a number of these flights, which was reported in The Guardian on 11 August. The Home Office was quoted in the article, claiming that "the current legal framework is often abused by

Home Office O Gukhomeoffice · 2h Small boat crossings are totally unnecessary and we continue to return migrants with no right to be in the UK.

Another flight left today with more planned in the coming weeks.



...ALLOWING ACTIVIST LAWYERS TO DELAY AND DISRUPT RETURNS

activist lawyers to frustrate the government's attempts in this regard."

"Activist lawyer" subsequently became a commonplace attack in government briefings and inflammatory tabloid articles.

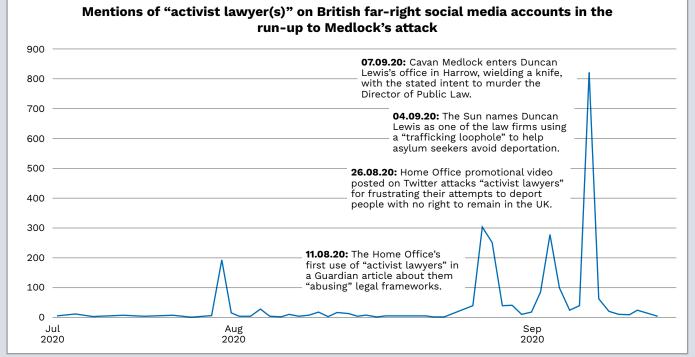
This included a promotional video released by the Home Office on 26 August that blamed "activist lawyers" for frustrating the department's efforts to deport people. This video was viewed over 1.6 million times before controversy over its content led to its deletion.

The Law Society stated that the video was both "misleading and dangerous", while Home Office permanent secretary Matthew Rycroft said it "should not have been used on an official government channel".

But the damage was done, and attacks on "activist lawyers" ramped up.

On 4 September, the Daily Mail published an article about asylum seekers arriving in the UK via boats. It claimed that lawyers were using a "trafficking loophole" to help failed asylum seekers avoid deportation. The article named the Director of Public Law at Duncan Lewis.

The first working day after this article was published, Cavan Medlock entered Duncan Lewis's office in Harrow, with the stated intent to murder its Director of Public Law.



Mentions of "activist lawyer" on far-right social media accounts had ramped up following a Home Office video on Twitter and a series of inflammatory newspaper articles using the phrase. For example, in March 2018, he wrote a series of messages to Jordan Peterson, the lifestyle guru and "culture war" commentator, including:

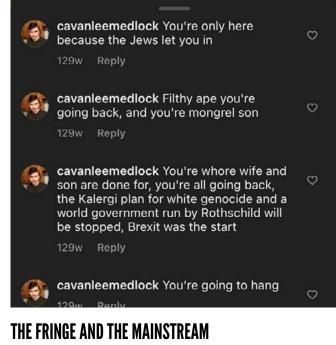
"@jordanbpeterson No man in his right mind would take a woman back to his father's house as it's degrading, living in the multicultural cesspit that is Harrow unable to move. My local MP Gareth Thomas gave all social housing to Syrian migrants." – 26 March 2018

Over time, Medlock's pleas became increasingly desperate and conspiratorial. For example:

"@StefanMolyneux I've wasted years in front of my Xbox with nothing to show for myself and it's damaged my pride, I'm no man but a disgrace." - 31 December 2018

While the conspiracy theories he imbibed may have channelled his venom towards certain targets, his anger was clearly both long-standing and deep-seated. Violence features in the earliest social media posts we have found; in a YouTube comment posted on a July 2014 Farage interview, he wrote: "James O'Brien [the interviewer] is a little worm who twists everything, left wing nut, people like him should be shot."

However, his abusive and threatening behaviour intensified over time. For example, on an Instagram video of the toppling of the statue of the slave-owner Edward Colston in Bristol in June 2020, Medlock unleashed a diatribe towards another commenter:



Medlock's fascistic worldview was drawn from fringe extremists and steeped in conspiratorial far-right rhetoric. Nonetheless, he remained keyed into more mainstream right-wing discourse and appears to have retained faith in well-known Brexiteers and antiimmigrant politicians long into his radicalisation.

Medlock believed that immigration was a weapon in a war of annihilation against white Britons. In his view, this war was being waged by "globalist" Jews and the "traitors" that assist them in the EU and other institutions. He seems to have found affirmation for this belief in the words of the right-wing commentariat.



Cavan Medlock (right) campaigning for Grassroots Out, London, April 2016

#### **ANTI-MIGRANT POLITICS INCITE VIOLENCE**

Cavan Medlock could be seen as yet another lone actor, an angry opportunist who felt inspired to act out his white-supremacist ideals. But it was the campaign against "activist lawyers" in the mainstream that inspired his act of terror.

Medlock absorbed a stream of anti-migrant rhetoric, pushed from the heart of politics through the rightwing media.

The dangerous consequences of the growing populist radical right could not be clearer. Last August, people seeking asylum, Muslims, and racialised communities more generally were targeted by nationwide far-right riots, with asylum accommodation sites being set ablaze in Tamworth and Rotherham.

Right-wing politicians and commentators persist with hard talk and tough measures on immigration, handing opportunities to the far right to further fuel reactionary anti-politics anger and immigration fears at the same time.

While we no longer have a government that pursues performatively cruel migration policy so overtly, Labour continues to chase the right on immigration rhetoric. Last November, for instance, Keir Starmer accused the Conservatives of "deliberately liberalis[ing] immigration" and "turn[ing] Britain into a one-nation experiment in open borders."

Medlock's target had been identified by a campaign that came from the heart of power. The case sends a loud, clear message about the consequences of hateful and alarmist rhetoric. Narratives of migration and asylum must be completely redefined away from fear and suspicion, taking power away from those who purely use it to divide.

### ANTI-IMMIGRANT RHETORIC Control, culture and competition

ANKI DEO looks at public attitudes towards immigration.



The sailors and Royal Marines of HMS Bulwark help migrants ashore. Photo: Royal Navy Media Archive

Migration is politically unignorable in the UK, and public attitudes which were softening have started to harden again since 2021. During their time in government, the Conservatives doubled down on immigration hostility in an attempt to win electoral support with Farage and Reform snapping at their heels.

The Labour government came to power vowing change. Yet in a November press conference, the Prime Minister used narratives more customary of his right-wing counterparts: accusing the Conservatives of running a country with "open borders", allowing high levels of immigration "by design", "soft-touch" Britain. In January, the government boasted of the removal of 16,400 people, noting that an unspecified number were "criminals convicted of drug offences, theft, rape and murder".

Labour, the Conservatives and Reform all claim to best represent the needs of ordinary people. However, in playing up to a small crowd with hardcore anti-migrant views, the government is missing the opportunity to reframe the narratives around immigration towards fairness and compassion, tied to its priorities of economic growth and community cohesion.

#### WHAT DO THE PUBLIC WANT?

Our polling shows that 55% of people think that on the whole, immigration has been good for the country, whilst 45% think it has been bad. But when people are asked which types of immigration they would allow, it is less black and white. Both allowing or banning all immigration are minority opinions.

How immigration is talked about is important, as framing influences support. When an explicit link is drawn between immigration, skills and the economy, three quarters of people (75%) support some kind of immigration. In a question whose wording draws attention to those fleeing war, persecution and conflict, people are also more likely to have softer attitudes: 53% think that the UK Government should be doing more to provide safe and legal routes.

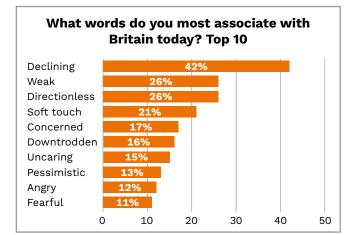
Over time, the proportion of those who would allow all immigration has increased, reflecting a broader trend of increasing tolerance despite the current backslide. In the aftermath of Brexit, the public had higher awareness of unskilled labour shortages such as fruit pickers and lorry drivers, but tolerance for unskilled immigrants is back to a pre-Brexit low as economic strain has brought conversations about competition and deservingness to the forefront.

The above indicates that people's actual ideas about immigration policy are moderate and take context into account. However, there also appears to be a tendency towards scepticism during times of economic hardship, which can be exploited by those seeking to polarise the debate.

#### Which of the following immigration policies would be best for Britain?

- Stop all immigration permanently
- Stop all immigration until the economy improves
   Only allow in skilled immigrants who will help the economy
- Only allow in skilled and unskilled immigrants who will help the economy
- Allow all types of immigration

Feb 2016	13%	1	7%		33%		27	%	9%	
Jul 2016	10%	9%		379	6		33%		11%	
Jul 2017	12%	9%		36	%		30%		12%	
Jan 2018	9%	5	4	0%			34%		12%	
Jul 2018	10%	2	6%			49	%		15%	
Dec 2019	4 7		30%			4	3%		16%	
Jan 2025	11%	149	6	3	3%		28%		14%	
(	) )	2	0	4	0	6	s a	80	10	00



#### **BREAKING THE CYCLE**

In our 2024 Fear and HOPE report, we explored how harmful migration policy is driven by a toxic cycle of politicians and the mainstream media feeding off perceived negative public attitudes. Hostile immigration rhetoric is being used as a shortcut to build empathy and trust with right-of-centre voters and those who have concerns about immigration. Three reasons why people might hold anti-migrant views are control, culture and competition.

If the new government is serious about improving community relations in the UK, it has a responsibility to break this cycle, which has real-life consequences. Anti-immigrant narratives on social media were one of the driving factors of the August riots; organisations working with migrants and refugees have been under scrutiny and attack for years.

The government's practical approach to immigration is undoubtedly an improvement on the dysfunctional aggression of recent years. It is also working to prevent the spread of misinformation and disinformation online. However, some of its rhetoric is all too familiar.

#### CONTROL

This viewpoint is centred around ideas of British sovereignty, political power and secure borders. Migration is prompted by global political, social and environmental factors, but some feel that the UK does not bear international responsibilities or that these responsibilities must not come at the cost of national interests.

The majority (57%) of people think it is more important for countries to work together on shared objectives than it is for a country to protect its own interests, and Starmer shares this willingness, making it clear that leaving the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is not on the cards.

However 49% of people think countries have the right to do what they want within their borders without interference from those on the outside, and 50% are willing to leave the ECHR, suggesting that some are willing to challenge long-standing legal frameworks and give up on fundamental rights frameworks for greater independence and border control.

When asked to choose words that describe Britain today, the top ten were negative. The popularity of terms like "weak" and "soft touch" hint at concerns

Do you agree or disagree with these statements about your community?						
Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree						
My local community is peaceful and friendly						
13%	46%		29%	9% 3		
The arrival of immigrants has changed my local community for the better						
7 18%	4	0%	18%	16%		
The arrival of immigrants has changed my local community for the worse						
16%	20%	33%	20%	11%		
I don't think new immigrants want to integrate						
20%	26%	33%	10	<b>6%</b> 5		
0 2	20 40	60	80	100		

about the UK being an easy target. Of those who answered that Britain was declining, the most popular explanation was that immigration has changed the country beyond recognition (46%). The Prime Minister describing the Conservative-run UK's hostile environment as "soft-touch Britain" plays up to these protectionist attitudes.

#### CULTURE

Culture arguments propose that immigration is compromising a "British" way of life. Demographic changes like new languages, places of worship or shops are seen as negative and threatening. Immigrants are also blamed for complex, multifactorial social changes such as the decline of high streets and public services or the loss of local industry and identity.

Relationships within and across communities should at the bare minimum be peaceful. Whilst most people (59%) describe their local community as peaceful and friendly, newcomers have public attitudes stacked against them, being unfairly characterised as uninterested in or even against a "British" way of life. Almost half (46%) do not think that new immigrants want to integrate. When asked to give solutions for improving community relations, 34% include controlling immigration.

Thirty-nine per cent of people think that we should prioritise asylum seekers from countries with a better chance of integrating. Whilst those who already speak English, have work or study lined up, or have relatives in the UK might have a better chance of settling into life in the UK quickly, the idea that whole countries can be more compatible implies that some religions, ethnicities and cultures are more welcome in the UK than others.

The far right exploit the spectrum of culture-based arguments to claim that their attitudes, rooted in racism and anti-Muslim hatred, are just "citizens' concerns". Over a quarter (28%) of people think that globalist elites are encouraging immigration into Europe as part of a plot to weaken European identity and a third (33%) believe that there are areas in the UK that are under the control of Sharia law. These conspiracy theories are the extreme end of culturebased anti-migrant arguments.

#### COMPETITION

Competition arguments are rooted in the idea that there is a scarcity of resources, which creates feelings of competition between different needy groups. The cost of living, health and the economy have consistently been priority issues.

Just over half (54%) of people agree that immigration is important for the public sector and organisations could not cope without immigrants. However, as explored above, a third of people think we should only allow entry to immigrants who can benefit the economy. The right to work for people awaiting asylum decisions, which is a popular policy, would help with this perception for those seeking sanctuary in the UK.

General attitudes to hardship are split: 53% of people think that people who are struggling have a right to seek help from the government, and 53% also agree that the government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off. The issue is that many people do not include immigrants – newly arrived and/or established in the UK – in their estimation of those who are struggling.

Newcomers to the UK are seen by many as having unfair access to public services including housing, health/social care, education and welfare. Some feel that the needs of British – or even White British – people should be prioritised, or that we should wait until the economy has improved before allowing more immigration. This often reflects a misunderstanding of welfare and local authority funding, as over three million people (the Home Office does not have accurate statistics) living in the UK are living with no recourse to public funds.

#### **COMPARING CONTROL AND CULTURE ATTITUDES**

In the case of competition, the government can reduce these attitudes by addressing the underlying reasons for the dissatisfaction – they would be pulling a weed out at the roots instead of trimming off the leaves. Around two-thirds (65%) of people say that they would have more trust in politicians if the government delivered better-quality public services.

However, tackling control and culture attitudes requires more complicated intervention and a change in rhetoric. Caution is needed to avoid playing straight into the hands of the populist right. To explore this, we created control and culture sub-groups by selecting participants who had chosen certain responses in A/B questions.

#### **Differences between control and** culture groups Average (n=7001) 📕 Control group (n=1184) Culture group (n=1050) It is more important for a country to protect its own interests 43% 100% 61% Countries have the right to do what they want within their own borders 49% 67% British values are in decline 71% 100%

British values gain strength from being consistent

 T5%

 100%

 0
 20
 40
 60
 80
 100%

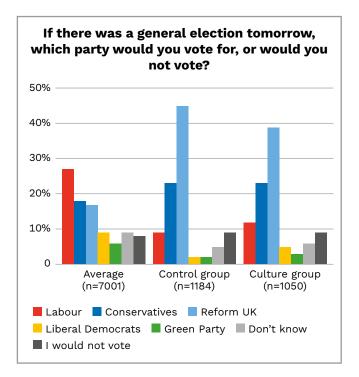
Both groups skew older, are more likely to be white and the culture group is also more likely to be male (55%, average 49%). The control group exhibits higher levels of culture attitudes, whereas the culture group is only slightly more likely than average to hold control views. This suggests that although control-based views might be seen as the more acceptable side of antimigrant attitudes, there is not such a clean separation between the two concerns.

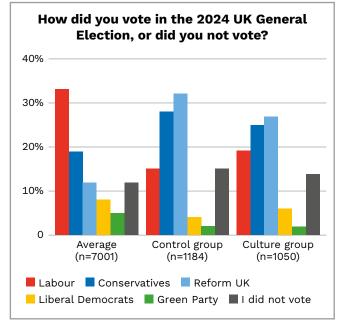
Interestingly, members of the control group are more likely than the culture group to have reactionary views on race and discrimination. They are more likely to say that people should be allowed to say whatever they want about race and religion, even if it is critical or offensive, and 85% think that discrimination against white people has become as big a problem as discrimination against non-white people, compared to 76% of the culture group (average 54%).

Part of the political focus on immigration is about electoral politics. Immigration is a key dividing line, with those who think that migrants undermine Britain's culture far more likely to support the Conservatives and Reform. Both Labour and Reform want to win over disillusioned Conservative voters, for whom immigration is a top-three priority. Both the culture

Control group (n=1184)	Culture group (n=1050)					
1 Immigration has been a bad thing for the country						
2 The UK should leave the European Convention on Human Rights in order to more easily remove people who have no legal right to be here or who we no longer want AND	2 Britain should prioritise taking asylum seekers from countries where we know people will have a better chance at integrating into British society					
3 It is more important for a country to protect its own interests AND	AND 3 British values are in decline AND					
4 Countries have the right to do what they want within their borders without interference from those on the outside.	4 British values gain strength from being constant even as people come here to make a new life.					

#### SECTION 7 – ANTI-MIGRANT & ANTI-MUSLIM





and control groups are much more likely than average to support Reform, with higher-than-average levels of the support for the Conservatives which could shift before the next election. It is unlikely that Labour will win voters from Reform at the next election by hardline immigration rhetoric alone.

Despite being politically engaged, a large proportion of both the culture and control groups are pessimistic about the future and decidedly negative about politicians. They feel that politicians don't listen to people like them (87% control and 82% culture, average 72%) and that most politicians just want power or fame, not to serve the public (87% control, 89% culture, average 73%).

This anti-establishment sentiment can and has translated into action: over half (56% control, 51% culture) of the two groups think that Britain's



Keir Starmer. Photo: Number 10 / Flickr

immigration and refugee policy bears a great deal of responsibility for causing the unrest during the August riots, and two thirds (control 66%, culture 65%) think that the protesters had legitimate concerns.

Control or culture rhetoric threatens not only the current government, but trust in politics as a whole. It legitimises Farage and Reform's anti-migrant mission, and the idea that immigrants or immigration policy can be blamed for social issues that are loosely connected or even unrelated.

Labour can convince these groups to trust them through a track record of economic growth, public service delivery and locally visible change. The government intends to do all of this, so stooping to Reform's rhetoric stands to gain little and lose voters on the left.

#### A DIFFERENT WAY FORWARD

Returning to Starmer's November speech, he might be right that the British people crave "order and security" – but rather than just border control, they want economic security, safe and cohesive communities, well-run public services and fairness in the welfare system.

In choosing to play the game that the likes of Farage have been playing for years and trying to address what it thinks the public wants, the government keeps the tool of immigration firmly in the hands of those who want to use it for polarisation. Stoking feelings of helplessness, decline, suspicion and scarcity will only lead to disorder and danger, and possibly even drive voters towards the anti-migrant political platforms of Reform.

Hatred is hatred, but there is a more complex and contradictory story when it comes to people feeling fear and suspicion about immigration. Government narratives should focus on fairness, compassion and international cooperation, as well as delivering economic growth and social cohesion for everyone.

The statistics reported in this article come from two separate polls, both commissioned by Focaldata on behalf of HOPE not hate. Both polls were weighted to be nationally representative across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The first poll (n=22,502) was conducted between 30 November 2024 and 8 January 2025. The second poll (n=7,001) was conducted between 19 December 2024 and 6 January 2025.

For further information, please email anki@hopenothate.org.uk

### ANTI-MIGRANT / ANTI-MUSLIM



Formed in May 2011, Britain First is one of the best known far-right groups in the UK, in part due to its success on social media. At its peak, the group's Facebook page had over 1.9 million likes and in November 2017, sitting President Donald Trump retweeted three anti-Muslim videos posted by then-Deputy Leader Jayda Fransen.

However, for many, the group is indelibly associated with far-right violence. This owes in part to the assassination of Labour MP Jo Cox by far-right extremist Thomas Mair in June 2016, a man who, despite having no apparent connection to the group, reportedly shouted the words "Britain First" during his attack.

The group has been linked to other terror attacks. In the summer of 2017, Polish-born Marek Zakrocki drove his van at the owner of a restaurant in North London, telling police at the scene: "I'm going to kill a Muslim, I'm doing this for Britain". Britain First literature was found at his home.

Moreover, Darren Osborne, the terrorist who drove a van into pedestrians near Finsbury Park Mosque in 2017, killing one and injuring nine, had also consumed Britain First content. The Metropolitan Police said of Osborne:

"He had grown to hate Muslims largely due his consumption of large amounts of online farright material including, as evidenced at court, statements from former EDL leader Tommy Robinson, Britain First and others."

Since its founding 13 years ago, Britain First has suffered an inordinate quantity of legal, interpersonal and competency issues. However, it remains one of the most active far-right groups in the country and a threat to communities across the UK.

#### POLITICS

Since forming the party over a decade ago, Co-Leader Paul Golding has regularly changed the focus of Britain First in the hope of finding a winning formula that, so far, remains elusive.

Since 2019, Britain First has also focused heavily on cross-Channel migration. Emulating the mosque invasions that made the group notorious, Golding and his activists have regularly stormed into hotels temporarily housing asylum seekers and confronted staff and residents with cameras, or else staged protests outside.

While this tactic has not garnered the same wide notice that the group enjoyed in its early years, it has proved highly influential on the wider British far right, popularising the trend of so-called "migrant hunting" that remains a mainstay of far-right activity today.

#### **ELECTORAL POLITICS**

Britain First has long paired its street activities with electioneering, a strategy Golding has dubbed "the ballot and the boot".

After numerous failed attempts and legal challenges, Britain First finally re-registered in 2021. Golding had already begun to reorganise Britain First into a more serious electoral machine, establishing more formal regional branches and more closely emulating the old BNP.

However, the group has performed terribly at the ballot box. 2024 was a hat-trick year of failures at the polls. Following a nasty London mayoral campaign that included labelling Sadiq Khan as "that vile Taliban mayor" and claiming that the capital "will be the first Islamist caliphate in the Western world", candidate Nick Scanlon received 20,000 votes (0.8%), losing to the joke candidate Count Binface.

The expense of this election – which, according to party emails, included £25,000 to contest in London and £11,200 on campaign materials – factored into the group's decision not to contest the 2024 general election, with Golding admitting in an unusually candid broadcast:

"We are exhausted, physically. Our donor base is exhausted, financially... We would stand in seats and do terribly. We're going to skip this general election. We don't have the resources, manpower, finances to put up even more than a half-arsed campaign. We're just not at that level yet."

#### **A DANGER TO COMMUNITIES**

Although it faces internal issues and a disastrous electoral record, Britain First remains one of the most active far-right groups in the UK. The group also has perhaps the best infrastructure on the far right, with three mini-vans, an office and a training centre for its "Defence Force".

Despite its high turnover, its small core of activists are often willing to travel for actions most weekends,



meaning that the group has an outsized ability to negatively impact its target communities.

Several of the asylum accommodation sites subjected to horrendous vandalism, violence and arson attempts in the summer of 2024 had previously been targeted by Britain First campaigns. This includes in Hull, which suffered one of the worst riots in the country, and in Rotherham, where rioters attempted to burn down a hotel while residents were trapped inside.

An asylum hotel in Tamworth, which was similarly subjected to a terrifying mob attack last August, had been the focus of Ashlea Simon's by-election campaign last autumn. The group drove around town in a "battle bus" emblazoned with the slogans: "Stop the boats" and "Keep Tamworth British". Britain First distributed many thousands of leaflets that targeted the hotel by name and accused the government of "using Tamworth as a dumping ground for working-age illegal migrant men" and of "[facilitating] the illegal immigration invasion of Britain".

Undeterred by the attempted arson, Britain First staged a march in Tamworth (led by Golding and Simon) on 5 October 2024 with a banner that read "PENSIONERS BEFORE MIGRANTS".

#### **EMBARRASSMENTS**

In November 2024, Britain First suffered a further setback from an undercover investigation by HOPE not hate. We revealed the Holocaust denial, antisemitism and sexism rife among members. One activist shouted at a woman who rejected party leaflets that he hoped refugees would rape her. The investigation also charted Golding's deeply-held cynicism about the future of the country. "I want this country to become a shithole," he said. "I want this country to descend into a fucking nightmare. Because that's the only thing that's going to get people off their backsides."

Low-level complaints about what Golding does with Britain First membership money are likely to continue. His incessant cash-solicitation emails are the source of much discontent in and outside the party. As our infiltrator revealed, in July 2023, Golding sent three emails in three days demanding his activists contribute to an "urgent" fundraising target of £2,000 to buy ten high-quality camcorders. "I want to buy enough of these so that each and every Britain First local branch has one to film their weekly activities," he wrote. Those camcorders never materialised nor were they mentioned again. That same month, however, Golding took his girlfriend and her son on a luxury holiday to Pattaya, Thailand.

#### **PROSPECTS FOR 2025**

Last year saw the return of an earlier tactic used by Britain First: street rallies. Golding was initially hesitant to organise such events, telling our undercover reporter they are a "PR nightmare", adding: "It's just a shitshow. People turn up pissed." Despite his concerns about public displays of drunken aggression or worse, a poor turn-out, Golding has nevertheless resumed holding public marches in lieu of its more typical invite-only protests. Britain First marched in Lichfield, Tamworth and Solihull, and held a "march for remigration" on 1 March in Nuneaton.

Golding has pledged to stand 30-40 candidates in the local council elections this May. His previous strategy of targeting a smaller number of wards and knocking on every door three times with a leaflet has so far proved a failure. Spreading his thin resources ever thinner seems an unlikely way to success.





#### **CONTENT CREATOR**

Alan Leggett (AKA Active Patriot), from Grimsby in Lincolnshire, is one of the most prominent "migrant hunter" activists in the UK.

Previously an acolyte of Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), Leggett made a similar attempt to transform himself into a so-called "citizen journalist".

In 2022, Leggett began targeting migrant accommodation, making at least 38 trips to film and harass both occupants and staff. In 2023, Leggett made at least 27 migrant accommodation visits and also appeared at a number of anti-migrant protests throughout the year.

In the first quarter of 2024, Leggett kept up a fairly consistent video output through his X/Twitter account, predominantly at temporary asylum accommodation sites around the Midlands and the North East. Following the end of his police order banning him from the site, Leggett returned to lurking around RAF Scampton, the site of a long-running anti-migrant campaign.

In the summer, Leggett headed to the northern French coast with Nigel Marcham (AKA Little Veteran) and another migrant hunter who had a stint in the Territorial Army. When the 2024 riots broke out, Leggett took to social media to fan the flames and push his anti-immigration agenda.

In mid-August, Leggett's house was raided by police, supposedly in relation to his social media output. In early November, Leggett was notified that he was being investigated under the Regulatory Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) 2000, requiring him to provide police with the passcodes to his devices. Later that month, Leggett indicated via X/Twitter that he was considering ceasing migrant hunting and moving to help his local homeless community instead, starting an online fundraiser for a mobile food van. Nevertheless, his social media output remains split pretty evenly between the two topics.

#### AMANDA SMITH (AKA YORKSHIRE ROSE) Categories: independent activist, influencer / Content creator

Yorkshire Rose, real name Amanda Smith, is a "migrant hunter" from Castleford in West Yorkshire who has been among the most prolific asylum accommodation harassers in the country. Over the course of 2022 and 2023, Smith made roughly 200 visits to sites of temporary asylum accommodation, predominantly across the Midlands, Yorkshire, North East and North West.

Smith, a former organiser for the English Defence League (EDL) and Britain First, posts videos frequently onto her YouTube and X/Twitter accounts, documenting her accommodation visits. These visits often take place alongside her fellow "migrant hunter" Alan Leggett (AKA Active Patriot), and in previous years with a man known as "The Bulldog".

In October 2023, Smith was arrested for aggravated trespass at RAF Scampton and subjected to bail conditions restricting her from within 200 metres of the site. In January 2024, this was extended by a further three months.

Smith has previously posted content of the fascist group Patriotic Alternative (PA), as well as reposting messages full of racism and Islamophobia.

Matching the general decline in migrant hunter activism in 2024, Smith made at least 36 accommodation visits in the year, almost all of them between January and July. In the aftermath of the Southport attack, Smith used her X/Twitter account to promote upcoming demonstrations around the country, and Smith herself attended the Leeds demonstration on 3 August as disorder swept the country.

Like Leggett, Smith also suffered yet more legal trouble in 2024. In March, she claimed that her arrest at RAF Scampton in 2023 for aggravated trespass had been upgraded to an investigation under Section 18 of the Public Order Act. On 7 August, Smith was arrested again for inciting racial hatred online and held in custody for 36 hours, whereupon she was released without charge but with a series of bail conditions. In early October, Smith was notified that the police were taking no further action. She subsequently announced that she would be suing West Yorkshire Police for "unlawful arrest", revealing that she was also pursuing a similar case against Lincolnshire Police.



### ANNE MARIE WATERS

Anne Marie Waters is one of the UK's best-known farright, anti-Muslim activists.

A former Labour councillor, in 2013 Waters shifted dramatically to the right and became heavily involved in the international so-called "counter-jihad" scene. After becoming a close ally of Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson) she became a key figure in Pegida UK and then stood as a candidate for UKIP.

Waters subsequently launched her own political party, For Britain, in October 2017 and the party quickly attracted Islamophobic UKIP exiles, ex-BNP members and other extremists.

After folding For Britain in July 2022 – against the wishes of many of its members – Waters rejoined UKIP in April 2023, and announced her intention to run for its leadership, temporarily latching onto the anti-migrant campaign at RAF Scampton in a bid for support, before subsequently dropping out.

Waters had a quiet 2024, establishing a Substack and writing semi-regularly on articles on topics such the Rotherham grooming scandal and "anti-whiteness", as well as posting segments of her forthcoming book on famous women she claims have been erased from International Women's Day by "the left".

#### **CHRIS JOHNSON**

CATEGORIES: INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST, Influencer / content creator

Chris Johnson is an independent antimigrant activist who methodically documents Channelcrossings landing around Dover, tracking the number of vessels and arrivals, on a neardaily basis. He also



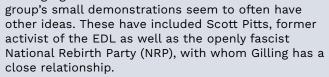
posts general updates about rescue operations in the Channel, and weather reports at sea.

Early in 2023, Johnson appeared to make the decision to abandon his YouTube channel with over 1,500 subscribers, instead posting his daily videos onto his Facebook account. In centralising his content in this way, Johnson was rewarded with generally much higher views and engagement that year.

#### HULL PATRIOTIC PROTESTERS Categories: street network / organisation

Founded in 2023 by former English Defence League (EDL) activist John Gilling (AKA John Francis), Hull Patriotic Protesters (HPP) is a small street movement with a primary focus on immigration, refugees and asylum seekers.

Whilst Gilling attempts to lead the group in a somewhat professionalised manner, and has voiced his opposition to "racist or neo-nazi bullshit", the ragtag attendees of the



In the aftermath of the horrific Southport attack, Gilling called a demonstration in Hull's Victoria Square on 3 August. A large number gathered for a static rally and speeches, before a group splintered off and engaged in some of the worst rioting anywhere in the country. This included a pitched battle at a site of temporary migrant accommodation, outside of which HPP had protested earlier in the year and which had previously been targeted by "migrant hunters". This was clearly at odds with Gilling's plans for the day, and two weeks later, as part of an arrangement with Sky News, he met with an Iraqi asylum seeker who had lived in Hull for 25 years to offer a sincere apology. In the process, Gilling said that his protest had been "hijacked".

Nevertheless, HPP held another demonstration in mid-January 2025, although, as has become a feature across the broader far right, this was directed in opposition towards Keir Starmer and the Labour government.

#### MICHAEL HORGAN (MICHATOR MEDIA) CATEGORIES: INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST, INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Michael Horgan is an NHS nursing associate in Nottinghamshire, and is the man behind the Michator Media brand. Since appearing at an anti-migrant protest in Cannock in February 2023, Horgan has steadily grown his social media following and his YouTube channel.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, Horgan has attended a further anti-migrant demonstration in Cannock, as well as in Rotherham and Wakefield and the longrunning and calamitous camp outside RAF Scampton. More significantly, Horgan has spent the last two years attached to a small group of migrant hunters including Amanada Smith (AKA Yorkshire Rose) and Alan Leggett (AKA Active Patriot). Together, they have headed to sites of temporary migrant accommodation around the country, with Horgan generally tagging along to locations in the Midlands and Yorkshire.



#### LITTLE BOATS

#### CATEGORIES: INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST

Founded by wedding DJ Jeremy Davis in August 2020, Little Boats was established, ostensibly, as an anti-migrant vigilante group to patrol the Kent coastline confronting

migrants. The group previously referred to itself as a "flotilla" and was formerly aligned with Steve Laws, the "migrant hunter" turned fascist activist. Little Boats takes its name from the Little Ships of Dunkirk, hundreds of private boats that sailed across the Channel to rescue Allied forces stranded on Dunkirk beach during WWII.

Whilst it has claimed previously to have engaged in night patrols in the English Channel, today it is essentially a social media operation manned by Davis that shares generic anti-migrant and anti-Islam content. Its supporters regularly post about the supposed "invasion" of Britain.

On X/Twitter, Little Boats retains a fairly sizable presence, and in 2023 shared a map of migrant accommodation to be targeted for harassment. The group's output dwindled in 2024, with seemingly nothing in the way of offline activity at all. Following the racist rioting of the summer, Davis joined much of the wider far right in labelling convicted rioters as victims of "two-tier policing".

#### PATRIOTS OF BRITAIN

#### CATEGORIES: ORGANISATION

Established in the lead-up to a small anti-immigration demonstration in London in September 2022, Patriots of Britain (PoB) pushes anti-



migrant content to its target audience of football supporters, whom it seeks to unite across clubs.

At present, PoB has a negligible impact on the UK far right, and its follower count across social media is low. POB's Telegram admin is Chris Bateman, who has previously cycled through the British National Party and For Britain, and is now a parish councillor for the British Democrats in Basildon.

In early 2023, PoB staged a tiny protest outside Serco HQ against cross-Channel migration, as well as a "protect the statues" demonstration in London in October to which no one showed up.

2024 saw little deviation from this pattern, with PoB functioning as an identikit, online, far-right propaganda operation. During the riots, its social media channels promoted a range of protests, some of which saw serious violence and disorder, and in their aftermath PoB sought to muddy the waters around many of the convictions.

At the end of August, a tiny POB group staged a flash demo outside Belmarsh prison, describing incarcerated rioters as "political prisoners". In October, the group promoted the Tommy Robinson rally in London.

#### RISE OF THE FOOTSOLDIER Categories: street network

Emerging in July 2024, Rise of the Footsoldier is a minuscule anti-migrant group headed by the Leedsbased former football hooligan, Paul Leeming, with help from his close friend, former English Defence League (EDL) activist, Scott Pitts.

The pair were formerly close associates of Alek Yerbury, but split with the fascist activist after he moved away from street protests and launched the National Rebirth Party. Rise of the Footsoldier takes its name from a football hooligan/crime UK film series, and places its emphasis squarely on street-based activism.

On 5 October, the group held its first demonstration, in Hull's Victoria Square, attended by between 12 and 15 far-right activists. These included Matthew Darrington of the fascist outfit Patriotic Alternative (PA) and John Gilling (AKA John Francis), Pitts' ally and founder of Hull Patriotic Protesters. Also in attendance was a masked far-right activist who went by the name "Captain Britain", later revealed by HOPE not hate to be the convicted criminal Aidan Heaps.

Undeterred, Leeming and Pitts arranged another demonstration for 23 November in Leeds. Appalling weather contributed to this being a complete washout, attended by even fewer than Hull the month before. Present were some notable additions, however, including conspiracist oddball and former For Britain candidate, Leo Robinson, and the YouTuber-turnedmigrant hunter, Marti Blagborough.



#### STUDENTS AGAINST TYRANNY Categories: organisation



Students Against Tyranny (SAT) is a predominantly online group established by James Harvey to tackle the supposed "wokeness" of universities. While SAT is a distinct organisation, Harvey has been seen as something of a protégé of Dan Morgan and Stan Robinson from Voice of Wales (VoW).

In the past, SAT has attempted to organise a number of ill-fated demonstrations, many of which were either cancelled at short notice or were dwarfed by much larger counter-protests. Harvey also brought embarrassment to VoW after making monkey noises when referring to the Somali national anthem on one stream and denying the scale of the Holocaust in another, the latter of which he eventually apologised for after a public backlash.

Last year, Harvey was somewhat quieter offline. He began the year with another protest at Manchester University. Harvey and co were outnumbered, but nevertheless he and his tiny band of followers pressed on, making a series of rambling speeches about "Marxism" and supposed "cancel culture". Elsewhere, Harvey headed to London for Lennon's march in Parliament Square on 1 June, before speaking at a protest alongside UKIP's leader Nick Tenconi in Norwich on 10 August as the dust was still settling following the summer's riots. Finally, he attended the "Unite the Kingdom" rally organised by Lennon – despite his then being imprisoned for contempt of court.



#### VOICE OF WALES Categories: Media Outlet



Voice of Wales (VoW) is a far-right media outlet run by Dan Morgan and Stan Robinson, which creates a range of content including articles, videos, livestreams and social media output.

After being banned from YouTube in 2021, VoW releases content via its own website and on minor platforms such as Gettr, where it has 17,000 followers and Telegram, where it has just over 3,000.

The group suffered a major reputational hit in October 2023, when Morgan was handed a suspended sentence for his role in a large-scale scam that stole millions from people who believed they were applying for compensation for mis-sold PPI.

The group has links with prominent far-right activists, including Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), and retains an especially close connection with UKIP. VoW has regularly arranged local meetings for the party, and Stan Robinson was selected as the UKIP candidate for Llanelli for the 2024 general election. He came last with a pitiful 1.5% vote share.

VoW was present at Lennon's film screening in Telford in January 2024, as well as his London demonstrations in June and October. During the summer's racist rioting, VoW were noticeably quiet, choosing to promote a far-right protest outside the Senedd which ultimately flopped. In the aftermath, as rioters were arrested, VoW joined others across the far right in pushing the "two-tier policing" narrative. The group also promoted two events in Swansea, one in September and one organised by Patriots of South Wales in November, both of which were dwarfed by counter-protesters.



#### 4FREEDOMS LIBRARY CATEGORY: ONLINE FORUM

4Freedoms is a tiny online anti-Muslim discussion forum run by Alan Ayling (AKA Alan Lake), formerly linked to the English Defence League (EDL).

The forum now has just a handful of regular posters, Ayling among them. Most chat rooms have fewer than 20 posters and membership to the forum is closed to new members.

#### PROUD BOYS BRITANNIA

#### CATEGORIES: ORGANISATION

Proud Boys Britannia (PBB) is the UK offshoot of the US-founded "western chauvinist" far-right movement, the Proud Boys.

The group has just a handful of activists and operates mostly as a social and drinking club. The group runs an active Telegram channel with just over 2,500 subscribers, which mainly posts childish and misogynist jokes and memes.

PROUD BOY

While remaining tiny, the group has created a branch structure with separate email addresses and Telegram channels for Scotland, Wales, England North/ Midlands and England South. Despite this, PBB has little influence within the wider UK far right and is often regarded as something of an embarrassment, owing to its Fred Perry uniforms, rituals, language and adolescent humour.

In September 2024, after complaining of the "borderline harassment" of its members by border security, the PBB Telegram accounts abruptly went down.

#### GAVIN BOBY Category: Individual activist

Gavin Boby is a planning lawyer and self-styled "mosque buster" who founded The Law and Freedom Foundation to prevent planning applications for mosques.

At time of writing, Boby's website claims that he has won 66 out of the 106 cases he has taken on. His involvement usually amounts to advising local people on tactics to oppose planning permission or change of use of a building into a place of worship.

Boby also runs a small YouTube channel where he updates supporters on the progress of his campaigns, as well as discussing a range of issues such as cross-Channel migration, grooming gangs and demographic changes within the UK.

Last year, Boby became a vocal advocate of so-called "remigration", a euphemistic term for deportations originally associated with Generation Identity. Additionally, he has expressed support for the fascist Homeland Party (a Patriotic Alternative splinter group) and Steve Laws, Homeland's explicitly ethnonationalist

#### REBEL NEWS CATEGORY: MEDIA OUTLET

Rebel News is a far-right Canadian outlet best known in the UK for its on-off relationship with anti-Muslim



activist Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson). Formerly known as Rebel Media, and having previously employed Lennon, Katie Hopkins and other farright Brits as hosts, Rebel News re-launched its UK operation in 2022.

The group's founder Ezra Levant regularly travels to the UK to cover Lennon's trials, using the visits to raise funds. In June 2024, Lennon travelled to Canada to do a speaking tour for Rebel News but was arrested on suspicion of an immigration offence. Levant has remained loyal to Lennon, despite a previously unreleased clip emerging from Lennon's time at the organisation in which he used an explicitly antisemitic trope to mock Levant.

Last year also saw former Urban Scoop correspondent, Sammy Woodhouse, join Rebel News to cover stories in the UK and Ireland.





South East Regional Organiser who was previously a "migrant hunter".

In 2024 he was involved in seven legal cases, claiming wins in four and losses in three. He claims to have helped win cases in Brent, Bexley, Hammersmith and Fulham and Oadby and Wigston.

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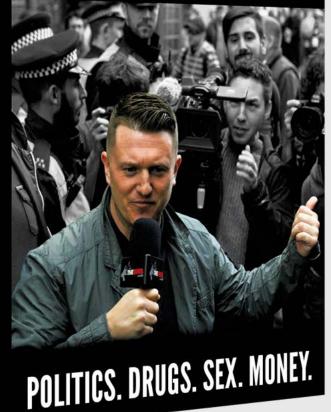
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### **FAR-RIGHT HEATHENS**

"Heathenry" is a new religious movement inspired by the pre-Christian customs and beliefs of Germanic peoples, in particular Norse Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England, in the Iron Age and early medieval periods.

Attitudes to race are a key dividing line in Heathenry today. Many follow a "universalist" system, believing their religion to be open to all those who wish to practise it, with some groups (often termed "hearths" or "kindreds") taking an explicitly anti-racist stance. However, others follow a "folkish" or racially exclusive version, believing Heathenry to be the sole preserve of white people, particularly those of Northwestern European descent. This latter form is sometimes termed "Odinism" or "Wotanism".

While many folkish groups claim to be non-political, some promote a far-right worldview and have considerable areas of overlap with the organised far right in both ideology and personnel. Odinism is a long-running current within fascist and white supremacist movements, and believers sometimes clash with the Christian far right.



#### **ODINIST FELLOWSHIP** Category: Organisation Years active: 1990s - Present



The Odinist Fellowship (OF) is a registered charity that follows a "folkish" version of Heathenism.

The OF, which emerged from the Odinic Rite in the 1990s, is headed by Ralph Michael Harrison (AKA Ingvar), a longstanding far-right activist and original editor of the now-defunct Right Now! magazine. Since 2014, the group has used a 16th-century chapel in Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire as its temple.

The group has attracted a number of far-right activists, including members of the neo-Nazi Patriotic Alternative (PA) and its splinter groups, the Homeland Party and National Rebirth Party, as well as the longstanding and extreme British Movement.

The Hearth of Devon, officiated by the well-known YouTuber, Tom Rowsell (AKA Survive the Jive) was affiliated to the OF until 2023.

#### WODEN'S FOLK

#### **CATEGORY: ORGANISATION**



Woden's Folk is a fringe group founded in 1998 by Geoffrey Dunn (AKA Wulf Ingessunu), a former

National Front activist who was also previously involved in the Odinic Rite. The group has an Anglo-Saxon focus and prominent messianic elements, prophesying the coming of a "Folk Fuhrer", a version of Woden who will save the "English folk".

The tiny but extreme group received press attention in 2019 for holding torchlit ceremonies at National Trust and English Heritage sites, including Avebury in Wiltshire and Wayland's Smithy in Oxfordshire.

Activists who have passed through Woden's Folk include former members of the National Front, the British National Party and also National Action, a neo-Nazi group now banned under anti-terror legislation. It also includes current and former members of Patriotic Alternative.





#### TOM ROWSELL (AKA SURVIVE THE JIVE) CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Tom Rowsell (AKA Survive the Jive) is the far right's goto expert on "Indo-European" history and paganism, producing a regular stream of video, podcast and social media content that is often interspersed with racist tropes and far-right talking points. He has built a sizable online following, at time of writing having 265,000 subscribers across his two YouTube accounts, almost 48,000 on X/Twitter and 15,000 on Telegram.

A former freelance journalist, Rowsell has been active in far-right circles in the UK since the early 2010s and spoke at the Generation Identity UK conference in July 2019 and at a Traditional Britain Group event in December 2021.

Overseas, Rowsell attended the Identitarian Ideas conference in Stockholm in February 2017, which was organised and addressed by leading white nationalists from across Europe and the US. More recently, he addressed a meeting of the the Dutch youth organisation, Jongerenorganisatie Forum voor Democratie, in Amsterdam in October 2024.

Rowsell has also appeared on a multitude of farright and white-nationalist shows, including those of Beau Dade (AKA History Bro), Colin Robertson (AKA Millennial Woes), Marcus Follin (AKA The Golden One), Edward Dutton (AKA The Jolly Heretic), as well as Arktos Media and Red Ice Radio.

Rowsell officiates the Hearth of Devon, a group that was, until 2023, affiliated to the Odinist Fellowship, a folkish Heathen group. He was also the organiser of the Pagan Futures conference in June 2022, which featured Dan Capp and Boaz Vilallonga and brought a crowd of more than 100 to London.

In December 2023, Rowsell attended a gathering of the private members club Neo Byzantium, an offshoot of the Human Diversity Foundation, a race-science company exposed by HOPE not hate. He was filmed bemoaning "negrophilia" among Americans, calling it "their primary vice", and further criticised the French for being "especially enamoured with blacks". Rowsell has taken adverts from Liegent, an audiobook summary app launched by the Human Diversity Foundation, promoting the service in his podcasts.

### **HOLOCAUST DENIAL**



#### MICHÈLE RENOUF category: independent activist

Michèle Renouf is an Australian-born former model and has been a leading international Holocaust denier since the 1990s.

She has a long history of working with neo-Nazis, Islamists and conspiracy theorists of all sorts to push her antisemitism. She is perhaps best known for her links to antisemites in the Middle East.

Though less influential than she once was, she continues to be active and has been seen on pro-Palestine and anti-trans demonstrations, as well as at events organised by the fascist group Patriotic Alternative in recent years. In 2024 she attended a farright conference in Sweden titled, "European Unity – A Future to Fight For" which was addressed by speakers from the Nordic Resistance Movement.



#### CASTLE HILL PUBLISHERS / COMMITTEE FOR OPEN DEBATE ON THE HOLOCAUST CATEGORY: PUBLISHER

Castle Hill Publishers (CHP) is a publisher of Holocaust-denial literature, set up in 1998 by the convicted German Holocaust denier, Germar Rudolf. In 2014, it merged with the American Holocaust denial organisation, CODOH (Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust).

In 2022 CHP was sold to CODOH after shipping books from the UK to Europe became "financially and legally untenable" because of Brexit. It publishes the *Holocaust Handbook* series which includes more than 50 books by some of the most high-profile deniers in the world. In 2022, founder Germar Rudolf stepped back from both CODOH and Castle Hill. A cryptic message on its website suggests that Rudolf's decision was motivated by "them" – AKA Jews – attacking him, but makes no mention of whether his 2020 conviction for exposing his genitals in a children's playground, while holding a bottle of baby oil, had anything to do with his decision to step back from running the Holocaust-denial enterprise.

In 2022 Castle Hill moved to the US and in late 2023 it collapsed. Many of its books are now sold by ARMREG Ltd, London. However, CODOH continues to operate.

#### ACADEMIC RESEARCH MEDIA REVIEW EDUCATION GROUP LTD (ARMREG) CATEGORY: PUBLISHER

This Holocaust-denial publisher was founded in mid-2023. Its website claims that it "tries building a platform that allows dissenting Holocaust scholars willing to speak out to reach a wider audience without fear of retribution."

ARMREG now sells many books previously published by Castle Hill before it went under in late 2023 and appears to be a continuation of that venture.

The company is based in London with its sole Director being Jeffrey Paul Tribe.

#### HISTORICAL REVIEW PRESS (HRP) **CATEGORY: PUBLISHER**

At one point the HRP was the leading publisher of Holocaust-denial literature in Britain. Run by Anthony Hancock, it published notorious books such as the reissue of *Did Six Million Really Die*? and the newspaper Holocaust News.

Despite the death of founder Hancock in 2012, the HRP still exists. However, today it is just a website that sells a variety of fascist, far-right and Holocaust-denial literature, much of it produced by other publishers. Though it says it is open to new submissions, it has not published an original book for some time.

#### VID IRVING

#### **CATEGORY: INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST**

David Irving is a key British Holocaust denier, once considered to be one of the most successful and respectable of the "revisionists". Irving made his reputation as a historian after gaining access to hitherto unaccessed personal papers of former leading Nazis, some of whom he interviewed.



Irving has become increasingly irrelevant. While he remains an internationally recognised name in the Holocaust-denial world, Irving is now an elderly man and rarely appears in public.

Old clips of his talks are still widely accessible and he may do the odd speaking engagement in the coming year, but he is a shadow of his former self and too frail to do much else now. He continues to update his archaic website but almost solely to add links to news articles from other sites. He also maintains the Focal Point Publications and Irving Books websites, where a dwindling audience of fans can still buy his books.

In February 2024, rumours circulated online that he had died, although these were later confirmed to be false. He is, however, currently facing serious health challenges and the few pictures that have emerged in the past year show him to be very frail. He now has an X account with 46,000 followers that distributes old clips and promotes past books, though it is almost certainly managed by someone else.

#### NICK KOLLERSTRON CATEGORY: INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST

Nick Kollerstrom, a former honorary research fellow at University College London, was sacked in 2008 after it emerged he was engaging in Holocaust denial. In an article entitled "The Auschwitz 'Gas Chamber' Illusion", Kollerstrom claimed that although there were gas chambers at Auschwitz these "were operated for purposes of hygiene and disinfection, in order to save lives and not take them".

In 2014, he released the book Breaking the Spell: The Holocaust, Myth & Reality, published by Germar Rudolf's Holocaust-denial publishing house, Castle Hill Publishers.

In 2023 he went on Iranian TV and said it is time to put the "nightmare hallucination narrative" of the Holocaust "to bed." He described it as "this holo-hoax tale."

In addition to Holocaust denial Kollerstrom has published books pushing conspiracy theories about the 7/7 London bombings, the supposed death of Paul McCartney, 9/11, and Ukraine.

Kollerstrom continues to be active in the conspiracy theory discussion group Keep Talking, and has made appearances on The Richie Allen Show, most recently in 2024 to discuss 7/7 and the Manchester Arena bombing.

#### JUHN HAMER CATEGORY: INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST

John Hamer describes himself as a "full-time geopolitical researcher but is actually a well known conspiracy theorist who has denied the Holocaust.

His books include the antisemitic screed The Falsification of History, Behind the Curtain, The Falsification of Science and JFK - A Verv British Coup which claims the British Crown was involved in the assassination.

Hamer also writes regularly for the conspiracy-theory newspaper The Light, including one piece in which he praised Colonel Gaddafi, comparing his rule favourably to our "very tightly Zionist-controlled, indirect form of democracy" and the "puppet-criminals who run the country only for the benefit of the bankster-elite".

On X, Hamer has posted about, "the Holofraud" being "key to the Zionist agenda for world domination," and lamented the demonisation of "the ideal of white nationalism"

Hamer does regular talks around the country with numerous already planned for 2025.

#### ALISON CHABLOZ **CATEGORY: INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST**

Alison Chabloz is a musician, blogger and Holocaust denier from Glossop in Derbyshire who runs her own website.

She is one of the UK's most notorious Holocaust deniers and has been convicted three times for breaking a range of laws. In 2018, she was convicted for sending an offensive,



indecent or menacing message and for a song in which she called Auschwitz a "theme park for fools."

Chabloz was sentenced again in April 2022 for "grossly offensive" antisemitism in a video posted online in April 2020. She was handed a prison sentence of 22 weeks. 11 of which were to be served at HMP Bronzefield and the rest on licence.

After an uneventful 2024 in which she deleted her website's articles, she appeared in December at a Keep Talking event to sing a song, written with Piers Corbyn, about climate change being fake.

### **CONSPIRACY THEORY**

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#### PAUL JOSEPH WATSON CATEGORIES: INFLUENCER/CONTENT CREATOR

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Paul Joseph Watson is a British far-right conspiracy theorist and influencer with an enormous social media following. Watson first came to prominence as a contributor to Alex Jones's Infowars, a major American far-right conspiracy media outlet.

While Watson's early content promoted a huge range of conspiracy beliefs, including 9/11 trutherism, chemtrails and the New World Order, over the past ten years his output has increasingly aligned with the US and European far right, demonising Muslims and migrants and spreading false news about liberal and left-wing public figures. Watson, and Infowars more broadly, have been prominent supporters of Donald Trump since his first run for presidency.

Hitting on a simple but effective format for his videos, Watson built his own large social media following, in particular on YouTube (2.4m subscribers across two channels), and X/Twitter (1.4m followers). Now less dependent on Infowars, he has distanced himself from the outlet in recent years. Documents released in the Sandy Hook defamation case against Jones – which resulted in him being ordered to pay \$1bn dollars to the parents of the victims – were embarrassing, highlighting the huge markups and profits of their supplements business and also Watson's private criticisms of Jones's conduct in relation to Sandy Hook.

In 2019, Watson launched his own website, Summit

News (since rebranded "Modernity News") through which he continues to churn out his brand of inflammatory, conspiratorial culture-war politics. In 2020, Watson did his best to exploit fears about the COVID-19 pandemic, and continually slammed the UK government's lockdown measures from his parents' home in Spain. During this period, he also suffered a number of bizarre public meltdowns, engaging in long, abusive Twitter rants against various public figures and former allies.

C

Watson has also dabbled in UK party politics. In 2018, he joined UKIP alongside several other far-right social media influencers who became close to then-leader Gerard Batten, a move he described as a "soft coup". However, this did little to pull UKIP out of its spiral into oblivion, and Watson soon jumped ship to support Reform UK.

While still an influential figure online, Watson has become increasingly isolated on the far right following a series of allegations and controversies. In 2022, Byline Times released a recording of Watson made at a party in which he says: "I really think you should press the button to wipe Jews off the face of the Earth." He also used a long list of racist and homophobic slurs, saying: "I don't give a shit about Israel and Palestine. I care about white people. Not sand n\*\*\*\*r Jew P\*\*i f\*\*\*t c\*\*ns."

Watson now runs a new website called Modernity where he posts his videos, and links to his wide range of social media accounts and written articles. The website also has a members area with paid access to exclusive content.

#### JAMES DELINGPOLE CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

James Delingpole is a columnist and podcast host who has written for publications including The Telegraph, The Spectator and served as editor of the UK-spinoff of the Breitbart media franchise, Breitbart London.



He continues to work as a columnist and film reviewer

David Icke.

Andor

Photo: Elekes

for The Spectator, while interviewing a wide array of conspiracy-theorist influencers for his podcast, The Delingpod. Recent interviews include Laura Towler, Deputy Leader of the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative, and the Holocaust denier Nick Kollerstrom. Others include the fascist social media influencer Morgoth.

Delingpole continues to hint at Holocaust revisionism on social media, though without laying out his beliefs in specific terms. In a Telegram post from October 2024, he complained that the WWII memoirs he was reading might have been "slanted and tweaked to reinforce the official narrative on Hitler, the war, the Jews, etc".

He also maintains a blog on Substack. One particularly shocking piece, titled "Will No One Think Of The (Probably) Fake Children", asserted his suspicion that the Southport murders were a "psyop" and a "distraction".

#### DAVID ICKE CATEGORY: INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST

David Icke is arguably the UK's most famous conspiracy theorist and antisemite.

Icke emerged into the public eye as a sports presenter in the 1980s and briefly as a Green Party representative. After experiencing an "awakening" in 1990, he became notorious for his extreme

conspiratorial beliefs, in particular those concerning the existence of evil extraterrestrials and "hybrid human-reptile" bloodlines he believes to be controlling world events. However, the "reptilian theory" is just one element of the hugely convoluted narrative Icke has developed over his long career, which incorporates vaccinations, mind control, Satanic ritual abuse, 9/11 trutherism and a barrage of paranormal and New Age beliefs.

Ickism borrows heavily from pre-existing New World Order (NWO) narratives, many of them drawn from American far-right militia movements. Whilst he denies charges of antisemitism, he regularly blames nonsensical subcategories of Jewishness – such as "Rothschild Zionist/Khazarian Mafia/Sabbatean-Frankists" – for long-standing antisemitic tropes.

For example, he has attempted to rehabilitate the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* – a notorious forgery that outlines a Jewish plot for world domination – by claiming that it accurately documents the plans of a "Sabbatean-Frankist Death Cult" rather than all Jews. He has also long demonised George Soros, the Rothschild family and other Jewish individuals and organisations as supernaturally evil puppeteers.

Since 2020, he has effectively exploited the COVID-19 pandemic to gain a new prominence, denying the existence of the virus in videos viewed millions of times and becoming a figurehead for the conspiracy theorydriven protest movement in the UK and overseas. This included headlining a series of large anti-lockdown and anti-vaccine demonstrations in London.

Icke's online reach has been hindered by bans from several mainstream social media platforms, although he had his X/Twitter account reinstated in early 2023 (at time of writing he has 718,000 followers on the platform).

The ageing conspiracist is increasingly delegating duties to his sons Jaymie and Gareth, who are themselves prominent in the UK's conspiracy theory scene and run the subscription streaming service "Ickonic". Icke remains prolific, however, producing large quantities of media content and averaging a book a year.

#### UNITY NEWS NETWORK CATEGORY: MEDIA OUTLET



Unity News Network (UNN) is a conspiracy theory website headed

by David Clews, a former Conservative and Labour councillor in Renfrewshire, Scotland.

Founded in 2018 by Clews and Carl Pearson, who was then UKIP's Scottish youth leader, UNN built an audience by supporting the protest movement to free the anti-Muslim extremist Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson) during his spell behind bars that year. The outlet's following grew significantly after it began spreading conspiratorial content relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, it has over 104,000 followers on Facebook, 90,000 on Twitter and 21,000 on Telegram.

While Pearson is no longer involved in the project, under Clews UNN has adopted an increasingly extreme outlook. For example, the outlet has promoted the white genocide conspiracy theory and described the West as being in the grip of "cultural Marxist degeneracy".



Clews has also established increasingly tight links to the UK's extreme right, most notably speaking at the conferences of the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative (PA) in 2022 and 2023. Regular UNN writer Niall McCrae also addressed the PA conference in 2024.

It is therefore unsurprising to find that the UNN chat on Telegram has been swamped with open antisemitism, other forms of racism, support for Hitler and far-right content more broadly.

Clews appeared to sink deeper into paranoia over the course of 2024, for example claiming after the general election that "Hope Not Hate have now taken over Number 10 Downing Street. A Bolshevik coup is taking place."

In the wake of his comments during widespread disorder last summer, Clews told his followers that HOPE not hate and Searchlight were coordinating press "hit pieces" and building a criminal case against him. Fearing his arrest, he fled the country, begging for donations from abroad before returning home to address the Traditional Britain Group (TBG) conference in October.

#### THE LIGHT Categories: Magazine, Media Outlet Editor: Darren Nesbitt

The Light is a monthly conspiracy theory magazine that focuses primarily on COVID-19 and climate change denial, and has also promoted antisemitism and farright politics. In recent years it has also co-organised music festivals and other offline events.

The Light emerged in September 2020 in tandem with the UK's burgeoning anti-vaccine protest movement. Edited by the flatearther Darren Nesbitt, it is designed to mimic a traditional newspaper and has grown into a significant voice in the conspiracy theorist alternative media. Every month, thousands of copies are handed out on street stalls or left alongside mainstream publications in newsagents to be taken free of charge.



In January 2022, Nesbitt claimed the magazine had a huge 250,000

print run – bigger than some national newspapers – to be distributed by volunteers organised on Facebook and Telegram. The fortunes of the outlet have dipped since, with Nesbitt blaming the loss of "hundreds of subscribers" on the cost-of-living crisis.

Nonetheless, The Light continues to find a wide reach across the UK and has broadened its focus from pandemic theories to a wider "anti-woke" outlook, taking aim at an "insane woke collectivist ideology" and incorporating strong anti-trans prejudice into its output.

Notably, the outlet has also platformed and promoted some of the UK's best-known far-right figures and antisemites, introducing them to new audiences. This includes the Holocaust denier John Hamer, who began writing for The Light in 2021 and, as of June 2024, publishes his historical ramblings via a monthly column.

Other contributors include anti-Muslim figures such as Anne Marie Waters, Katie Hopkins, David Kurten and the longstanding far-right activist Robin Tilbrook. Among The Light's most regular writers is Niall McCrae, a disgraced former academic with links to Patriotic Alternative, the neo-Nazi group. It has also repeatedly promoted content from the Holocaust denier Mark Collett, leader of PA, including a post railing against "replacement migration".

The Light, which has encouraged the formation of activist networks since its early days, has also increasingly moved towards organising its own events. In May 2024, the group co-organised the first "Stand In The Light" music festival alongside A Stand In The Park, another conspiracy theory-oriented group that emerged in the wake of COVID-19. Another such event is due to take place in Cumbria this year.

#### SECTION 10 - CONSPIRACY

#### HOPE SUSSEX COMMUNITY CATEGORIES: ORGANISATION



Matt Single. Photo: Facebook

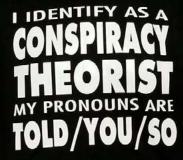
HOPE Sussex Community is an "autonomous community centre" established in 2022 near Netherfield in East Sussex.

The project emerged from the conspiracy theorydriven anti-lockdown and anti-vaccine protest movement, and was spearheaded by Matt and Sadie Single, former British National Party (BNP) officials.

HOPE Sussex encourages parents to remove children from mainstream schools in favour of teaching an alternative, conspiratorial curriculum. The group has published photos of children engaging in crossbow and combat training, and Matt Single conducting "science" lessons involving explosives and his homemade flamethrower. The Times reported in 2023 that "as many as 20 children of primary school age" attend the school, and that "obstructive" staff members blocked Ofsted from inspecting the site. The paper also reported last July that Matt Single planned to take pupils on a road trip to Moscow, driving through France, Belgium, Germany and Belarus in his campervan.

While HOPE Sussex presents a "family friendly" New Age image, organising alternative music festivals and craft events, it has also hosted a number of far-right figures and radical conspiracy theorists. An early contributor to the project was Alpha Team Assemble, the militant anti-vaccine group, until a falling out between the two groups.

The site has also hosted events featuring David Icke, the UK's best-known conspiracy theorist, the farright social media personality Katie Hopkins and Kate Shemirani, a leading British anti-vaxxer notorious for her extreme statements. In December 2024, Hope Sussex also hosted the Holocaust denier John Hamer, who gave a talk attempting to discredit the theories of evolution, the Big Bang and "globe earth".





Piers Corbyn, the older brother of former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, is among the UK's most active conspiracy theorists and campaigners.

A former Labour councillor and organiser, Corbyn originally made a name in the conspiracist milieu as a climate change denier, gaining press coverage for rubbing shoulders with the Holocaust denier Nick Kollerstrom at events.

However, he gained national notoriety as a figurehead of the UK's anti-vaccine protest movement shortly after COVID-19 lockdowns began in 2020. Corbyn organised and headed a multitude of anti-lockdown and anti-vaccine demonstrations at which he was often arrested, generating extensive press coverage. He was also arrested in 2021 for distributing leaflets likening vaccination efforts to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Corbyn stood in the London mayoral election in 2021 for his own political party, Let London Live (LLL), but received less than 1% of the vote. He has gone on to contest other local and parliamentary elections, although both he and other LLL candidates have reliably returned paltry results. The party was deregistered in 2023. He did, however, stand as an independent in Bermondsey and Old Southwark in the 2024 general election, receiving 1.1%.

Corbyn has broadened his focus from COVID-19 onto other issues, reflecting a wider shift in the conspiracy theory-oriented protest movement. This includes taking aim at Drag Queen Story Hour events, the children's book reading sessions, and particularly conspiracy theory-driven campaigns against "Low Traffic Neighbourhoods" and Low Emission Zone measures in Oxford, London and other cities.

He also received press attention after labelling the 7 October Hamas attack in Israel as a "false flag operation". He has since been charged alongside nine others for a "coordinated effort" to disrupt a pro-Palestine march in central London in January 2025.

#### RICHIE ALLEN CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Richie Allen is the Manchester-based protégé of conspiracy theorist David Icke, and runs a regular audio show.

The Richie Allen Show emerged from Icke's shortlived broadcast, The People's Voice, and was for a time hosted on Icke's website. It has become a staple platform for conspiracy theorists, including some antisemites and Holocaust deniers. While Allen claims his guests are on to "debate", they are often given an easy ride and praised despite their extreme positions.

Repeat guests include some of the UK's most infamous Holocaust deniers, such as Nick Kollerstrom (whom Allen has described as an "old friend"), and Alison Chabloz (whom Allen described as a "remarkable woman, extraordinary woman"). Other repeat guests include Mark Collett, leader of the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative, as well as the Islamist hate preacher Anjem Choudary. He has also hosted various mainstream politicians, including the current Conservative MP Desmond Swayne and the former Tory minister Ann Widdecombe.

Allen is now banned on many mainstream social media platforms, although regained his Twitter account in November 2022. At time of writing, he has a sizable following of 73,000 on the platform.

# UKCOLUMN

#### UK COLUMN CATEGORY: MEDIA OUTLET

UK Column is a conspiracy theory-oriented online media outlet.

Founded in 2006 by Brian Gerrish and aiming to "highlight the rise of a dangerous political dictatorship", UK Column was originally a small newsletter but has grown into a website that produces a regular stream of articles, video content and occasional offline meetings.

The site received a considerable boost during the COVID-19 pandemic, and remains a significant voice in the UK conspiracy theorist alternative media. It retains a presence on most major social media platforms.

UK Column also has areas of overlap with the far right. For example, during 2022 the site focused on Drag Queen Story Hour, in step with a broader far-right backlash against the children's storytelling events, which UK Column presented as a deliberate plot to "brainwash" children. Far-right ideologies promoted by the outlet include the "Cultural Marxism" theory, and even the "Kalergi Plan", a variant of the white genocide conspiracy theory alleging that a sinister plot is underway to wipe out white Europeans.

The outlet has links to the Heritage Party, with Gerrish and UK Column presenter Charles Malet addressing the group's conference in 2024, the former delivering a speech on "Fighting the New World Order".

Commissioning editor Alex Thomson has also made several appearances on Patriotic Weekly Review, the online show of Patriotic Alternative (PA) leader Mark Collett, as well as various other fascist and white nationalist shows. Gerrish and Thomson have also made repeated guest appearances on the show of British white nationalist Colin Robertson (AKA Millennial Woes).

#### KEEP TALKING Category: Discussion group



Keep Talking is a conspiracy theory discussion group that holds meetings in the UK

capital, organised by Ian Fantom. Prominent Holocaust denier Nick Kollerstrom is an active member of the group and has sold his denial material at events.

Keep Talking has held meetings on a wide range of conspiracy theories, featuring figures from both the political left and the far right. This includes Holocaust deniers such as Alison Chabloz and James Thring, the antisemite Gilad Atzmon, the far-right activist Robin Tilbrook, and David Shayler, a former MI5 agentturned-9/11 "truther" who has declared himself the Messiah.

The group has suffered setbacks and cancelled meetings due to the attentions of anti-fascist and anti-racist campaigners, but continues to hold regular meetings as of 2024.

#### HERITAGE PARTY CATEGORY: POLITICAL PARTY LEADER: DAVID KURTEN

The Heritage Party is a minor political party launched in 2020 by the former UKIP official and London Assembly member David Kurten.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Kurten was highly active in the anti-vaccine and anti-lockdown protest movement, and Heritage has a



distinctly conspiratorial focus, for example claiming in its manifesto that 5G and water-based fluoride are poisoning the country. However, he has since shifted the party's focus to anti-immigration rhetoric.

Kurten has also recently begun to dabble in antisemitic politics, complaining in February 2024 that a "Jewess" will "rule over" Mexico, and siding with a Holocaust denier in a social media debate. More extreme is the party's General Secretary Madeleine Hunt, who, under the pseudonym "Mag Magz", commented under a Telegram post about Israel by stating that "anti-Christianity [and] anti white race" were "Talmudic principles".

Kurten's party regularly contests elections, although Heritage Party candidates reliably poll poorly. It put up 41 candidates in the 2024 general election, all of whom lost badly, averaging 0% of the national vote share. The group's local elections performance that year was only marginally less embarrassing, standing in 35 council seats and winning 2.7% of the vote.

Heritage does, however, have a handful of councillors at the parish level, the lowest tier of local government.



#### CONSERVATIVE WOMAN CATEGORY: MEDIA OUTLET

Conservative Woman is a conspiracy theorist website set up in 2014 which, despite its name, has majoritymale contributors. It grew in popularity during the pandemic years, in which it took a stridently antilockdown and anti-vaccine stance, and claimed to have 1.5 million monthly views in 2023.

Conservative Woman supported Reform UK at the 2024 general election and gave it largely positive coverage, though a recent column warned against the party's supposed "drift to the centre".

The site added Matt Goodwin to its roster of authors in 2024, though his articles are all reposted from his Substack rather than produced for the site. Other recent headlines illustrating the tone of the site include "Britain must return to its Christian roots, or else" and "Make the UK your 53rd state – my plea to Donald Trump".

#### ENGLISH CONSTITUTION PARTY Category: Political Party Leader: Graham Moore

The English Constitution Party (ECP) is a tiny political party devoted to the cause of English nationalism, with a strong tendency towards conspiracy theories.



Led by Graham Moore (AKA Daddy Dragon), the party makes no impact politically but retains a small support base, and gained some attention in 2023 after Moore called for its supporters to bring rape alarms and eggs to a protest against the coronation of King Charles.

The ECP did not field any candidates in the 2024 local elections and just four candidates at the general election, who received a paltry 1,563 votes between them. The party suffered a small setback in August when Moore's X/Twitter account was suspended, but he continues to produce regular video content on his Rumble channel. These include semi-regular streams from the "Constitutional Seminars" that he puts on around the country.





#### DAVID LAWRENCE

Many of the assorted fascists and neo-Nazis that comprise the UK's extreme right witnessed the tumultuous events of 2024 and took heart.

The racist riots throughout England affirmed that their anti-migrant, anti-Muslim, populist messages had cut through to the public. At home and overseas, the remarkable success of far-right parties at the polls has weakened liberal democracy and prompted mainstream politicians to adopt elements of their platforms. Moreover, the direct nods of popular influencers – not least Elon Musk – to far-right groups and ideologies, and the rapid degeneration of X/ Twitter, offered new opportunities to extremists across the globe.

Altogether, the extreme right has been emboldened by this perceived rightward swing. In the words of the veteran activist Peter Rushton, Assistant Editor of the fascist magazine Heritage & Destiny (H&D): "The summer of 2024 showed that we are in a time of transition [...] the era of stability and postwar consensus is gone for ever [sic]". To Mark Collett, a former British National Party (BNP) official who now heads the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative (PA): "The public are no longer deriding or ignoring what we say. They are openly voicing our talking points [...] This is a watershed moment for nationalists here in the UK."

However, British fascists are ill-equipped to fully capitalise on these openings. The extreme right has remained both fringe and fragmented since the collapse of the BNP 15 years ago, and despite periodic calls for "unity", enmities run deep.

This is especially the case after PA, which had dominated this sphere since 2019, suffered mass defections to the Homeland Party and the National Rebirth Party (NRP) two years ago. Momentum has

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since swung away from PA and towards Homeland, a shift outlined in depth in the profiles section of this report.

Despite broadly sharing a vision of the future, PA, Homeland and the NRP, alongside longer-standing fascist groups like the British Democrats and the British Movement, are competing in a crowded field. They are also bitterly divided on key strategic issues; while some would-be mass movements aim to recruit widely, others are turning inwards, prioritising ideological purity and militancy.

This article explores four key trends and debates within the extreme right: electioneering, metapolitics, "whites only" communities and fascist fitness groups.

#### **ELECTORAL AND COMMUNITY POLITICS**

The fracturing of PA has revived a perennial debate about the viability of electoral politics. While fundamentally hostile to democracy, many of the major British fascist groups have traditionally organised along the party political model. However, fascists today are grappling with a long history of failure at the polls, and while spying opportunities in the collapse of the Conservative Party, they are also reckoning with the unprecedented success of Reform UK, a civic nationalist party that won five MPs at the general election last year on an anti-immigration ticket.

After years of ambivalence, the outcome of the election has prompted PA to publicly reject the

ballot. The group has repeatedly failed to register as a political party and was humiliated by the successful registration of Homeland and the NRP last year. PA responded by fielding its own activists as independents or under the banner of the English Democrats, a minor far-right party, a move described by Collett as a "middle finger" to his critics. Following their predictably dismal results, however, Collett has dismissed elections as "a waste of time, money and resources". Holding that competition with Reform will inevitably end in "humiliation", he instead advocates for fascist entryism in order to "steer that party from within".

Collett's scepticism is not unique. The tiny but extreme neo-Nazi British Movement (BM) abandoned the "rigged" political process 40 years ago, instead aiming to foment "revolution from below", and the slogan "there is no political solution" remains popular among accelerationists. Even some experienced former National Front and BNP activists have questioned the efficacy of building a large national party today. As Mark Cotterill wrote in a H&D editorial last year:

"It may be that the time has now passed for a mass radical racial nationalist party to be built, let alone succeed in this country. However, what we could and should be building right now is an elite ideologically sound racial nationalist and/or national socialist group(s) [...] that can organise initially outside but also have people within a wider populist movement/party". Homeland, however, is far more optimistic. The organisation was partly born out of frustration with PA's non-party status, and Chairman Kenny Smith, a former BNP organiser, has slammed election sceptics as "simply cowards, lazy or both". Adopting euphemistic language, Homeland presents itself as both a more "sensible" ethnonationalist outfit than PA and a more hardline alternative to Reform, and aims to recruit widely while retaining a highly ideological cadre at its core.

Homeland embraces the "ladder strategy", the notion that winning council seats through sustained, localised campaigning can pave the way for national power. This strategy was articulated by the National Front in 1987 and practiced by the BNP's most successful branches, which won a string of council victories in the 2000s. This remains the high watermark of fascist success at the ballot, despite never delivering a Parliamentary seat.

Of course, this approach is slow and does not guarantee success. The failure of Homeland's sole local election candidate, Roger Robertson, to come close to winning his seat last May, despite a decade's experience as a parish councillor, is a case in point. Nonetheless, the group's activists continue to inveigle their way into parish and community councils, which they can often enter virtually unopposed, in order to build towards future election runs.

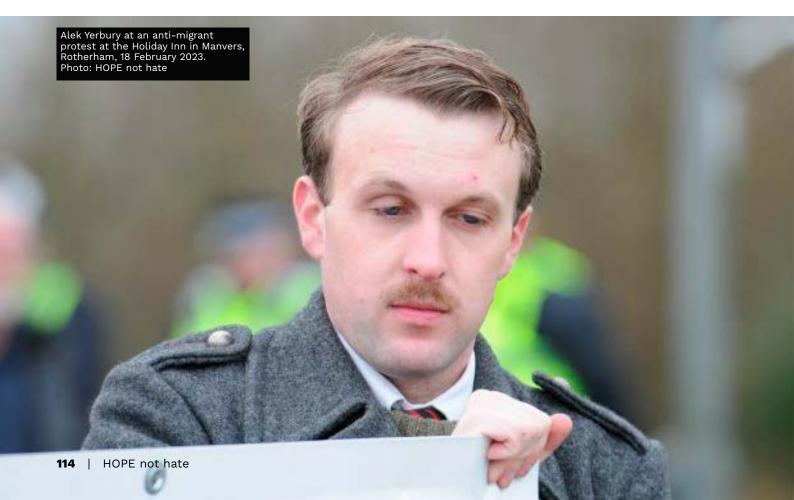
The British Democratic Party, which launched a decade before Homeland, similarly claims a commitment to "community-based politics" and has a handful of parish councillors of its own, although, unlike the newer party, it also contests parliamentary elections. However, despite the considerable experience of its aging activists, the party's electoral record is dismal and it has little appeal to younger activists.

Labelling PA and Homeland as "inferior versions of the BNP", Alek Yerbury, leader of the NRP, conversely dismisses council seats as effectively worthless. In Yerbury's wisdom, "the solution is to ignore local politics completely and instead campaign only on the basis of national-level issues, at a national level". The NRP therefore aims directly for seats in Parliament – which are far harder and more costly to win – and primarily targets urban areas, precisely where opposition is fiercest. Yerbury believes that, through this strategy, he can seize national power in 10-15 years.

However, the NRP makes little effort to broaden its support, adopting a startlingly authoritarian list of policies and appointing figures extreme even by the standards of the far right. Yerbury's habit of lecturing others despite his inexperience has proved isolating, with Smith claiming that his "ignorance is astounding" and Collett labelling him "clearly insane".

At present, the extreme right's prospects at the ballot do not appear promising. Homeland is the most energetic operation with the clearest strategy. However, despite its rapid growth, it is still only roughly 5% the size of the BNP at its height and 0.4% that of Reform at present, with none of the brand recognition of either group. A constellation of microparties are competing for the anti-immigrant, anti-establishment vote, but all are likely to be overshadowed by Reform, especially if it succeeds in establishing a functioning grassroots structure.

The ongoing infiltration of parish councils demands close attention. The extreme right is playing a longterm game and is laying the foundations for future success. Nonetheless, it is notable that, in the past



five years, the few fascists to have won council elections have stood as independents rather than for national parties that can be more readily discredited by local campaigners. Anti-fascists must work to undermine support at the local level before it metastasizes.

#### METAPOLITICS, WHITE CIVIL RIGHTS AND REMIGRATION

As debates about the ballot continue to rage, segments of the British extreme are working towards a broader goal: shifting culture itself.

"Metapolitics" is the notion that if activists can shape cultural narratives, political change will naturally follow. This strategy was outlined by the French intellectual "Nouvelle Droite" in the 1970s and revived by the "alt-right", a loose, tech-savvy white-nationalist movement, in the 2010s. The alt-right used online activism to insert ideas into mainstream debate, an approach that has proved highly influential among the modern extreme right. This includes PA and Homeland, which have spent years amplifying the notion of demographic "replacement" as the thin end of the wedge.

Having written off the ballot, PA officially rebranded as an "indigenous rights advocacy and pressure group" last summer. This shift follows the jailings of key PA activists for race hate or terror-related offences, not least Sam Melia, husband to Deputy Leader Laura Towler and the de facto third-in-command of the group, in March. Portraying Melia as a "free speech" martyr garnered coverage across much of the wider right and enabled PA to raise almost £70,000 to "support" him and his wife.

Collett and Towler, already accomplished spinners of victimhood narratives, have also set about fuelling feelings of injustice in the wake of the legal crackdowns that followed the summer riots, in particular joining calls from across the broader far right to end "two-tier policing". Notably, the group has raised £20,000 it claims will be donated to the families of these supposed "political prisoners", with beneficiaries including a man who hospitalised a police officer and another involved in a mob attack on an asylum accommodation site in Tamworth.

This rebrand, then, enables PA to amplify the notion of "anti-white" discrimination and thus advance its racial doctrine, while also opening up potential new funding streams. So far, however, it has failed to swing momentum back in PA's favour and exacerbated its reputation for "grifting" and promoting a "victim mentality" among the wider far right.

Last year, PA and other segments of the extreme right coalesced around an international metapolitical effort: normalising "remigration". Popularised by the Identitarian movement in the 2010s, remigration is a coded term for the mass deportation of non-white people, essentially the same policy of repatriation championed by the extreme right for decades. However, remigration became an international rallying point after its full-throated endorsement by the ascendant Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) last year, as well as the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs and Donald Trump.

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anonymous activists have set about flooding X and other platforms in an effort to amplify the policy. "We need to normalise remigration, keep talking about it ....shift the Overton window," wrote one British fascist on Telegram last year.

Homeland, which couples its localised politics with nationally-focused campaigns, is particularly enthusiastic. Releasing its "remigration" policy in September, the group has announced a campaign to "make 2025 the year that talk of remigration goes mainstream", is set to host a "Big Remigration Conference" in April and has applied to register the slogan "remigration now" with the Electoral Commission.

Last October, a giddy Collett told PA's national conference:

"For the first time in my lifetime, remigration is a rallying cry that is posted tens of thousands of times a day on social media. Deportation is demanded by sitting MPs. Normal people are discussing sending them back".

Of course, Collett is not known for understatement. Most Brits will be unfamiliar with the term and likely appalled by the realities of what it would entail.

However, far-right rhetoric has increasingly crept into mainstream debate in recent years. Concepts emanating from the fringes that gain traction online can be adopted by right-wing commentators, and from there enter the parlance of those who are unaware of their origins, including sitting MPs and government ministers. The dramatic rightward shift within the Conservative Party is testament to the increasing salience of far-right talking points.

As social media platforms cosy up to Trump, loosening their moderation policies along the way, it would be foolhardy to dismiss the damage that determined fascists could achieve over time.

#### **"WHITES ONLY" COMMUNITIES**

Conversely, the most disillusioned elements of the extreme right have almost abandoned public outreach altogether. PA has long promoted "build[ing] alternative structures that allow us to break away

In the UK, an army of fascist influencers and

#### **STATE OF HATE 2025**



and shield ourselves from the anti-white system." Increasingly, fascists are taking this approach to its logical conclusion and seeking to purchase land and property in order to establish "white heartlands".

Land acquisition is a long-standing aspiration for many on the far right, who desire a space in which they can host events with fewer risks or, more ambitiously, to withdraw into white enclaves, often emphasising a mystical connection between race and land. There have been previous such attempts by members of Combat 18, the BNP, National Action and other groups, all of which have ended in failure.

Since 2023, The Woodlander Initiative (TWI) has been at the forefront of this trend. TWI is a land-buying scheme headed by Simon Birkett, an activist with a past in the National Front, the BNP, the Conservative Party and now PA. Addressing the PA conference last October, Birkett dismissed the ballot box altogether and advocated the building of a "parallel society", citing Orania, a whites-only town in South Africa, as an example.

TWI, which has the long-term ambition of owning land in every county, has so far purchased two plots – each of several acres – close to the village of Llanafan Fawr, Builth Wells, mid Wales, which have been used for PA activities. The project has been described by Birkett as a "multi-million pound organisation" in the making, and thereby "a possible avenue to power".

While TWI has the fulsome support of Collett, other PA members are also working to establish their own enclaves, with former London Regional Organiser Nick Hill behind one recent such scheme. BM also maintains its own "Land Fund" and claims to have explored "rural locations & public houses" for purchase.

Of course, there is a heavy dose of fantasy here. There are enormous financial and logistical hurdles, and many previous such attempts have either failed to get off the ground, collapsed into bitter schisms and/ or been abandoned due to dismal conditions and the property sold off.

Others have criticised this tendency on strategic and ethical grounds. For example, Yerbury has slammed "hair brained scheme[s]" like TWI as "cowardly, selfish, greedy and mentally weak", as they would abandon the wider population for self-marginalising "cults".

However, one notable project from within the conspiracy-theory milieu has found a modicum of success. Hope Sussex Community is an "autonomous community" centre established by Matt and Sadie Single, once leading figures in the BNP, in Netherfield, East Sussex in 2022. The pair encourage parents to remove children from schools to be taught a conspiracy theory-laden curriculum on site.

While such attempts are likely doomed to failure, we will continue to see extremists attempt to forge their own communities as anxieties heighten under Labour governance. Organised efforts to withdraw from mainstream society into isolated, ideologically pure communities can pave the way for further polarisation, and must be watched closely.

#### THE DANGER REMAINS

The British extreme right remains small and often as preoccupied with infighting, inconsequential online debates and pipe dreams as effecting broader change.

However, the threats of fascist fringe cannot be measured in size alone. Committed extremists have proven that they can exert an outsized influence, whether by inflaming tensions in local communities under the guise of helping them, or inserting their talking points into public debates in order to desensitise the public to their thinking. Others sink into self-marginalising communities and networks that pave the way for ever more extreme ideas to take root.

Both directly and indirectly, this can and does lead to violence, as the racist riots and terror convictions of 2024 starkly demonstrate.

# FASCIST FITNESS

Extremists disillusioned with formal politics are also increasingly turning to insular fascist fitness clubs, another longstanding tradition to grow and organise significantly over the past year.

A violent, hypermasculine ideal has always been central to fascist ideology, and combat training, sometimes with pseudo-military trappings, has been a feature of British fascism since the launch of the British Fascisti over a century ago. Blending physical training with political extremism and group loyalty is a well-established and powerful radicalisation tool.

In recent years, this tendency has revitalised courtesy of the Active Clubs (ACs), an international network of decentralised fascist fitness and hand-to-hand combat training groups that have spread rapidly throughout the US, Europe and beyond.

The first significant British groupings to adopt elements of the AC philosophy were the PA Fitness Club and White Stag Athletics Club (WSAC), both of which emerged from The Judgement Zone, a nowdefunct fascist fitness group on Telegram, in 2021. In 2023, the leaders of both groups – PA's "Fitness Officer" Kristofer Kearney and WSAC's "Sergeant" Ashley Podsiad-Sharp – separately received lengthy prison sentences for terror-related offences.

The first British group to officially adopt the AC brand, Active Club Scotland, emerged in 2023,

composed of activists linked to PA, Homeland, the Scottish Defence League, National Action and more. In 2024, the network spread across the country, with at least eight active branches at time of writing. AC members are often scornful of "optics cucks" who aim for broad appeal, and instead aim to establish a militant fascist elite.

This rapid growth owes partly to the incorporation of Vanguard Britannica, another small, tight-knit fascist group, into the AC network last summer. Other organisations to draw inspiration from ACs include the BM, which opened a gym for training martial arts in Manchester in late 2023, and the Youth Alliance, a small neo-Nazi group that emerged last April and has since held its own combat training sessions.

The dangers posed by the spread of these secretive, militant brotherhoods should not be underestimated. They value a capacity for violence because they expect to use it against minority groups and anti-fascists. It is notable that the neo-Nazi group National Action held training camps and opened a gym to prepare for race war following its proscription under anti-terror laws in 2016.

Unsurprisingly, ACs continue to attract individuals with violent pasts, including AC Scotland associate John Montgomery, who was jailed for bomb and death threats against left-wing activists in 2007. Last year, Swansea-based fascist Alexander Edwards discussed starting an "active club" before being jailed for over five years for terror-related offences and for a brutal unprovoked attack on a transgender woman. Edwards had previous convictions for his role in the British Hand, a nazi terror group exposed by HOPE not hate in 2020.



# NAZI, FASCIST AND ETHNONATIONALIST

# ACTIVE CLUBS NETWORK

CATEGORY: NETWORK

The Active Clubs Network (ACN) is an international network of fascist martial arts groups that includes several branches in the UK.

The ACN has roots in the Rise Above Movement (RAM), a US far-right street-fighting group founded by Robert Rundo, a violent criminal, in 2017. After RAM suffered a number of arrests, Rundo introduced the notion of decentralised "Active Clubs" in 2020. Small, localised

training groups under the name quickly emerged across the US, Europe and elsewhere.

ACs combine physical exercise with extremist ideology in order to foster a militant fascist elite. Alongside training, ACs also engage in stickering, banner drops and other propaganda actions, broadcasting such activities on Telegram and other platforms while carefully preserving the anonymity of its members and avoiding direct calls to violence.

As detailed on the previous page, the first significant British groupings to adopt elements of the AC philosophy were the PA Fitness Club and White Stag Athletics Club (WSAC), both of which emerged from The Judgement Zone, a now-defunct fascist fitness group on Telegram, in 2021.

However, the UK's first official AC, Active Club Scotland, formally launched in May 2023. HOPE not hate has since exposed its leader, Scott Cowan, as a former Scottish Defence League activist and that other members have pasts in PA, Blood & Honour and the now-banned nazi terror group National Action.

An Active Club England umbrella account appeared on Telegram in February 2024, and branches subsequently emerged in the North West, Eastern, London, Midlands, South West and Caledonia regions, as well as Northern Ireland. This rapid growth owes partly to the incorporation of Vanguard Britannica, another small, tight-knit fascist group, into the AC network last summer.

These branches occasionally meet for joint training and other actions, including a summer camp. In September, Ian Michael Elliott – an activist from the US white supremacist group Patriot Front – visited the Scottish branch. Members of ACS also met with overseas ACs in Stockholm for the Holmgång 2024 fight competition.

The closure of the Active Club England channel by



Telegram has done little to slow the spread of the network, with a new channel quickly reappearing. In August, further branches were announced in the North East, South East, Yorkshire and Birmingham, although there is little sign of them at time of writing.

In February 2025, an ITV exposé reported that AC England had grown to more than 100 members following recruitment drives in the wake of the summer riots. ITV also revealed that among the active members of AC London is Jay Barlow (AKA Glenn), who

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NGUARD BRITA

has recent convictions for possession of a knife and racially or religiously aggravated harassment, and in 2018 was jailed for four years for GBH following a knife attack in a supermarket. AC London members were filmed making nazi salutes and discussing the use of weapons and "taking power whenever the opportunity arises".

#### VANGUARD BRITANNICA CATEGORY: ORGANISATION

Vanguard Britannica (VB) is a small fascist group that primarily engages in stickering, graffiti and physical training.

Emerging in August 2022, VB's first activities took place in Leicestershire but it has since established small branches across the country, with activists concentrated in Midlands, the North and the South East.

During 2023, VB became better organised and more ambitious, undertaking multiple banner drops over motorways in England with antisemitic and anti-immigrant messaging. VB also adopted elements from the international Active Club network, such as including physical exercise and martial arts training among its regular activities.

In April 2024, members also met with Ian Michael Elliot, a member of the American fascist group Patriot Front, in London.

In June 2024, VB's public output abruptly ceased and its website went down, as the group was effectively incorporated into the Active Club Network. However, in January 2025 VB held a "training summit" and promised a "resurgence of our movement and the expansion of its activities".

#### HERITAGE & DESTINY CATEGORY: MEDIA OUTLET EDITER: MARK COTTERILL



Heritage and Destiny (H&D), a bi-monthly magazine, is the most important print publication produced by the traditional British fascist scene.

Founded in 1999 and edited by former British National Party (BNP) organisers Mark Cotterill and Peter Rushton, the publication retains a readership among the old guard of the British far right. It has, however, made efforts to expand its readership in recent years, including establishing a presence on social media.

Over the past 18 months, the magazine has printed a debate about the viability of electoral and community politics between the leaders of the most prominent fascist groups in the UK, including Patriotic Alternative (PA) and its splinter groups, the Homeland Party and National Rebirth Party, as well as the British Democrats and British Movement, and veteran fascist Steve Brady (AKA Ian Freeman) of the National Front.

H&D also hosts conferences in Preston, Lancashire, in remembrance of various deceased British fascists. The events received wider attention after Isabel Peralta, a notorious Spanish fascist and H&D's "European correspondent", entered the country to address the 2022 and 2023 conferences.

The most recent event, in September 2023, was attended by roughly 80 people and featured speeches by Peralta alongside the leaders of PA, the British Democrats and the British Movement. No conference was held in 2024.

## THE BRITISH DEMOCRATIC PARTY CATEGORIES: POLITICAL PARTY

#### LEADER: JIM LEWTHWAITE



The British Democratic Party, better known as the British Democrats, is a fascist political party that splintered from the British National

Party (BNP) in 2013. The split was led by Jim Lewthwaite, a former BNP councillor in Bradford, and Andrew Brons, formerly one of the BNP's two MEPs and before that a leader of the National Front.

As the BNP collapsed, the British Democrats offered a home for defectors and exiles. However, the group failed to capitalise on any early momentum and support quickly drained away. Other than fielding small numbers of candidates at elections, the group has spent much of the last decade gathering dust.

The British Democrats received an injection of new members in 2022, celebrated by Lewthwaite as "unprecedented growth". Many of the new recruits were former members of the anti-Muslim party For Britain which had folded that year, including Cllr Julian Leppert in Epping Forest and other former BNP figures in London, Essex and Kent.

The British Democrats has gained a handful of councillors at the parish level, the lowest tier

#### THE WOODLANDER INITIATIVE Category: Organisation Leader: Simon Birkett



The Woodlander Initiative (TWI) is a land-buying scheme spearheaded by Simon Birkett (AKA Woodlander), a Wiltshire-based tattoo artist and longstanding far-right activist. In November 2024, HOPE not hate revealed the locations of two plots purchased by TWI close to the village of Llanafan Fawr, Builth Wells, mid-Wales.

Birkett, a former member of the National Front, the British National Party and the Conservative Party, has been involved in Patriotic Alternative (PA) since early 2020. From his "off-grid" cabin near Warminster, Wiltshire, Birkett has built an online following among the far right via his YouTube and Telegram channels and guest appearances on various fascist streams.

In June 2023, Birkett launched the TWI, a land-buying scheme aimed at far-right activists and conspiracy theorists. Purchasing land is a long-standing aspiration for many on the far right, who desire a space in which they can host events with fewer risks or, more ambitiously, to withdraw into "whites only" enclaves.

The project has, so far, raised more than £140,000 from donors and shareholders, and has the longterm aim of owning land in every county in the UK. However, at present Birkett is listed as a "persons with significant control" for The Woodlander Initiative Ltd on Companies House, suggesting that he effectively controls the company and so too its assets.

The other listed director, alongside Birkett, is Joe Knight (AKA Wessex Nomad), an online content creator from Weston-super-Mare, Somerset. Knight has himself purchased a small plot near Llanafan Fawr, on which he and Birkett plan to build cabins for an "off-grid refuge". Regional TWI groups in the North and South West of England are also looking to purchase plots.

In 2024, the group's links to PA grew even tighter, as Birkett addressed the group's annual conference in October and advocated the building of a "parallel society". PA leader Mark Collett has repeatedly championed TWI and in November, ten PA activists camped at the TWI's land in Llanafan Fawr.

Others involved in the project include Dan Capp (AKA The Fyrgen), who built TWI's website.

of local government: former BNP activists Chris Bateman in Basildon, Essex, and Lawrence Rustem in Detling, Kent, and former UKIP councillor Ken Perrin in Chatteris, Cambridgeshire.

Lewthwaite and other party figures remain active in the UK's traditional fascist milieu. The British Democrats has nurtured links to the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative (PA), with PA activists often campaigning for its candidates in election periods.

Despite the considerable experience of its activists, the British Democrats has failed to appeal to younger fascists and in 2024 was outstripped by the Homeland Party as the largest fascist political party in the UK.

# OUR CHILDREN

#### PATRIOTIC ALTERNATIVE CATEGORY: ORGANISATION LEADER: MARK COLLETT

Patriotic Alternative (PA) is a neo-Nazi group launched in September 2019 by Mark Collett, a former leading member of the British National Party (BNP). PA quickly became the most active far-right group in Britain and established new activist networks across the country.

In recent years, however, PA has lost momentum. A series of splits – not least to the new Homeland Party in 2023 – and the imprisonment of key activists has damaged both capacity and morale. Despite its rebrand as a "white civil rights" organisation last year, PA has been overtaken by Homeland as the largest fascist organisation in the UK, and the group's fortunes seem likely to decline further in 2025.

#### **IDEOLOGY AND STRATEGY**

Launched with the aim of uniting isolated fascists into offline communities, PA quickly gained recruits from across the splintered British far right. PA engages in various forms of traditional political organising, online activism and media-baiting stunts, alongside internal "community building" activities, to spread its core message. The group tends to downplay its most extreme elements, particularly its antisemitism, when dealing with the public, claiming to simply be "raising awareness" about "demographic change".

PA is unable to contest elections in its own name, due to its repeated failure to register as a political party. Instead, it has supported candidates from other fascist vehicles or resorted to dirty tactics to influence elections, including distributing misleading leaflets made to appear as Labour or Conservative campaign

# PATRIOTIC ALTERNATIVE

literature but designed to discredit the major parties. In 2024, the group stood candidates as independents or for the English Democrats following a pact between the two groups, although Collett has since turned away from electioneering.

PA draws from the playbook of the alt-right and is orbited by various fascist social media personalities who produce large quantities of content each week. Banned from most mainstream online platforms, PA depends on loosely-moderated alternatives, most notably Odysee and Telegram.

PA aims to capitalise on hot-button issues to foment a sense of white grievance. This includes exploiting cross-Channel migration, in particular targeting temporary asylum accommodation sites, and latching onto campaigns against Drag Queen Story Hour, a series of storytelling sessions for children organised at public libraries. Last year, in the wake of the legal crackdowns that followed the summer riots, PA also calls for the end of "two-tier policing" in the hopes of popularising notions of "anti-white" discrimination.

#### **FAULT LINES AND SPLITS**

Despite its high output and considerable media coverage, the group's growth has stagnated. There are several apparent reasons for this loss of momentum.

Firstly, PA's brazen neo-Nazism has alienated many on the British far right, not to mention the wider public. Collett himself has a long history in fascist politics and carries much baggage. As HOPE not hate has repeatedly revealed, PA has accommodated and



even promoted former activists from the proscribed group National Action, a fact that has gained PA much negative attention. Members have also come under increasing scrutiny from the authorities, raising the potential cost of activism.

PA has also struggled to retain activists, many of whom have grown frustrated with its aimless activities or else been alienated by Collett's titanic ego. PA's structure renders it particularly vulnerable to splits, its branches acting with considerable autonomy, a fact that fosters significant gulfs between regions and a disjointed understanding of strategy and purpose.

The first splinter occurred in July 2021 when a cluster of activists, mostly in the Midlands, formed the Independent Nationalist Network (INN). Next, a handful of former Scottish activists launched the Highland Division in October 2022. Both groups dissolved after achieving little of note.

More significant was the desertion of the Leeds-based activist Alek Yerbury in February 2023. Yerbury headed numerous anti-migrant protests throughout that year, before successfully registering his own political party, the National Rebirth Party (NRP), last February.

However, by far the most consequential rupture occurred in April 2023 when Kenny Smith led a group of disgruntled officers to form the new Homeland Party. Smith took with him some of PA's best-known figures, most of its regional organisers and its Scottish and West Midlands branches almost wholesale.

These schisms, and the successful registration of Homeland and the NRP in 2024, have been demoralising, denting PA's output, undermining its leadership and providing alternatives to which future defectors can turn.

#### ARRESTS, CONVICTIONS AND "WHITE CIVIL RIGHTS"

The jailing of key activists under race hate or terrorrelated charges has also been damaging. The most notable is Sam Melia, husband to Deputy Leader Laura Towler and Yorkshire Regional Organiser, who received a two-year sentence in March 2024 for offences relating to his fascist propaganda network, the Hundred Handers, which was first exposed by HOPE not hate in August 2020.

Collett has attempted to turn these convictions to PA's advantage. Downplaying Melia's extremism and portraying him as a martyr for "free speech" garnered considerable coverage among the wider right, and PA was able to raise almost £70,000 to "support" Melia and Towler. Collett and Towler have subsequently rebranded PA as a "white civil rights" group. This enables the pair to fully abandon the pursuit of party status and instead focus on spinning white victimhood narratives for money. In doing so, Collett is following a path previously trodden by the American white supremacist David Duke and former BNP leader Nick Griffin, two of Collett's main political influences.

PA's main campaign since announcing this new direction is fundraising for the families of "political prisoners", i.e. those incarcerated for participating in the disorder and rioting last summer. So far, the group has raised £20,000, with beneficiaries including a man who hospitalised a police officer and another involved in a mob attack on an asylum accommodation site in Tamworth.

#### PROSPECTS

Since the split, PA's leadership has attempted to firm up support amongst the fascist fringes through even more extreme messaging, and loosening vetting procedures in order to swell numbers.

However, PA activists have continued to trickle out to Homeland and other organisations. In January 2025, the group suffered a further blow when a significant chunk of its North West branch, which had been its most active, jumped ship to the British Movement.

That month also saw the release of a BBC documentary that featured undercover footage obtained during a year-long infiltration. Among those filmed was Aaron Watkins, an activist exposed by HOPE not hate in 2023, who claimed that they should: "Round [migrants] up into camps and if they refuse to leave, we shoot them", among many other instances of extremism. The documentary has reignited internal fears that the group may be proscribed, with Dame Sara Khan leading calls for a new law that would enable PA to be banned as a group that is "creating a climate conducive to terrorism".

With roughly 500 members, PA remains a large fascist organisation, and the return of Melia and other key figures to activism may provide some much-needed energy. However, it remains a diminished force and its rebrand is unlikely to reverse its fortunes. As such, our concerns about PA relate less to its potential for growth but rather to its future direction.

> HOPE not hate, anti-fascists and media organisations have repeatedly exposed a dangerous and potentially violent degree of extremism within PA. A militant style of politics has spread into the UK's fascist fringes, the most notable proponent of which was National Action, a group that casts a long shadow over PA. The possibility remains that a more overtly violent splinter, or individual acts of violence, may stem from the group.

PA has reinvigorated British fascism, and in one way or another, its ripples will continue to be felt on the political margins for years to come.

Mark Collett

#### **GOYIM DEFENSE LEAGUE** CATEGORY: ONLINE NETWORK



The Goyim Defense League (GDL) is a loose, transnational and obsessively antisemitic neo-Nazi network.

Founded in the US, the GDL's assorted content creators, online trolls and affiliated activists harass Jewish people, vandalise property, distribute propaganda and perform publicity stunts. GDL is also behind the video platform, GoyimTV, which hosts extreme anti-Jewish content.

GDL has a small number of affiliated individuals in the UK, and printed GDL material has appeared in Dudley, Brighton, Aberdeen, Swansea, Manchester, Bolton and elsewhere.

In December 2021, the Manchester-based content creator Richard Hesketh, who posted his videos to GoyimTV, received four years in prison for seven counts of inciting racial hatred. He had previously appeared in a video with GDL founder Jon Minadeo (AKA Handsome Truth).

In October 2024, Robert Taylor, based near Bolton, was convicted of numerous terror and race haterelated offences, including distributing GDL propaganda by hand and verbally abusing several Jewish people in antisemitic attacks.

Another Brit linked to the GDL is the neo-Nazi Ryan Weston, who hosts his online show "Weston Paradigm" on the GoyimTV platform.

Minadeo has also twice appeared on the online show of Patriotic Alternative leader Mark Collett.

# WHITE LIVES MATTER ENGLAND

#### **CATEGORIES: ORGANISATION**

White Lives Matter England (WLME) is an offshoot of the US propaganda campaign that has engaged in sporadic stickering in England since 2022.



The group uses tactics similar to the

now-defunct Hundred Handers, encouraging activists to print out stickers from a centralised archive and place them in public spaces, photos of which are then posted on WLME social media channels.

The group does not have a clear leadership structure, but a small number of activists who manage its channels and chat groups and others who simply promote the groups content.

Because the name of the group is a common far-right slogan and its messages are often fairly generic, the stickers have been used by a range of groups of activists not directly affiliated to WLME, including various youth-oriented groups. In this way, the group's main achievement is lowering the bar for offline activism.

In 2024, activity continued in a similar vein to previous years, with stickers distributed in various locations across England. There is, however, little other activity in the UK, aside from maintaining social media channels.

#### HOMELAND PARTY Category: Political Party Leader: Kenny Smith



The Homeland Party is a political party that splintered from the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative (PA) in April 2023.

The group formed after Kenny Smith, a former British National Party (BNP) organiser, led chunks of the PA membership, including almost the entirety of the Scottish and West Midlands branches, to defect en masse. The split was strategic rather than ideological, stemming from a loss of faith in PA's leadership and a desire to contest local elections.

After a slow start, Homeland gained momentum in 2024, buoyed by its successful registration as a political party in January and its national conference in September, and has now eclipsed PA as the largest fascist organisation in the UK.

#### **IDEOLOGY AND STRATEGY**

Homeland is desperate to shed PA's toxic reputation and project an image of "sensible nationalism", adopting inoffensive branding and euphemistic language. Drawing influence from the National Front and the BNP, the group promotes the "ladder strategy", i.e. the notion that establishing power at the local level through sustained, localised campaigning is a necessary precursor to national power.

Like the BNP, Homeland aims to exploit feelings of grievance in majority-white neighbourhoods and foment anger against the major parties and minority communities. It aims to gain "control of the levers of power" locally, encouraging activists to join parish and community councils, the lowest tier of local government, as well as to infiltrate trade unions, local parent councils, NHS trusts and even allotment societies.

Homeland eventually hopes to leverage its local power into national influence, with the ultimate aim of realising "remigration" – essentially the same policy of repatriation championed by the extreme right for decades.

While Homeland aims to recruit widely, it retains a highly ideological cadre of activists who are just as antisemitic, misogynistic and conspiratorial as PA. At the core of Homeland is the "White Genocide" myth, the notion that Jews are orchestrating demographic changes in order to replace "indigenous" Brits, but this is only alluded to in its public output.

#### **PROGRESS IN 2024**

After spending 2023 with fewer than 100 members, last year Homeland's fortunes improved. The group's first boost came with its registration as a political party in January, a pursuit in which PA had failed numerous times, making Homeland appear the more professional outfit.

Homeland subsequently recruited a coterie of fascist social media influencers, including "You Kipper", a Mosleyite propagandist, and Sam Wilkes (AKA Zoomer Historian), a Hitler-apologist YouTuber. These figures

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have boosted the group's social media operation on X/Twitter, with Homeland's following on the platform increasing from 1,000 to 30,000 in little over a year.

In January, the group launched a "Campaign for an Immigration Referendum" but omitted Homeland branding from its public material. The campaign has yet to gain traction, however, and its pretence of independence has been undermined by the appointment of Kai Stephens (AKA Barkley Walsh), a young fascist with considerable baggage, as its spokesman.

In the May local elections, Homeland channelled its resources into a single candidate: former BNP official Roger Robertson in Hart. Homeland drafted in activists from over 150 miles away to campaign for Robertson, who has a decade's experience as a parish councillor in the ward. Following a HOPE not hate campaign, Robertson came third with just 13.5%, a considerable decrease from his 22.6% as an independent candidate in 2023.

Meanwhile, Homeland members continue to get co-opted into parish and community councils, often failing to declare their affiliation in the process. Homeland has at least nine such councillors at time of writing, and plans to build towards election runs in these locations, although some have already received negative local attention.

Homeland's second major boost followed its national conference in Wirksworth, Derbyshire in September. The event was addressed by Manuel Schreiber, a lowranking member of the anti-Muslim Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), and Robert Grajny, "Foreign relations director" for the Polish far-right party Konfederacja. This enabled Homeland to boast of the "endorsement" of these far larger European organisations.

The conference was Homeland's first event of any size, and despite protests outside the venue, a flurry of signups have followed. Homeland is now considerably larger than most competitors on the fascist fringes, with a membership of 750 at time of writing. Smith estimates that 70% of members are younger than 30, which, if accurate, would make Homeland a serious outlier among far-right political parties.

The highest profile sign-up is Steve Laws, a fascist so-called "migrant hunter" from Folkestone who, despite his online incitement during the riots this summer, seems to have evaded legal issues and is now Homeland's South East regional organiser.

In October, Homeland also swallowed Identity England (IE), a tiny and ineffectual successor of the far-right youth group Generation Identity (GI) UK. In practice, Homeland has gained perhaps ten additional activists from this supposedly "historic" merger, although it now has an active presence in London.

Homeland continues to court more influential groups and figures overseas, including Martin Sellner, the figurehead of the international GI network who is credited with popularising the term "remigration". Homeland claims that Sellner, who has been banned from entering the UK, reviewed its remigration policy before publishing.

Pairing its localised politics with broader online campaigns, Homeland has enthusiastically joined an international effort to normalise remigration, flooding



X and other platforms with the word and applying to register the slogan "remigration now" with the Electoral Commission.

Homeland is attempting to walk a fine line, presenting itself as both an ideologically coherent and more "sensible" outfit than PA, but also a hard-line alternative to Reform UK. The party is attempting to recruit figures ejected from Reform and is courting members of the Lotus Eaters, a far-right media outlet, in the hopes of boosting its visibility. So far, however, these attempts have been largely unsuccessful.

#### **PROSPECTS**

As PA declines, Homeland aims to consolidate its place as the dominant party on the extreme right. The group intends to hire paid staff and expand its branch structure, and also aims to build its reputation at home and overseas with the "Big Remigration Conference" in April, which is set to feature Renaud Camus, the French writer credited with coining the "Great Replacement" theory, and Lena Kotré, an AfD MP. Importantly, it also intends to target a small number of seats at the 2025 local elections, putting the ladder strategy into practice.

However, Homeland faces considerable challenges. The group is roughly 0.4% the size of Reform UK, which is likely to harness the anti-immigrant, antiestablishment vote in upcoming elections. Moreover, the highly time-intensive "ladder strategy" does not guarantee success, evidenced by the failure of Robertson to come close to winning his seat last May. Many of Homeland's new recruits appear politically inexperienced and chronically online, and may prove ill-suited to the mundane realities of local politics.

Homeland also routinely overestimates public support for its views, and its aim to become a mass movement whilst retaining its ideological purity has the potential to cause issues internally. For example, Peter North, a self-styled intellectual who signed up after the conference, has criticised the antisemitism of Homeland supporters as "absolutely vile". Another short-lived sign-up labelled Homeland a "demented boys club" after claiming that "their spokesman & a pack of other inadequates told me women shouldn't be able to vote" at a party social in December.

Homeland has a long-term vision, and the political landscape is unpredictable. Committed fascists are attempting to infiltrate local institutions, and this demands the close attention of anti-fascists and campaigners. While the party continues to gain momentum, at present Homeland remains a peripheral political force.

#### NATIONAL REBIRTH PARTY CATEGORY: POLITICAL PARTY LEADER: ALEK YERBURY



The National Rebirth Party (NRP) is a new fascist microparty led by Alek Yerbury, an oddball would-be dictator now based in Manchester.

The NRP, which gained party status in February, is predicated on dubious strategy and is staffed by figures extreme even by the standards of the far right. While its electoral prospects appear dim, there is reason to be concerned about the degree of extremism fomenting within the group.

#### ALEK YERBURY AND THE NATIONAL SUPPORT DETACHMENT

Yerbury was privately educated in Adelaide, Australia before serving in the British Army. He joined the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative (PA) in the autumn of 2021 and became a regular public speaker, receiving negative press for his resemblance to Adolf Hitler.

Yerbury harbours an intense hatred of politicians and left-wing activists. HOPE not hate has previously exposed his appalling statements about the murder of Jo Cox, a Yorkshire MP assassinated by a nazi in 2016, and others in which he advocated the use of firearms on migrants and the internment of left-wingers in forced labour camps.

He split with PA in February 2023 after a spat with the leadership and allied himself with a circle of former English Defence League (EDL) activists in Yorkshire. This included Scott Pitts, who would act as lieutenant throughout the year, and David Smaller, head of the Yorkshire Patriots, an EDL splinter group.

He subsequently launched the National Support Detachment (NSD) in April in the hopes of establishing a faux-military force that would confront left-wing activists at street protests. In a far cry from the disciplined "NSD platoons" Yerbury had envisaged, he spent the year addressing a series of diminishing antimigrant protests across the north, only to be reliably outnumbered by counter-protestors.

This phase culminated in the calamitous protest camp outside RAF Scampton, a site earmarked to house asylum seekers, last winter. The camp was defined by squalor, squabbles, arrests and accusations of stolen funds and substance abuse, the ultimate outcome being the total alienation of any local sympathy his campaign may once have had.

#### **THE NRP**

Abandoning street protests, Yerbury successfully registered the NRP in February and now heads a political party that is both highly ambitious and extreme. The NRP dismisses the much-vaunted "ladder strategy" once used by the British National Party (BNP) and forgoes council contests, aiming directly for seats in parliament and primarily targeting urban areas.

Yerbury believes that he can seize national power in 10-15 years, despite the fact that the NRP makes little effort to broaden its support and instead offers a startlingly authoritarian slate of policies. For example,



the NRP's manifesto states that "only people of British heritage or lineage" would qualify for citizenship, that "foreigners whose presence is harmful" would be expelled, and that citizens "who refuse to carry out their duties will be stripped of their rights". The death penalty would be handed to those who commit "crimes against the nation and its people", a category that would include those who carry out "habitual lowlevel crime". This definition would seem to include several people Yerbury has rubbed shoulders with at his own events.

#### **PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS**

So far, the NRP has recruited a small collection of activists with pasts in PA, the EDL, Britain First, the BNP, the National Front, the British Movement, Youth Alliance and more. It has established five functioning branches: Birmingham, Hull, Leeds, London and Manchester, which engage in meetings, public surveys and street stalls through which they distribute the party magazine. It has also announced several other branches that have so far achieved little or failed to materialise.

However, Yerbury and other party figures continue to expend much energy squabbling with their competitors on the extreme right, and the shift from street movement into party politics has alienated some of his closest supporters.

The NRP may attract PA offcasts and other fascist fantasists, and its open-door policy to any extremist may enable some moderate growth in the immediate term. However, its outmoded branding, eccentric leadership and obvious extremism will ensure it is confined to the outside political fringes for the foreseeable future.

Nonetheless, Yerbury and his followers are pushing a dangerous kind of politics that demands close attention. Both Yerbury and others now active within the NRP have themselves previously endorsed violence, and we have already identified several individuals convicted for the country-wide disorder this summer who have previously rubbed shoulders with Yerbury and his allies at various events.

At present, the NRP is engaging with the political process. However, it has potential to act as a crucible for violent extremism, especially if disillusionment sets in following its inevitable failures at the polls.

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#### TRADITIONAL BRITAIN GROUP CATEGORY: DISCUSSION GROUP



VICE PRESIDENT: GREGORY LAUDER-FROST

Founded by Gregory Lauder-Frost in 2001, the Traditional Britain Group (TBG) is a London-based organisation that hosts far-right gatherings, dinners and conferences.

Lauder-Frost is a former leading member of the Conservative Monday Club, a pressure group banned by the Tory Party for its racism, and was also vice president of the anti-communist Western Goals Institute. He was also involved with Arktos Media, the far-right publishing house.

The TBG, which typically hosts a formal dinner, a conference and a Christmas social each year on top of occasional evening events, has become a key meeting point for the British far right and an important stopover for international far-right figures. The TBG has endeavoured to maintain an elitist, "High Tory" image, meaning it has been attended by Conservative Party figures alongside open fascists. Repatriation has long been central to the group's beliefs.

Past speakers have included the American "alt-right" figurehead Richard Spencer and Markus Willinger of Generation Identity, as well as Gerard Batten before he became UKIP leader. The group received press attention in 2013 after Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg addressed the TBG's annual dinner (he later apologised for his appearance). Associated European far-right politicians include MEPs from the anti-Muslim German party Alternative für Deutschland and the Estonian finance minister Martin Helme.

HOPE not hate's undercover reporter attended the TBG's 2023 Christmas event and conference, which was marred by sound system difficulties and poor turnout. Lauder-Frost advised our infiltrator during post-event drinks: "As long as you go through life knowing that women are completely pathetic, you'll be really successful."

In 2024, David Clews of Unity News Network, the anti-migrant activist Niall McCrae of The Light and the Workers of England Union, and the aristocratic businessman Rhodri Philipps (jailed for offering to pay someone £5,000 to run over an anti-Brexit activist) addressed the conference. The TBG's most recent Christmas social was protested by anti-fascists after Red Flare published the location of the venue.



Jacob Rees-Mogg with Gregory Lauder-Frost (right)



Photo: YouTube

#### **NEEMA PARVINI (AKA ACADEMIC AGENT)** CATEGORY: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Neema Parvini (AKA Academic Agent) is a YouTuber and academic with a large international following. He has held positions at Richmond American University and the University of Surrey, specialising in Shakespeare. He was let go from Surrey due to his far-right activism.

Parvini's views are extreme and often aligned with those of the scientific racism community. For example, he has tweeted that "blacks are closer to homo erectus" and that black and white people are "different species". Parvini also frequently quotes the fascist philosopher Julius Evola and recommends books by the American fascist ideologue Francis Parker Yockey.

Parvini has monetised his commentary on current far-right topics and sells premium subscriptions with additional content. While his degrees and academic work were all in the area of literature, he sells online courses to his followers in the areas of economics. politics, mathematics and physics, as well as writing.

He has spoken at a range of far-right conferences. These included the Traditional Britain Group in 2022 and 2023, Nomos in London alongside Colin Robertson (AKA Millennial Woes), and Scyldings alongside Carl Benjamin (AKA Sargon of Akkad) and Curtis Yarvin. Despite his extreme connections, Parvini was also interviewed by then-Conservative MP Jacob Rees-Mogg on GB News in March 2024 to discuss social cohesion and plug his latest book.

In 2024, an undercover investigation by HOPE not hate revealed Parvini was in talks with Matthew Frost and Erik Ahrens of the Human Diversity Foundation about setting up a far-right think tank to launder extreme ideas. Later that year, Parvini's website underwent a design rebrand, listing him as the "director" of his website, Academic Agency. Parvini's books are hosted on Frost and Ahrens's audiobook website, Liegent.

#### **STATE OF HATE 2025**



#### **STEVE LAWS** CATEGORIES: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Steve Laws is a notorious ethnonationalist "influencer" from Kent. He has cycled through several far-right organisations in his relatively short time on the scene, including For Britain, UKIP, the English Democrats and Reform UK, as well being closely linked to the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative (PA). He is now the South East organiser of the fascist Homeland Party, a PA splinter group.

Laws helped to popularise "migrant hunting", a form of activism that typically involves filming, harassing and intimidating refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Starting in 2020, Laws filmed arrivals on the Dover coast and also made longer form (and poorly produced) "documentary" content, quickly gaining over 10,000 subscribers on YouTube.

Laws now focuses on his X/Twitter account, which was reinstated in 2023 and has 97,000 followers at time of writing. He also owns a sporadically-updated blog, with recent articles including one titled "OPINION: Deaths in the Channel, why should I care?"

Over the past year, Laws's online output has become increasingly extreme. While he has long used dehumanising language, for example describing migrants and asylum seekers as "invaders" and "swarms", he is now an open and vicious antisemite and relentlessly promotes the mass deportation of "millions" of non-white people from the UK.

In 2024, he published a multi-stage "plan" to remove immigrants and create an ethnically homogenous Britain (euphemistically referred to as "remigration") that combines state force with more passive forms of harassment and intimidation. These include not using immigrant businesses, blocking immigrants in the roads and streets and much else.

Over the years, his links to fascist organisations have tightened. For example, he has repeatedly appeared on online streams with PA's leader, Mark Collett, and spoke at PA's conference in October 2022 alongside a propagandist for a pan-Nordic, militant neo-Nazi organisation that is banned in Finland. Laws has also been active in the UK's far-right street movement, including leading a protest in Dover in March 2023 alongside Alek Yerbury (former-PA activist and now leader of the National Rebirth Party) and another in September 2023, alongside the National Front leader and oddball, Tony Martin. Laws spoke at another small demonstration in October in Westminster that he organised with Yerbury.

Laws also stood for UKIP in the 2022 Southend West Parliamentary by-election, held following the murder of David Amess MP, and then for the English Democrats in his home constituency of Dover & Deal at the 2024 general election. He performed appallingly in both, gaining just 185 votes (0.4%) in the latter.

Laws has had various run-ins with police over the years. In 2020, he was found guilty of taking a dinghy without the owner's consent. He appealed this decision in 2021 (the court discontinued the case in 2022). In 2021, Dover Harbour Board also filed an injunction against Laws and other activists for unauthorised dockside filming. Whereas some of his co-defendants agreed, Laws refused to sign an undertaking to stay away from the docks and opted for a further court hearing.

More recently, Laws was arrested (and promptly released) at the disorderly protest in Whitehall, London, following the horrific Southport attack in July 2024. Laws commented gleefully on the summer's racist riots, posting (and then deleting) a number of tweets in support of, or explaining away, various despicable acts. Laws has, so far, avoided prosecution for this output.

Last summer he was, however, sacked from his job booking cruises with Aviva after a co-worker, concerned by Laws' extremism, blew the whistle on him using HOPE not hate's articles as evidence.

In the autumn, Laws officially joined the PA-splinter group, the Homeland Party, after giving a speech at the group's national conference in September, and in January 2025 was made Homeland's South East Regional Organiser. Laws also spoke at the conference of the Portuguese far-right group Reconquista in Lisbon last November on the subject of "remigration", detailing his multi-stage plan to the audience in his characteristic charm-free tone.

#### SECTION 11 - NAZI, FASCIST AND ETHNONATIONALIST

### YOUTH ALLIANCE / National socialist youth

#### **CATEGORY: ORGANISATION**

Emerging in late April last year, Youth Alliance (YA), since renamed National Socialist Youth, is a tiny but deeply antisemitic and anti-Muslim youth group. Aiming to recruit men aged 17-30, YA emphasised Christianity as a core part of its identity, positioning itself as fighting a quasi-holy war against both Judaism and Islam.

YA prioritised offline activism and initially appeared to align itself with the UK's existing anti-Muslim street movement, with activists attending Tommy Robinson's London rallies in June and July and briefly attaching themselves to an anti-migrant campaign in Aldershot. As far-right disorder swept the country, YA contingents were also present at the Whitehall protest, the Sunderland and Bristol riots, and the Portsmouth protest last summer.

However, since the riots the group has become both



#### MORGOTH categories: influencer / content creator



Morgoth is a pseudonymous fascist social influencer. The Geordie first gained a following among the extreme

right via his blog "Morgoth's Review", which launched in 2014 and gave commentary on cultural and political issues. The comments section of the blog routinely received hundreds of posts, functioning as a far-right discussion board.

He has since broadened his platforms, establishing a presence on Twitter in 2015, with his current account at almost 53,000 followers; a YouTube channel in 2018, amassing 66,800 subscribers; a Telegram channel in 2020, with almost 15,000 subscribers; and a Substack in 2022.

While Morgoth's video content tends towards euphemistic language, his writing, especially for his blog, leaves no doubt about his extreme racial hatred and authoritarian instincts. For example, in 2015 he wrote that he would be unmoved to watch migrants drown at sea: "Even if I imagine myself standing on the Italian shoreline in the Spring sun watching a boat full of blacks sink sending them all to their deaths I would still feel the same." In another post entitled "Merry



less active and significantly more radical, promoting extreme antisemitism and Nazi propaganda and attacking Tommy Robinson over his civic nationalism. Small numbers of activists have also engaged in limited operations in residential areas, distributing stickers featuring the image of Oswald Mosley and slogans like "BRITONS STAND UP". YA also held a few sparsely-attended physical training sessions.

Having gained the attention of law enforcement, YA has effectively fizzled out, with activists defecting to other vehicles. What remains of the group established close links to the longstanding neo-Nazi British Movement, and in January 2025 renamed itself National Socialist Youth. At present, the group seems to do little other than pumping out a stream of Nazi content on Telegram.

Holocaustmas!", he wrote that "the Holocaust is the primary tool used to cripple whites in the genocidal war the Jewish community is waging against them". In March 2015, Morgoth also spoke positively of Jack Renshaw, then a prominent figure in National Action (NA), a neo-Nazi terror group that would be banned under anti-terror legislation the following year. Morgoth quoted Renshaw's extreme antisemitic outpourings, and claimed that he had contacted Renshaw to write for his blog. Renshaw has since been convicted for a plot to murder an MP and child sex offences, and is serving life behind bars.

Morgoth has also shared NA propaganda celebrating the murder of Stéphane Charbonnier, the editor of the French magazine Charlie Hebdo, by Islamists in 2015. In total, twelve people lost their lives in the attack on the magazine's offices in Paris.

Morgoth also established links to the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative (PA) in its early days, appearing regularly on the show of PA leader Mark Collett and other related figures.

Despite this long history of extremism, Morgoth has featured on the personal podcast of James Delingpole, The Spectator columnist, who referred to him as "one of the smartest people on the planet", and has been quoted on GB News.

#### COLIN ROBERTSON (AKA MILLENNIAL WOES) CATEGORIES: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Colin Robertson (AKA Millennial Woes) is a farright content creator from Linlithgow, West Lothian who became one of the most prominent figures in the British alt-right in the mid-2010s via his nowsuspended YouTube channel.

Known for his gloomy monologues on political and cultural issues, Robertson fled the UK in 2017 after his identity was exposed by anti-fascists. During this period, he became a regular speaker at fascist events on the continent and in the UK. He has since returned to live in London.

In 2019, Robertson aligned himself with the neo-Nazi group Patriotic Alternative, but was soon ostracised by the organisation after a bitter fallout.

Since then his influence has diminished significantly, although his annual "Millenniyule" series of livestreamed interviews on Odysee still draws an audience and some prominent names. Notable guests in 2024 included Martin Sellner of Generation Identity, former UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom and the Homeland Party's Steve Laws.

His Twitter account, which was suspended in late 2018, was reinstated in February 2023 and at time of writing has almost 39,000 followers. He also maintains a Substack account and a presence on Telegram.



## CHARLES CORNISH-DALE (AKA RAW EGG NATIONALIST)

CATEGORIES: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Charles Cornish-Dale is a farright social media influencer and bodybuilder, best known for dispensing unorthodox health and nutrition advice alongside hyper-

masculinity and far-right politics. He operated anonymously under the "Raw Egg Nationalist" moniker until June 2024, when HOPE not hate published a report revealing his identity.

Despite being a relative latecomer to the "right-wing bodybuilder" milieu that emerged on Twitter and revolved around Costin Alamariu (AKA the Bronze Age Pervert), Cornish-Dale quickly became one of its best known figures. He experienced a significant boost to his profile in 2022 after his inclusion in a documentary by far-right Fox News host Tucker Carlson, The End of Men, which highlighted a supposed war on masculinity and the ways in which some toxic men's rights activists were fighting back.

Following HOPE not hate's exposé, Cornish-Dale appears to have spent the latter part of 2024 fruitlessly obsessing over the circumstances of his unmasking, describing in multiple podcasts and articles his suspicion that intelligence agencies or a source from within his circles might have leaked his details.

His primary outlet is his X/Twitter account, which has almost 275,000 followers at time of writing, but he also publishes longer form content for a variety of outlets. He publishes books and annuals of his magazine, Man's World, via Antelope Hill, a US-based far-right publisher that displays his work alongside its own compendiums of speeches from Adolf Hitler and other Nazi figureheads.

#### SAM WILKES (AKA ZOOMER HISTORIAN) CATEGORIES: INFLUENCER / CONTENT CREATOR

Sam Wilkes, who uses the pseudonym "Zoomer Historian", is a YouTuber and historical revisionist who advances a Nazi-apologist version of WWII history to his 171,000 subscribers. He is also a key propagandist for the fascist Homeland Party.

Wilkes' YouTube channel was originally devoted to videos about computer games, through which he amassed a sizable 40,000 subscribers by 2019. After a period of dormancy, however, he renamed the account "Zoomer Historian" in March 2023 and began producing Hitler apologist videos with titles like "How Winston Churchill Started WW2" and "World War 2 Was Not Worth Fighting".

When not defending Hitler on YouTube, the "Zoomer Historian" tirelessly promotes the fascist Homeland Party, a splinter group of the neo-Nazi Patriotic Alternative, to his 53,000 following on X/Twitter. He also uses the platform to make frequent calls for the mass deportation of ethnic minorities and harass nonwhite users of the platform.



#### ARKTOS MEDIA CATEGORY: PUBLISHER

Launched in 2009 by Daniel Friberg and John Morgan, Arktos Media is one of the most important purveyors of European New Right and alt-right literature in the world. Arktos Media Ltd is still registered in the UK, though much of its operation is based in other countries.

Friberg is Editor Emeritus while the Editor-In-Chief is now Constantin von Hoffmeister, while the Belgian far-right activist Robert Steuckers holds the post of Deputy Editor-In-Chief. Longtime Arktos figure Tor Westman remains Managing Director while Jason Rogers is Senior Editor and a company director.

Arktos has published over 250 books, ranging from new texts to translations and reissues. Amongst its catalogue of authors are influential fascist and farright thinkers, including Alexander Dugin, Alain de Benoist and Guillaume Faye. Arktos has also reissued texts by influential philosophers amongst the far right, including Julius Evola and Oswald Spengler.

Arktos maintains a range of social media accounts and also has a regular podcast, often hosting high-profile far-right figures from around the world. Its "Insights" blog has recently praised US Vice President JD Vance and published articles by the influential Russian extremist Alexander Dugin.



# BLACK HOUSE PUBLISHING / SANCTUARY PRESS CATEGORY: PUBLISHER

In 2011, Janet Slatter launched Black House Publishing, named after the British

Black House Publishing, named after the British Union of Fascists HQ, the "Black House". It has reissued versions of fascist, nazi, Third Position and right-wing literature from authors including Oswald Mosley, Oswald Spengler, and New Zealand far-right author Kerry Bolton.

However, in March 2019 Slatter launched Sanctuary Press alongside Black House, and moved much of the explicitly fascist publications, including all the Oswald Mosley books, to that imprint. While it no longer has its own website, its books are available through Amazon and via some independent book shops.

The Black House website also has a blog with articles by a range of writers, including Kerry Bolton.

# CANDOUR AND THE A.K. CHESTERTON TRUST

Edited by Colin Todd, Candour magazine is Britain's longestrunning fascist publication. However, it has long been in decline and is now an irrelevance on the modern far-right scene.

The Trust was first launched in 1996 to promote the work of veteran fascist A.K. Chesterton and continued the



Chesterton and continued the publication of his magazine after his death.

In recent years, Candour is published less frequently and circulates amongst a dwindling circle of fascist readers. The website still runs a blog which is updated semi-regularly.

#### STEVEN BOOKS / LEAGUE OF ST GEORGE Category: Publisher

League Enterprises / Steven Books is the commercial arm of the long-standing League of St George, which was founded in 1974 by former members of Oswald Mosley's Union Movement.

The League of St George sporadically releases a magazine, League Sentinel, while Steven Books continues to publish extremely low-quality reprints of obscure fascist pamphlets, as well as selling far-right books by other publishers.



#### **STATE OF HATE 2025**

#### **BLOOD & HONOUR** CATEGORIES: MUSIC NETWORK

Blood and Honour (B&H), which took its name from the motto of the Hitler Youth, is a nazi skinhead movement

formed in 1987 by Ian Stuart Donaldson, lead singer of Skrewdriver, arguably the most important and most famous nazi band in British history.

Less than a decade after forming B&H, its two main protagonists were dead. Ian Stuart Donaldson (stylised by B&H as ISD) died in a car crash in 1993, while Nicky Crane, ISD's close supporter and former British Movement thug, died of an AIDS-related illness the following year. While the movement carried on, initially taken over by the nazi group Combat 18, it has been on a steady decline ever since. With an increasingly elderly support base and – in more recent years – more aggressive policing, B&H has become little more than an occasional reunion for old nazis.

Each year tends to see an ISD memorial gig, either on or close to the date of the B&H founder's death, sometimes with hundreds in attendance. Occasionally, such as in 2008 and 2016, these events have been large enough to attract national media attention.

The importance, and even presence, of B&H has waned in recent years. A combination of increased police action, HOPE not hate's actions to stop gigs and previously leading figures stepping back has meant that few, if any, gigs are now held under the B&H banner. In its place have emerged a number of individual promoters, who of course have long involvement in B&H, putting on gigs across the country.

B&H suffered another blow when its leader, Robert Talland, better known as Ginger Rob, was charged with two counts of disseminating terrorist publications. The trial was declared a mistrial, but not before Talland put forward a defence that he had provided the police with information about the nazi scene in the past. While other B&H leaders rallied around him, arguing that it was worth saying anything to stay out of prison, privately many were uneasy as to what exactly information he had shared with police.

Amongst these promoters are Lou Worthington, Chad Charles, "Rob" (surname unknown, he plays in the bands Crucified and Whitelaw and goes under the online name Bob Der Cursified) and Thomas Stenhouse. Also putting on the occasional gig is Benny Bullman, lead singer of Whitelaw who is involved in the British Movement.

Over the coming months we expect fairly large (supposedly non-political) gigs taking place in Merseyside, Staffordshire and Norfolk.

What few B&H gigs happen these days tend to be ballad nights.

Similarly, the threat of police action and the dwindling number of B&H gigs have led several previously farright bands and singers reinvent themselves as more mainstream non-political Oi! bands. However, this mask often slips when they perform at gigs organised by former B&H activists.

On 8 January 2025, the Treasury announced a full asset freeze of B&H on the grounds that it is suspected of "promoting and encouraging terrorism, seeking to recruit people for that purpose and making funds available for the purposes of its terrorist activities". The designation also extends to "any aliases it operates under e.g. 28 Radio and Combat 18".

The use of this kind of sanction to counter far-right terrorism is unprecedented. The fact that neither B&H nor Combat 18 (founded in 1991) have previously fallen foul of counter-terror policing on an organisational basis is a sign of the state's shifting attitudes towards nazi extremism. C18, the neo-nazi skinhead group closely linked to B&H, has openly pushed a terrorist strategy for decades and has been linked to terror attacks and many other acts of violence both in the UK and overseas.





#### STREET SOUNDS PROMOTIONS Categories: Music Network

Street Sounds Promotions (SSP) is a small advertising outlet for nazi music founded by Chad Charles, a 40-year veteran of the scene and the country's most prominent nazi music promoter. The group has ties to the broader Blood & Honour nazi music network, and consists of an infrequent gig operation and intermittent merchandising.

SSP is effectively the new name for Charles's previous promotional outfit, Punishment Block. Charles also ran the nazi merchandise mail-order business Patriot Streetwear UK, despite the fact that he and his wife both claimed benefits. In addition to merchandise, Charles organises the occasional gig through SSP, generally consisting of nazi punk and Oi! bands.

In 2024, HOPE not hate dealt Charles a blow by revealing the details of his two-day SSP festival in Blackpool that was arranged to coincide with the annual Rebellion punk festival in the town. Charles was forced to cancel his event, removing the opportunity to rake in a decent chunk of money. However, May 2024 saw another Charles-backed gig, this time at the Cooksons Bridge pub in Bootle in honour of his own birthday, which was commemorated by Charles receiving a cake with a swastika design on top.

#### THE NATIONAL HOUSING PARTY UK Categories: political party



The National Housing Party UK (NHPUK) is a minor far-right political

party. NHPUK was launched in 2021 by the Oldhambased former Britain First activist John Lawrence and Pat McGinnis, a London-based former British National Party (BNP) activist. NHPUK's two key policies are "a complete halt to permanent settlement immigration and to leave the 1951 UN Refugee Convention".

Registering as a party in March 2022, NHPUK has since spent much of its time humiliating itself in local elections. This includes McGinnis achieving a single vote in a Camden Council by-election (Hampstead Town ward) in July 2022.

Alongside producing online content for a tiny audience on subjects ranging from NHPUK campaign days to "9/11 trutherism", the group has also held a number of regional meetings and engaged in small protests, including supporting anti-migrant protests in Leeds in 2023.

In 2024, NHPUK has not fared much better. Whilst McGinnis runs the party's Twitter account and has grown it to over 50k followers, this does not appear to be translating into success elsewhere. The regular YouTube streams attract minimal views, and Lawrence's electoral attempt in Oldham's Hollinwood ward in May resulted in him receiving just 173 votes and coming a distant third. In March, the party held seemingly its sole public meeting of the year in Manchester, attended by fewer than 10 people.

#### BRITISH MOVEMENT CATEGORIES: ORGANISATION LEADER: STEPHEN FROST

Founded in 1968 by Colin Jordan, the British Movement (BM) initially viewed itself as a

highly intelligent, ideological and drilled physical force as an alternative to the democratic adventures of the National Front.

The BM succeeded in attracting violent, racist thugs to its ranks, and its role in fomenting violence was recognised by the Home Secretary in 1981, a year in which 26 people were murdered in racist attacks. However, its desire to be viewed as the ideological and intellectual vanguard of the far right was never realised, and the BM was wound down in 1983 due to the efforts of senior member Ray Hill, who was also an anti-fascist working for Searchlight.

It was promptly revived, albeit in diminished form, as the British National Socialist Movement (BNSM) by the Yorkshire-based activist Stephen Frost, who continues to head the tiny and extremely antisemitic organisation to this day.

The BM effectively runs what is left of the Blood & Honour music network, breathing some life into the ailing organisation. The BM has tried to raise its profile by producing swathes of crude racist stickers, online magazines and podcasts, and using the messaging platform Telegram. In doing so, it has succeeded in recruiting a small number of younger activists to accompany the ageing skinheads.

Historic antagonisms between the BM and other farright groups have dissipated with time and the group often collaborates with other fascists in joint meetings and protests. For example, Frost and leading BM figure Mark Bullman (AKA Benny Bullman) of the nazi band Whitelaw often speak at the annual John Tyndall memorial event, organised by Heritage and Destiny, while BM members have been joined by Blood & Honour activists and Leeds hooligans at small protests against migrants and asylum seekers.

BM's North West branch has been rejuvenated by an influx of former Patriotic Alternative (PA) members, who had been active in both groups for several years before formally defecting in January 2025. The branch engages in regular banner drops and street stalls, with its activists performing Nazi salutes for its social media channels.

BM activists also opened a gym for training martial arts in Manchester in late 2023, mimicking elements of the Active Club network. The gym was opened by John O'Brien, a former soldier convicted of involvement in the Dover riots in 2016.

The BM is active in London, where Tim Ryan is the key figure, as well as in the South East, Yorkshire, the East Midlands and Scotland. There is a smattering of support elsewhere, such as South Wales, but far less than in the past.

In March 2024, the BM was named (as the BNSM) in the government's new definition of extremism, alongside PA, as groups that "promote Neo-Nazi ideology".



#### NEW BRITISH UNION CATEGORY: ORGANISATION LEADER: GARY RAIKES



The New British Union (NBU) is an attempted revival of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, headed by Gary Raikes, formerly of the British National Party and Britain First.

Launched in 2013, the organisation adopted blackshirt uniforms and the "flash and circle" symbol of the BUF, attracting a small collection of extremists and oddballs. The NBU had an inauspicious start, however, after its Gloucestershire District Officer, Clive Ceronne, received four and a half years behind bars for an arson attack on a mosque that June.

The NBU, which has failed to meet its initial goal of becoming an electoral force, continues to regularly change strategy, voicing its intention to register as a political party while also arguing that fascism cannot win at the ballot box.

The latter position came to the fore in May 2023 when a journalist from The Mail on Sunday filmed Deputy Leader Clive Jones expressing support for "lone wolf" tactics at one of its meetings. The exposure prompted the organisation to change the names of its branches, from "cells" (which was considered too terroristicsounding) to "units".

The group also received press attention in 2022 when HOPE not hate revealed that Tory councillor Andy Weatherhead (AKA Andrew Beadle), who represented Hythe West on Kent County Council, was previously a senior member of the group.

The NBU's extremism and clear fascist aesthetic has drawn small numbers of young activists to its ranks, although they rarely stay for long. In recent years, it has made a renewed push towards its younger audience by using Instagram to recruit members, restarting its video channels and creating a TikTok account.

However, with many larger and more energetic fascist groups currently active in the UK, the NBU is an irrelevance on the extreme fringes.



#### BRITISH FREEDOM PARTY Categories: Organisation Leader: Jayda Fransen

Formed in 2018, the British Freedom Party (BFP) is a minor far-right organisation helmed by Jayda Fransen and Jim Dowson, both of whom were previously leading figures in the anti-Muslim group Britain First, and the ex-British National Party (BNP) leader Nick Griffin.

The group has an overtly religious dimension, owing to Dowson and Fransen's radical evangelical Protestantism, and uses the crusader imagery popular in the anti-Muslim "counter-jihad" movement. It is also antisemitic, in part due to the influence of Griffin, a notorious Holocaust denier.

While the BFP is not a registered party, the group has received press attention due to Fransen's unsuccessful runs as an independent in various elections, including in Southend West in 2022, following the death of David Amess MP. The group has since largely abandoned these publicity stunts, however.

At present, the group mostly exists as a marginal media outfit, with Fransen, Griffin and Dowson releasing regular broadcasts to their small online audiences. Dowson and Griffin have increasingly spent time on Dowson's religious projects, which have included the building of a chapel from which Dowson broadcasts religious sermons.

The trio have considerable political baggage and many enemies within the far right, meaning the group is politically isolated and has a widespread reputation for grifting. Its leadership continues to spend time attacking Stephen Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), Paul Golding, Mark Collett and others.

The group is in the process of rebranding to "The Christian Nationalist Party", although this is unlikely to reverse its fortunes.

#### SECTION 11 - NAZI, FASCIST AND ETHNONATIONALIST

#### NATIONAL FRONT CATEGORY: POLITICAL PARTY LEADER: TONY MARTIN



Founded in 1967, few other parties across the political spectrum have split, factionalised and even stood against itself in elections as much as the National Front.

Once a party with 17,500 members, today's incarnation is a mere shadow of its former self. With each passing year the NF becomes more tired and irrelevant, but we have long accepted that there will likely always be some individual, somewhere, trying to keep the flame of perpetual failures alive.

The NF's current leader Tony Martin has put extraordinary time and effort into building some kind of cult of leadership around himself. But other than diminishing numbers around a pub table in Croydon, Martin's leadership has had – if such a thing were possible – a further detrimental effect on the party.

Previous conversations around merging other far-right groups into the NF proceeded on the basis that, by reputation at least, the NF would have some kind of party apparatus. They broke down when it became apparent that other than an old name, the NF has no such apparatus to speak of, little or no membership and seemingly no future.

The NF's leadership has from its very early days been mired by ambitious incompetents. The current leader has never ceased to surprise us just with how ineffectual his leadership is.

With no apparent party business to keep him occupied, Martin now trawls events across London organised by other people, making vain attempts to cajole political activists into debate despite being incapable of engaging in a coherent political discussion.

Previously active branches and individuals in Yorkshire and Lancashire have walked away or folded, and currently we're not even sure the NF has a membership to speak of. The annual Remembrance Day parade persists, but despite an increase in farright activity in general, the NF's leader can only attract 20 or so participants to insult the British and Commonwealth war dead.

The group has also seemingly given up on contesting elections, failing to stand a single candidate at either the local or general elections in 2024.



#### BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY CATEGORY: POLITICAL PARTY LEADER: ADAM WALKER



Since former leader Nick Griffin lost his seat in the European Parliament in 2014, the proverbial nail has been in the BNP's coffin. However, the party remains cash-rich, principally funded by death-bed bequests, as Griffin largely spent his final years as leader getting elderly people to pledge their fortunes to the party.

leader Adam Walker and treasurer Clive Jefferson.

There are still sporadic attempts by former members and staffers to wrestle the party out of the hands of Walker and Jefferson – the two criminals that now own the BNP – but the time to rescue both the party and its household name has long passed.

The current leadership no longer even bothers to field candidates, having little discernible interest in keeping up a pretence the party is functioning – except for a website where the obligatory attempts to solicit donations continue.

Those who cut their teeth in the BNP have flitted between various minor parties and groups for years, but the largest contingent have found a home in the British Democrats, led by the former BNP councillor Jim Lewthwaite and MEP Andrew Brons. 

# ANTI-LGBTQ+

#### KELLIE-JAY KEEN-MINSHULL Category: Individual activist

POLICE

Kellie-Jay Keen-Minshull (AKA Posie Parker) is a British anti-trans activist best known for her t-shirts and stickers bearing the words "woman: adult human female". Keen-Minshull is a leading voice in the antitrans movement in the UK and overseas.

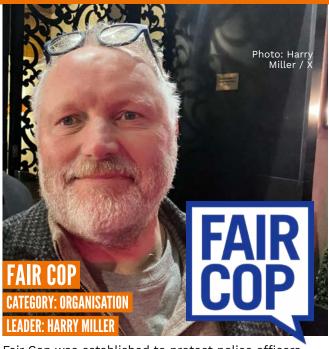
She has found support from the far right, which also targets trans people. Keen-Minshull has posted anti-Muslim tweets and expressed support for Tommy Robinson. She has appeared on the livestreams of conspiracy theorist Richie Allen's channel twice and been interviewed by Laurence Fox, and also frequently appears on GB News and TalkTV. Far-right activists have also supported her at her rallies.

Keen-Minshull registered the Party of Women as a gender-critical political party in February 2024. The party stood 16 candidates in the general election, including Keen-Minshull in Bristol Central. She lost her deposit with 0.5% (196 votes). The Party of Women has two local councillors, one in Maldon, Essex and another in Cheshire West.



oto: Dylan Re

In August, Keen-Minshull appeared to express support for the National Front because it historically campaigned against a paedophile group. Several months later, she reposted – and then deleted – an altered version of the Fourteen Words white supremacist slogan.



Fair Cop was established to protect police officers who face disciplinary issues for expressing antitrans, misogynist and other anti-LGBTQ+ views. It was started in 2019 by former police officer Harry Miller, after he was investigated for posting anti-trans content on social media.

The organisation has strong links to the far right and the broader "gender critical" milieu. In 2020, it promoted the #SayYesToHate Twitter campaign, which took aim at the supposedly too-broad definitions in hate crime legislation.

In 2023, Fair Cop intervened on behalf of James Goddard, previously an organiser in Patriotic Alternative, after he posted anti-LGBTQ+ rants online and was investigated by the police. Miller was arrested in 2022 after posting a picture of the progress pride flag fashioned into a swastika. This resulted in widespread far-right support online.

Miller has appeared alongside several far-right activists on social media and offline. In 2020, he spoke at the Hearts of Oak annual conference and he was interviewed by Carl Benjamin (AKA Sargon of Akkad) on the Lotus Eaters in 2023. Miller said activism had recently been making him feel "knackered", adding that 2025 "will probably be my last doing this".

# FAMILY EDUCATION TRUST

#### **CATEGORY: ORGANISATION**

Family Education Trust (FET) is a campaign group opposing the rights of LGBTQ+ people, especially those of transgender people. The group

opposes LGBTQ+ education in schools and argues in favour of discriminating against same-sex couples in terms of adoption and access to care. FET supports legislation requiring teachers to "out" trans children to their parents and wants discrimination on the basis of gender identity to not be a hate crime.

The group's leadership has praised Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. In 2022, the group promoted the anti-Drag Queen Story Hour campaign. The far-right priest Calvin Robinson spoke at a FET event in 2024.

#### SCOTTISH FAMILY PARTY Category: Political Party Leader: Richard Lucas



The Scottish Family Party (SFP) was launched in 2017 by former UKIP candidate Richard Lucas. The party opposes same-sex marriage and many forms of gender equality legislation. It is also strongly anti-abortion and has campaigned vigorously on the issue.

In recent years, the SFP has posted an increasing amount of anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ content on social media. It argues that "Transgender Ideology" is damaging and "confusing children". However, the party also opposes protections for children. The SFP disagrees with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, saying it undermines the rights of parents. The party argues that parents should be allowed to beat their children. The SFP also opposes hate crime legislation.

SFP received some press attention in 2023 after Niall Fraser represented the group at the Rutherglen and Hamilton West by-election, receiving just 1% of the vote. He had previously claimed he would "brick up" the entrance of a sexual health facility in Glasgow, and was filmed abusing the then-First Minister Humza Yousaf at a Fringe event, shouting: "F\*ck you. You are a pestilence on the land."

The group also has links to the fascist Homeland Party, a group that splintered from Patriotic Alternative. Lucas was interviewed by Simon Crane, who was then PA's Scottish organiser and was previously active in the SFP. Crane is now a leading figure in Homeland. Fraser would go on to appear on an official Homeland broadcast.

SFP stood 16 candidates in the 2024 general election, all of whom were unsuccessful and lost their deposits. It also polled 1.9% and 1.47% in two council byelections in November (West Fife and Coastal Villages and Kilpatrick respectively), generously rounding up both results to "2%" in a message to followers on social media.



# NORTHERN IRELAND



#### MATTHEW COLLINS

Increasingly guided by the directives of the Irish Republic and European Union, Northern Ireland has quietly exited stage-right from the news in Britain. Perhaps understandably so – it was often the cause of gut-wrenching headlines that felt incomprehensible to many.

Although there is no appetite for a return to the killing that blighted the six counties, Loyalists have increasingly returned to obstinate positions whilst the Unionist political class stumbles from one disaster to another.

The largest Unionist Party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), lost the office of First Minister in the

Northern Ireland Assembly to sworn enemy Sinn Féin in 2022. Due to another lengthy boycott of the Assembly, "the Shinners" didn't assume office until February 2024. The DUP's mood worsened when leader and former First Minister Jeffrey Donaldson was charged with rape and historical sexual offences and forced to resign.

The less paramilitary-friendly Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) lost their leader Doug Beattie soon after when objectionable comments made about women and Irish travellers earlier in his career came to light.

Underperformance of Unionist politicians and the intransigence expected of Britain's political establishment are some of the more salient reasons why the Loyalist paramilitary gangs are still active, despite being illegal, and still receiving funds from (among many streams) the British and Irish governments.

A third Unionist Party – the high-polling but lowperforming Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) – entered into an electoral and Westminster pact with Reform UK during the year, despite Reform MPs not understanding or caring for the precious relationship Unionism sees between itself and Britain.

At the beginning of this year, some commentators close to Loyalist paramilitaries stated they believed the peace process was over. This was not an official position, but the Loyalist Communities Council (LCC), which represents the "mainstream" factions of the UVF and UDA, had withdrawn support for the Good Friday Agreement as far back as 2021.

Usual sabre-rattling notwithstanding, little evidence suggests Unionist underperformance means Loyalist paramilitaries are militarily compensating. But they are made increasingly bilious by First Minister Michelle O'Neill's dual commitment to Vice Presidency of the IRA's political wing and being First Minister of a postconflict Northern Ireland.

Part of O'Neill's antagonism is her party's support for use and expansion of Irish language, and her attendance at funerals of former IRA volunteers, some with paramilitary trappings.

Despite Unionists and Loyalists holding paramilitarystyled funerals of their own, the UDA and UVF have limited legitimate political sway.

With this in mind, they demand a more neutral and bipartisan First Minister from Sinn Féin. Not only does O'Neill attend these funerals, she also explicitly does not condemn IRA atrocities – feeding into a long-held narrative that O'Neill and Sinn Féin still answer to the IRA's shadowy Army Council. "They haven't gone away, you know," as Gerry Adams once said.

The growing number of funerals of former "volunteers" from Republican and Loyalist militias should be cool comfort to paramilitary organisations, who are unlikely to have the capabilities to operate with the ruthless efficiency of yesteryear.

The other factor in their dwindling capacity, as observed long ago by UVF leader Gusty Spence, is "rust" – the substantial armaments that were not decommissioned would age as much as those that operated them.

#### **A POLITICAL FUTURE?**

All major political parties in the Irish Republic have roots in Sinn Féin (formed in 1905), but last November's Dáil (parliamentary) elections for the second successive time saw an anti-SF coalition block them from forming a minority government.

The Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of the incumbent coalition government claimed as many as 80% of immigrants arriving in the Republic were crossing over from Northern Ireland.

Whilst Unionists took that as traditional "Brit-bashing", it was Sinn Féin that held the position of First Minister of Northern Ireland and held similar ambition for the office of Taoiseach of the Irish Republic.

At the time of writing, it is suggested Sinn Féin are lobbying for the post of President of the Republic.



In an election which saw a large number of independent and far-right candidates amid increasing concern over immigration, Sinn Féin was and is targeted with far-right vitriol, due to their perceived liberal policies on immigration and their role in administering what is considered an occupied area of their country.

Sinn Féin is not the sole political party to harbour ambitions for a United Ireland – all parties do. However, for much of its existence, SF was abstentionist – refusing to take seats in the Irish or British parliaments to instead pursue a role subservient to the IRA. As a result, some portray Sinn Féin as cosmopolitan northerners. They are however, the largest party either side of the border.

Sinn Féin and the IRA modified their strategy during the 1980s, with an "Armalite in one hand and a ballot box in the other." Loyalists (and Unionists) contend their armed response to the IRA and the wider nationalist community was a significant reason for the IRA's disarmament, and the subsequent peace agreement.

Despite premature claims of victory, a united Ireland is as-yet undetermined. There is no agreed-upon model of what a United Ireland would look like or cost, both in financial terms and, inevitably, lives lost. A "border poll" which the PUL decry is part of no deal on the future of Northern Ireland is mooted by some in Sinn Fein as far away – or as close as ten years away.

There remains much work to do on both sides of the border. Similarly, Unionists and Loyalists could do more to allay concern about their immoveable and hard-line positions in a continuation of shared future in Northern Ireland.

Loyalists are concerned that their previous privileges and numerical advantages have evaporated. Many of them would prefer a smaller state with no Irish or Irish nationalist input.

Absent sensible options, this could become their Stalingrad option: abandoning burnt territory to the advancing enemy.

To our knowledge, this has been a privately considered

option for over five years. Border polls, electoral defeats and demographic shortening will make no difference to those who simply will not concede to the inevitable march of time.

In Belfast and the surrounds, those who now join Loyalist paramilitary groups do so for myriad reasons – some are far from the heroic depictions of those who took up arms before them. It is currently due to an ugly stalemate for Unionism and Loyalism that it still articulates their powerless political position through the lens of violence.

In September the Northern Irish education minister Paul Givan was "summonsed" to a meeting with the UDA and UVF's mouthpiece, the Loyalist Communities Council (LCC). Ignoring advice from his own officials, he met with the LCC at Parliament Buildings.

The LCC Chairman "reported the lack of community support for an Irish Medium [language] school in East Belfast" which was "causing polarity and volatility in the community". No doubt the DUP minister will have been aware the "polarity and volatility" was the work of the UDA and the UVF represented in front of him.

#### **FASCIST FRENEMIES**

After twenty years reporting from Northern Ireland, it feels like a soap opera that does not know when or how to end. But the revenue keeps pouring in, and the plot thickens beyond belief.

Both the UVF and the UDA – despite the obligatory denials afterwards – were involved in last August's Belfast anti-immigration riots, organised after the horrific murders of three children in Southport.

But not every racist realised their rioting dreams. A riot planned to run simultaneously in Coleraine by the self-proclaimed former leader of the National Front attracted only one person – the organiser himself. Mark Brown, a 37-year-old recidivist criminal and racist, was arrested and his plan curtailed after locals were warned off attending by a local councillor from the UVF-aligned Progressive Unionist Party (PUP).

After expressing his own concerns about immigration, the councillor said, "Those of you who call yourselves Loyalists do not get involved with neo-Nazis; to do so betrays everything we hold dear." Adding insult to Brown's arrest in Coleraine, he was later arrested for threatening to harm a woman.

In Belfast, far-right and fascist activists appeared from the Irish Republic, standing shoulder to shoulder with organisations historically hostile to them – the National Front, Blood & Honour and British Movement. Paul Golding's Britain First have been pushed out of the province.

Whilst some fascists took the opportunity to rekindle links in Nationalist and Republican areas of Belfast, far-right activists from the Republic caused outrage at home by doing the unthinkable and attending a Loyalist drinking den with a convicted sectarian murderer from the UDA.

In Nationalist parts of Belfast, stickers and graffiti from "Republicans against Antifa" have appeared, but the well-publicised links between Irish fascists and sectarian Loyalist murder squads have strained further advances.

## ULSTER DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

The UDA's mainstream faction – primarily in south and east Belfast – continues to frustrate supporters by "transitioning", keeping members on a tight leash of ceremonial parades and cleaning duties.

This was until the August anti-immigration riots hit south Belfast UDA's heartland of Sandy Row. Residents reported local UDA commanders out on the streets encouraging rioting that saw foreign-owned businesses (purportedly under UDA protection) burnt and police officers injured.

The UDA has interests on the Row, including the Belfast South Community Resources (BSCR), run by convicted Loyalist murderer Garnet Busby.

The group, for which UDA Brigadier Jackie McDonald once served as "development officer", has raked in over £1m of taxpayer cash and charitable income in the past two years. It rents offices out to the DUP, of whom McDonald has been a long-time supporter.

An understandably volatile McDonald was driven to Sandy Row the day after the rioting to read the riot act to local UDA members. Luckily, the far-right activists from Dublin had gone home.

What happens to the UDA when the 77-year-old "Don" retires is unclear. Not only is McDonald a significant "earner" for the UDA, he has also led the group through violent feuds, internal and otherwise. It was McDonald who exiled rival UDA leader Johnny Adair to Scotland in 2003.

The UDA continued to splinter last year in the large areas of "territory" no longer under the leadership of McDonald's "mainstream" faction. So violent have the "renegade" UDAs become that some UDA "companies" (in the military parlance) have approached McDonald and asked to be readmitted to the mainstream faction. Some groups and individuals from areas like Shankill and South Antrim have navigated the UDA's strict rules on leaving by switching to paying their subs and membership dues to McDonald's leadership.

McDonald's UDA is a significant animal to the other "five families". But this did not stop South Belfast UDA attempting to murder an associate from Sandy Row in a dispute apparently linked to drugs and guns.

Another significant UDA Brigadier, Gary Fisher of South East Antrim Brigade, stood down last year. Widely considered to be a gang of cut-throat drug dealers, the group's annual show of strength – held on Remembrance Sunday – showed how much it has splintered. Several embarrassments hit the group last year – from convicted sex offenders in their ranks to one senior member trading drugs for sex with younger women.

Many of its aging leading lights now live in the warmer climes of Europe with the proceeds of their drugdealing and the benefit of Irish (EU) passports.



## ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE (UVF)

If 2023 was an *annus horribilis*, 2024 was hardly its *annus mirabilis*. What concerns the long-term incumbent leaders of the UVF nowadays appears to be leaving a legacy matching that of the original Ulster Volunteer Force, on whose honour they squat.

The UVF is a long way from when the likes of Gusty Spence and David Ervine could give a semblance of reasoning for their existence.

Both men – former prisoners who led the UVF and operated in its political wing – would be shocked to see the UVF still functioning as a paramilitary organisation, even if it does so with substantial funding and government-paid jobs for the boys. Like the UDA, the UVF is an illegal organisation with something like 4,000 members.

Those members are divided into two groups – military and welfare (fundraising) – and plagued by the same drug-dealing and criminality it claims to reject.

Having removed the leadership of the criminal gang using its name in East Belfast last year, the UVF launched a campaign against money-lenders. They patched up a feud with the UDA over a borrowed pistol, and allegedly ambushed a drug gang sent from Dublin. All of which, ostensibly, appears relatively wholesome. Their controversial "Prepared for War" wall was also blown down after twenty years, during the appropriately named Storm Darragh.

Alleged chief of staff of the UVF John Graham has been in post since 1976. His alleged deputy, Harry "Harmless" Stockman, has been in post intermittently for slightly less time.

At Graham's behest, Stockman has been searching inside the UVF for a suitable replacement for Graham, someone who can lead the UVF into the future the pair envisage – a kind of British legion for retired killers.



Unfortunately for the UVF, the individual anointed by Stockman, "community worker" Winston "Winkie" Irvine, now faces jail for a bungled arms exchange. Irvine is also accused of being behind the faux bomb attack on the visiting Irish foreign minister in 2022.

Despite the charges hanging over him, Irvine was still welcomed as an organiser of 1,500 UVF

personnel ordered onto buses on the Shankill Road in West Belfast and other places across Northern Ireland into East Belfast last June, to make a point to the former UVF leadership.

The intimidating display was the largest paramilitary "turn out" Northern Ireland has seen for years. As the Newtownards Road was brought to a standstill, unsubstantiated rumours persisted of a possible armed showdown.

UVF attacks and threats against drug dealers on the Shankill Road late in the year were linked to the legal issues facing "Winkie". UVF sources claim Irvine's paramilitary friends from "B Company" were behind them.

Irvine, who has a degree courtesy of a funding grant from the Irish government, is now accused by some in the UVF of having been an agent of the British government.

Such claims are impossible to verify, and despite spectacular courtroom shenanigans from Irivine's barrister, promises of an explosive statement never eventuated and Irvine meekly pled guilty to the gun charges last December.

Like the UDA's mainstream leadership, the UVF convey much of their thinking these days through the paramilitary thesaurus that is the unelected Loyalist Communities Council.

For now, there seems to be no future for them other than being tied to the uncertainty of their bloody past.





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