

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article9275>



Britain

Notes on the historic rise of the far right in Britain

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP610 - November 2025 -

Publication date: Saturday 22 November 2025

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Against the backdrop of the bankruptcy of the historic two-party system, continued social brutalization, and after years of state racism and complicity in genocide, various shades of the British far right are now securing an unprecedented mass audience, which crystallized during a demonstration in London that brought together 150,000 demonstrators in London at the call of an avowed Islamophobic fascist. Fossil fuel interests, armaments, tax evasion and Israelism: the first benchmarks for understanding this evolution.

On 13 September 2025, a demonstration called by a notorious figure of the English fascist far right, Tommy Robinson (Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, his real name) brought together between 110,000 and 150,000 people in London. By its scale, unprecedented in Britain, this event marks a threshold of the audience of the far right — its mobilizing themes and affects — and of the fascist resurgence on an international scale.

Among the various factors and temporalities to be taken into account, one thinks of the historical trajectory of some twenty years in which the episode is part and comes to be a milestone: the racist focus on immigration owes little to the representatives of the far right itself and much to the violence of political and media discourse and to an ever more aggressively “hostile” legislative inflation for about fifteen years. It should be made clear from the outset that Labour's responsibilities in this area from the end of the 2000s onwards were immense. Then we think of the political situation, both national and international, of which the demonstration of 13 September is a crystallisation: the deep crisis of the forces of the historic two-party system (Labour and the Conservatives), the audience for the far-right Reform UK led by Nigel Farage and Richard Tice, and the centrality of the Palestinian question and the genocide, against a backdrop of uninterrupted social degradation.

But to begin with, an overview of the personnel assembled and its main themes — as predictable as they may be — seems necessary. We will then draw attention to some, at least, of the material conditions of the event; the forces and resources which determine its possibility, the figures, and which define its content and expression.

Placed under the banner of “freedom of expression,” in other words, pluralist and democratic common sense, the event brought together a number of factions of the British far right, but also European, Australian, and American. The participants were able to hear speeches by Elon Musk and Éric Zemmour (accompanied by Jean Messiha), but also Petr Bystron for the AfD, and the Dutch Christian far rightist Eva Vlaardingerbroek (one million followers on X, more than 390,000 on Instagram and present on Fox news, GB news, and the online outlets of the far-right Sweden Democrats party, among others).

Also invited were the New Zealand Pentecostal Christian fundamentalist Brian Tamaki, convinced that the pandemic of 2020-22 or Hurricane Gabrielle were so many divine punishments for our wanderings away from God, between pornography, gay rights and abortion; the Israeli-Australian Avi Yemini, a former member of the Israeli army, a notorious provocateur who during a demonstration against the imprisonment of Robinson in 2018, declared himself “the world's proudest Jewish Nazi”, Ezra Levant, founder of the Rebel News website and known as the “Canadian Steve Bannon”, and the British Katie Hopkins, regularly spotted alongside Robinson, a once-familiar mainstream media personality for whom asylum seekers are “cockroaches” while “our towns are festering sores, plagued by swarms of migrants and asylum seekers, shelling out benefits like Monopoly money”. Other characters of a similar kind, from Spain, Belgium, Ireland, or Denmark, were invited to offer their contribution.

The ideological matrix of the far right

Tommy Robinson, who initiated the 13 September demonstration, has become the focal point of this vast ultra-conservative and fascist movement nourished by a powerful victimhood imaginary whose martyrology now reserves a central place for him. Far from having been disqualified and marginalised by his past as a hooligan, a member of a notorious neo-Nazi organisation (British National Party from 2004 to 2005) and then the founder of an ultra-nationalist and Islamophobic organisation (English Defence League, EDL, from 2009 to 2013), Robinson has achieved the status of an exemplary incarnation of a victim of the system. A cheeky character of modest origins, abandoned by his father at the age of two, he has seen his rich career as a repeat offender (between expulsion from social networks for incitement to hatred and five prison stays for passport fraud, obstruction of justice, assaults, possession of drugs, mortgage fraud) turn into a title of bravery and glory in the face of the evil that is both oppressive and occult of a “system” whose crimes he is now revealing.

According to this version of things, the government is repressing freedom of expression (“free speech”) in order to prevent its role in the “great replacement,” “uncontrolled immigration” and the extinction of “Western civilization,” “the Islamization of our societies” and the threat of generalized “jihad.” A nightmarish vision concentrates the horror of this secret exterminatory logic of which “we” are the despised and ignored victims: “the rape of our daughters” by migrants accused not only of sexual assault on minors, but even worse, of organizing networks (grooming gangs) for the sexual exploitation of minors.

It is worth dwelling, even if too briefly, on this motif of “rape” (“of our daughters”). To begin with, there is an old panic in the face of racial mixing propagated by the non-white, savage and insatiable foreigner — many women, many children — who are incompletely civilized and, in fact, have remained in a more or less anomic state of nature and destructive of our norms. This fantastical character of the most classic racist imagination, proto-animal and presumed to be chronically overnumbered, would supposedly migrate to enjoy without limit or scruple the largesse of a national-social state to which he would never have contributed. While the brave and loyal taxpayer accepts various privations (and must be content with the distant promise of enjoyment dangled by a huge pornographic industry, from the front pages of the daily press with a large circulation), the migrant profiteer is then guilty of the general “civilizational collapse.”

It should be noted that neither Robinson nor Musk, nor Zemmour, nor Bystron, manage to refer, even in a cosmetic and opportunistic way, to which concrete social dimension of the problem could be displaced on the “civilizational” terrain. Typically, this is a case of fantastical avoidance and recoding of a truly terrible reality; the systemic neglect and abuse of millions of children in the United Kingdom, most often suffering in the silence of words they do not have, the impoverishment of all protection, care and follow-up structures, and exposed to a whole repertoire of sexual abuse and violence, a dark continent of which the dedicated organizations claim to perceive only the small emergent area. [1]

This imaginary of “rape” (and all its dark charge of repressed appetites) is thus that of a primitive jouissance at the origin of the “civilizational” collapse to which “multiculturalism” is working. It goes without saying that it remains — and must remain — disconnected from any issue of male domination, criticism of patriarchy and gender violence in order to be recoded against critical feminist thought (domestic, sexual and sexist violence — including rape — feminicide, socio-sexual relegation or the violence of child poverty that befalls millions of “our daughters” never seem to have the same rank as a mobilizer of affects here — and in truth, here do not exist, or no longer exist, at the end of what bears the features of a sadistic voyeuristic erotic reconfiguration that also seems to presume a certain fatality of rape in the last instance).

In this perspective, the “multiculturalist” left, feminists and anti-racists, as soon as they question the protective authority of fathers, brothers and husbands (over “our daughters”), and as soon as they defend the rights of migrants, are attributed a direct responsibility in the “social, moral and civilizational disaster”. Or, to quote Robinson in his video “The Rape of Britain: Part One”: “No country in the world is unaware that our government, our social services, and our police forces are sacrificing a generation of our daughters at the hands [sic] of the altar of multiculturalism [...];

There are still young girls, in every city and every big city, who are taken from us, taken from their mothers, as sex slaves at the hands of Islamic gangs.” This same motif can be found almost word for word in the intervention of Petr Bystron, of the AfD, and his defence of “our struggle” in Europe “for 2000 years”: “We don’t want our daughters, our sisters, to be raped. We don’t want our brothers, our friends, to be stabbed when they defend them.”

Elon Musk, in giant screen version, “clarified” the fundamental problem in his own way: “what I see happening here is a destruction of Britain, initially a slow erosion but rapidly increasing erosion of Britain with massive uncontrolled migration. A failure by the government to protect innocent people, including children who are getting gang raped. It’s unreal.”

For Musk, “there’s so many on the left that want to just crush debate and put people in prison just for talking, as you [Robinson] were, just for speaking their mind.” And in addition to how “the government did nothing and tried to hide it – they tried to hide these horrific crimes” there’s the violence of the left, designated as responsible for the assassination of Charlie Kirk three days earlier in the United States: “The left is the party of murder and celebrating murder. I mean, let that sink in for a minute. That’s who we’re dealing with here.”

We understand then, if it were not clear enough, that it is against the “woke mind virus” and its logic of “cancelling” terror (to “prevent debate and put people in prison”) that the banner of “free speech” has been unfurled, as a perfect This is evident after several years of generalized anti-woke political and media moral panic, and three days after the assassination of Charlie Kirk, attributed to this same “murder party”.

In the conclusion of this exchange, Musk confirms Robinson’s idea that the left is the occult force capable of controlling governments, and of organizing mass migrations from which it would then draw electorates that it would otherwise be unable to gather among the “authentically” national populations. “There’s a massive incentive on the left to import voters. So, if they can’t convince their nation to vote for them, they’re going to import people from other nations to vote for them... thus depriving the citizens of their democratic power. It’s really a voter importation thing.”

Here, more or less term for term, we find the classically anti-Semitic conspiracy imputations – but for someone who uses the Nazi salute, this cannot really be surprising – directed by the Hungarian far right against George Soros in 2017: Soros, the liberal “Jewish financier” supposedly working for the dissolution of national identities by putting his fortune at the service of a vast manipulation of migrants to Europe. This same motive, always accompanied by the quick but explicit reference to George Soros, is at the heart of a long interview offered on the far right and ardently pro-Israel GB News channel.

It should be remembered that this same victimhood of the “invasion” is the one that animated the neo-Nazi perpetrator of the Pittsburgh synagogue massacre in October 2018 (eleven dead). For the killer, Robert Bowers, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) was responsible for the arrival of Central American migrants and “evil Muslims,” which “likes to bring in invaders who kill people from here. I’m not going to stand by and watch my people being slaughtered.” The delusional justifications for the mass killings perpetrated by Anders Brevik in Norway in 2011 on young left-wing activists (71 dead) and by Brenton Tarrant in a mosque in New Zealand in 2019 (51 dead), were no different.

The origins of British racism

We can remain brief on the origin of these rhetorical figures and motifs. They have a long tradition in the history of ethno-nationalist paranoias. But above all, they have a history of recent and incessant activation by the political forces of the British two-party system over the last twenty years. In this respect, and as has already been indicated,

Labour social democracy has left behind a uniformly toxic legacy since the 2000s, between the validation of the neo-Nazi British National Party's "just concerns" in terms of the allocation of social housing and the lexicon of the "invasion" and "submersion" of the schools by the children of migrants and asylum seekers. This language has been promoted by ministers (Labour Home Secretaries) in office. In 2010, Labour's election programme devoted a section to "crime and immigration: strengthening our territories, protecting our borders" to prepare "the next stage of national renewal". In 2015, the merchandizing of the party's conference offered mugs with the inscription: "Controls on immigration: I'm voting labour".

This endless catalogue of nationalist and racist one-upmanship reached a new critical threshold when the Labour prime minister since June 2024, Sir Keir Starmer, a staunch Zionist and avowed supporter of the Palestinian genocide, hastened to express the first tribute to the American racist ideologue, Charlie Kirk. It should be noted that the condolences of Starmer and Kemi Badenoch (leader of the conservative opposition) also focused on the question of "freedom of expression" in the name of which openly racist and sexist remarks and the obscurantism that inspires them must have their place in the public debate (which cannot be applied to denunciations of the genocide and Palestinian solidarity, as we have had ample opportunity to understand).

In the aftermath of Kirk's death, and on the eve of the "freedom of speech" demonstration called by Tommy Robinson, Badenoch declared: "The murder of Charlie Kirk is a blow to everything that Western civilization stands for: open, vigorous debate and peaceful protest." For Boris Johnson, Kirk was nothing less than "a shining martyr for freedom of expression."

Three weeks later, Badenoch announced the "hardest border closure plan Britain has ever seen," which included withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the repeal of the Human Rights Act of 1998.

In this way, in Britain, the various shades of the far right can continue to content themselves with continuing and prospering the work of political formations that have long been hegemonic and are now both in the grip of a crisis of legitimacy of unprecedented gravity. The debt is therefore great to the Labour-Tory tandem, its multi-recidivist anti-foreigner legislation, its attacks on civil liberties, its "anti-woke" moral panic, its genocidal complicity and normalization.

This is perfectly reflected, among other things, in the mediocrity of these far-right propagandists. The exchange between Robinson and Musk, the interventions of Zemmour or Bystron have no rhetorical charm, not even the slightest danger, even, of any rhetorical charm. In this respect, 13 September carries with it the possibility of a pleasure in a nullity of which the imaginary of the "rape of our daughters and our sisters" could be an attempt at correction as sordid as it is desperate. At this point, perhaps it should be admitted, rhetorical brutality devoid of the slightest sophistication, of skill, is sufficient as a manifestation of the sheer desire for the use of force, while the Trumpist ICE militias, the fascist exaltation of Israeli genocidal power, or the giant riots and rabbles in Britain and now Ireland, show the future.

Tech, fossilism, armaments, Israelism and the heyday of neofascism

The rise of the British far right manifests itself in two obvious ways. The demonstration of 13 September is one of them; the considerable lead in opinion polls for Nigel Farage's anti-immigration Reform UK party is another. Between Robinson and Farage is the false contradiction and the real complementarity that can exist between a delinquent-martyr who has long had no party other than his own online brand, and a notable determined to fit into an

institutional framework within which he can claim to embody a majority succession.

The first, Robinson, won the support of Musk, who himself broke with Trump, to the detriment of the second, the billionaire having judged Farage too “weak” on the issue of immigration.

The official far right is now divided between Reform UK (Farage) and Advance UK, a split from Reform UK led by Ben Habib, joined by Robinson since August 2025. But at this stage, their nuances can be considered minor in view of the scale and continuity of the forces now engaged in supporting this new political configuration.

Robinson, whose audience and wealth are linked to social networks and his sales of “manifest” books, owes Musk for having regained his “freedom of expression” on a new X account, owned by Musk, whom he also thanked for the payment of legal costs (not confirmed by Musk himself).

But it is to Israelism, among the most fanatical, that the former British neo-Nazi, converted into a “free speech martyr”, frenzied Islamophobe and unconditional admirer of Israel (for which he has declared himself ready to fight in the event of war), owes a large part of his prosperity.

His sentence to thirteen months in prison for illegally filming and posting on Facebook the trial of Muslims accused of sexual assault (hence the banner of “free speech” against a woke justice system won over to the “migratory invasion”), earned Robinson an international far-right campaign “Free Tommy” (relayed by many Russian accounts as well as by Trump himself), with the support of the pro-Russian right,

Israeli-American Daniel Pipes' ultra-Zionist Middle East Forum (MEF) paid for the legal costs and the organization of three demonstrations in support of Robinson at a cost of \$60,000.

The Gatestone Institute, a pro-Israel think tank, and the David Horowitz Freedom Center, a far-right organization that describes itself as a “school of political warfare” against “the fifth column,” have published articles in defence of Robinson. In addition, the Gatestone Institute and the MEF both benefit from the largesse of Nina Rosenwald, co-president of a financial investment firm (American Securities Management), who claims to be an “ardent Zionist” and is known as the “sugar mama of anti-Muslim hate.”

Earlier, tech billionaire Robert Shillman, a regular donor to pro-Israel institutions, hired Robinson by the Canadian far-right organization Rebel Media in 2017-2018, awarding him a scholarship estimated at around \$85,000 per year. This position was also accompanied by three assistant posts, each paid \$2,500 per month. Robinson's personal estate is estimated to be somewhere between £1 million and £3 million.

In October 2025, the verdict of a new trial was postponed following the official invitation extended to Robinson by the Israeli minister in charge of the diaspora and speaker of the Knesset, Amichai Chikli. There are many precedents of this kind, dating back to 2003 and the reception given by Ariel Sharon, then Prime Minister, to the neo-fascist Gianfranco Fini, an admirer of Mussolini and the apartheid wall then being built around the West Bank. However, the arrival of an influencer with no other title than that of an ex-Islamophobic hooligan is clearly a departure from the diplomatic decorum that was once de rigueur. The initiative, however, has sparked anger and incomprehension in Israel itself, and even in British Jewish community organizations, which are usually so loyal to Israel.

What place for Reform UK?

What about Reform UK and its leading figures? Farage, honorary chair, and Richard Tice, leader of Reform UK (which, unlike the other parties, has private company status), have distanced themselves from the “thug” Robinson. But like Robinson, Farage and Tice are the devoted and utterly servile relays of forces more determined than ever to do without standards and constraints that are far too cumbersome (fiscal, legal, environmental and so on), however weak or cosmetic they may be.

Farage (wealth estimated at between £3 million and £5 million) and Tice (£40 million and a tax-avoiding patriot), two authentic men of the people, both have their own programme on the conservative and Islamophobic channel, GB News, launched in 2021. In this context, both had plenty of time to challenge the reality of climate change, “absolute garbage,” according to Tice.

With this deep conviction, and for the good of all, the leaders of Reform UK defend the exploitation of Britain's gas potential, knowing that “we've got potentially hundreds of billions of energy treasure in the form of shale gas,” according to Tice. It would then be “grossly financially negligent to a criminal degree to leave that value underground and not to extract it.”

Combining actions with words, Reform UK MPs, in council assemblies where they have won a number of majority positions since the last local elections, decided to repeal carbon neutrality targets and eliminate references to the “climate emergency” that have been integrated into the orientations of such assemblies in recent years. Budgets were then reallocated to other priorities, while continuing to receive subsidies earmarked for energy transition policies. Recently initiated guidelines and policies in the counties of Durham, Staffordshire, Kent, Derbyshire, and West Northamptonshire have been annulled.

But this determination in the denial of climate change and the derailment of the few existing efforts in terms of energy transition corresponds strictly to what could be expected from a “party” almost entirely in the hands of the fossil fuel industry. An investigation published in the *New York Times* in March 2025 showed that of the £4.75 million obtained in 2024 by Reform UK, 40% came from individuals known to have “openly disputed the reality of climate change, or from holders of investments in fossil fuels and other polluting industries”.

Other researchers have shown, for the DeSmog website, that between December 2019 and June 2024, Reform UK collected more than £2.3 million from oil and gas interests and climate sceptic figures, including, for example, Terence Mordaunt, director of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, an organization at the forefront of challenging work on climate science. This amount corresponded to 92% of total donations to the Reform UK business party. Most of these contributions also come from accounts registered in tax havens.

But the conflict of interest can be even more caricatural; Tice and Farage are employees of a chain, GB News, whose owner, Paul Marshall, owns £1.8 billion in shares in the fossil fuel sector, including Shell, Chevron, Equinor (Norway) and more than a hundred others. The DeSmog investigation also showed that in 2022, a third of GB News anchors had openly questioned climate work and half had denounced climate initiatives.

Reform UK is also the recipient of donations from an arms company, QinetiQ, which is a major beneficiary of the increase in state spending in the defence sector. “80% of QinetiQ's revenues related to armaments come from British taxpayers alone,” according to the *Byline Times*, a windfall of public money which the company's main shareholder, Christopher Harborne, redirects in part to the benefit of Reform UK, of which he is the main financier. Harborne donated nearly £14 million to Reform UK between 2019 and 2024, and paid for Farage's two recent visits to Trump, in 2024 and 2025 at a total cost of nearly £60,000.

Between Robinson and Farage-Tice, we understand the whole issue and the meaning of “freedom of expression”: to

maintain anti-migrant moral panics, by disrupting legal procedures if necessary, and to spread the myth of Islamization and the “rape” of the West; to be able to challenge climate research for the benefit of the fossil fuel lobby in the context of manifest conflicts of interest, and to defend all logics of oppression, up to the point of genocidal horror, by continuing to present oneself as a victim of feminist, anti-racist, or pro-Palestinian censorship, all in the service of the “freedom” of extraction, escape, exploitation, pollution and manipulation, conditions for the “expression” of an absolute capital.

Various components of the British far right could therefore be able to take over from the discredited parties, those who have made their bed but who still intend to ensure their survival with new anti-refugee, Islamophobic one-upmanship, and reformist sadism as proof of managerial credibility: the hell of cruelty and indifference inflicted on the children of Gaza comes from afar.

These are undoubtedly the symptoms of the transition from a decrepit parliamentary neoliberalism to the oligarchic order which is now on the way to reaching its full political fulfilment. In which case, it must be admitted, defending this indefensible requires a very great “freedom of expression”, purely fabricated, unencumbered by a justice system that is still capable of independence, a media and a press that are still free, scientific research that still assumes its critical vocation, and by any political demand for equality.

There is some good news, however, to emerge from the ongoing shipwreck of the parties that have dominated British political life until now: the deep, right-wing and sectarian Labourism, inspiring an almost universal disgust, may finally give a real chance to the emergence of a left-wing, socialist force, this time no longer condemned to the kind of peripheral and ephemeral agitation in which so much enthusiasm and momentum have inevitably ended up running out of steam and withering away until now. It remains to be seen, and to follow, the social democratic revival represented by the British Greens and, even more, what could become of Your Party, launched by MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana, whose announcement alone during the summer received nearly a million messages of support and membership requests. Enough to do. Well, maybe.

Translated by International Viewpoint from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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[1] Read the National Audit Office report, “Pressures on Children Social Care,” 2019. Also, the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse report, S. Kewley and K. Karsna, “Child Sexual Abuse in 2023/24: Trends in Official Data,” June 2025. According to the two authors, “The number of children who are victims of sexual abuse is much higher than what is brought to the attention of public bodies. Based on available survey data, we estimate that at least one in 10 children in England and Wales are sexually abused before the age of 16 (Karsna and Kelly, 2021). According to a low estimate, the number of children who are victims of sexual abuse in a year is around 500,000.” p.12.