

# “Turning Point UK:” A far-right offensive on British campuses

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A lavishly financed political offensive has been launched against students and young people by an alliance of Conservative government “hard Brexiteers” and the American far-right.

Turning Point UK (TPUK) was founded earlier this year and has branches at the universities of Sussex, Oxford, St Andrews, York, Warwick and Nottingham as well as King’s College London, University College London, the London School of Economics and University of the Arts London.

It has posted five full-time job vacancies for “Field Representatives,” responsible for managing Glasgow, Edinburgh and Belfast; Liverpool, Leeds and Manchester; Nottingham and Birmingham; London and Cambridge; Bristol, Oxford, Brighton and Cardiff. Launch events—debates on “controversial topics”—are planned for London (March 10), Cambridge (March 11), Sheffield (March 12) and Sussex (March 13).

The organisation’s purpose is given as “educating students and other young people on the values of free markets, limited government and personal responsibility.” Their promotion material is a naked defense of the capitalist system, declaring, “We seek to defend the structures of society that have both created one of the most competitive economies and oldest, most influential democracies in human history.”

This development speaks to the ruling class’s profound fear of growing anti-capitalist sentiment among young people. In 2018, a poll of the US population aged 18-29 found more people in favour of socialism than capitalism. A 2016 YouGov poll found the same for the UK. A survey of nearly one million people between the ages of 18 and 35, by the Union of European Broadcasters, found that more than half of young people in Europe would join a “large-scale uprising” against the present system.

This pronounced shift to the left, driven by the objective crisis of the failed capitalist system, stand in the way of the ruling class’s attempts to utilise universities as centres for the promotion of free-market and militarist ideology.

Immense financial and ideological resources are therefore being ploughed into a global right-wing counteroffensive, one which finds its highest expression in the actions of Professor Jörg Baberowski at Humboldt University in Berlin who engages in pro-Nazi apologetics. Recently the far-right Alternative for Germany parliamentarian Marc Jongen utilised Baberowski’s arguments in a speech in the German Bundestag (parliament).

TPUK states that it intends to defend its pro-capitalist ideology “against a dogmatic left-wing political climate, education system and radical Labour Party...”

Invoking an imagined persecuted constituency of right-wingers, it asks its target demographic, “Sick of snowflakes spouting nonsense? Fed up with Momentum [backers of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn] propaganda on your newsfeed? Let down by the left-wing bias of your university? If you’re being silenced for your conservative opinions or entrepreneurial spirit, don’t sit down and shut up...”

This appeal to popular support is a fraud. There is no “grassroots” movement of young people in favour of the social system destroying their living standards, limiting their life chances and threatening them with war. No one is rallying to the cause of an organisation which tweets such asinine idiocies as “Socialism = slavery. Capitalism = freedom.”

A cursory check of its leading personnel exposes TPUK as a top-down operation of the Tory right, with the substantial backing of Turning Point’s US-based parent organisation and its fascist supporters.

One of TPUK's leaders is George Farmer, a former member of the elitist Bullingdon Club and social secretary of the Oxford University Conservative Association. He is the son of multi-millionaire former Conservative party treasurer and major Tory donor, Lord Farmer, who spent most of his life as a financier in the City of London and its commodities market. Farmer co-founded the Red Kite hedge fund, which by 2017 had about \$2 billion of assets under management, specialising in trading physical copper, mine finance and mining equities.

The *Telegraph* noted that Farmer upped his donations to the Tories under David Cameron "to regular cheques of around £250,000 a quarter," when the Tories took seriously proposals from the Centre for Social Justice right-wing think tank that advocated "an overhaul of the welfare system to simplify the benefits in a move that it says could save £3.4bn a year."

George Farmer, listed as an employee of Red Kite, paid £50,000 last year to dine with Prime Minister Theresa May and other senior Tories, and has donated nearly £100,000 to the party.

Other leading figures in TPUK are major players in the Brexit campaign: Steve Edgington, Chief Digital Strategist at Leave Means Leave, Darren Grimes, founder of BeLeave and BrexitCentral, and Tom Harwood, leader of the youth wing of Vote Leave. Harwood is also a reporter at the right-wing blog, Guido Fawkes, and helped to spearhead the disaffiliation campaign against the National Union of Students in 2016.

The Twitter account of Dominique Samuels boasts of "her part in student politics... leading the campaign against Working Class Officers in students' unions." She states in a video on the TPUK web site, "I don't believe the way to solve the poor's ills is class war or seizing the means of production, et cetera."

Vocal political support has been offered TPUK by leading Tory Brexiteer MPs Jacob Rees Mogg and Priti Patel and by former UK Independence Party leader, Nigel Farage. Mogg tweeted, "The left has no monopoly on the 'young'," while Patel gushed, "A new generation standing up for political & economic freedoms & Conservative values & beliefs. Fantastic!"

Fellow Tory MPs Chris Green, Steve Baker, Anne Marie-Trevelyan and Bernard Jenkin followed suit, as did LBC Radio presenter Nick Ferrari and former Army

Colonel Richard Kemp. Green participated in a Blairite pro-Zionist rally in Manchester last September, where he declared, "If the Labour members of parliament cannot eject him because he was put in his place by the membership," then Labour MPs and councilors must "challenge Jeremy Corbyn and eject him." Failing that, "we need to have a new party."

Kemp is one of several serving and former Army officers to attack Corbyn as part of concerted and ominous interventions by the military into political affairs. In 2017, in response to Corbyn's statements that "any use of nuclear weapons is a disaster for the whole world," he said, "Quite literally if Jeremy Corbyn as prime minister enacted the policies he describes, he would have blood on his hands... he must never be elected to lead this country."

As well as securing funding from their own deep pockets, TPUK can draw on the resources and experience of Turning Point USA (TPUSA), which received \$5 million in donations in 2016—mostly from Republican-aligned billionaires.

Their activities include running a McCarthy-style "Professor Watchlist," targeting academics accused of "left-wing bias" —some of whom have received death threats as a result. According to TPUSA's Heartland Regional Director, "a huge part of what Turning Point does... is student government races." Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been channeled into right-wing candidates for student offices in the US.

Present at TPUK's founding event, hosted at the Royal Automobile private members club in London, were James Dellingle and Paul Joseph Watson. Dellingle is the London editor of the fascistic *Breitbart News*, while Watson is an editor at InfoWars, run by the far-right conspiracy theorist, Alex Jones.

The involvement of these forces marks a step-change in the political fight on the campuses. Just as in Germany, the reactionary aims of the ruling class find concrete expression in the cultivation of the most right-wing forces on campus and a growing intersection between the Conservative and fascistic right.



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