

# Reform UK lurches right, outlines planned authoritarian, militarist, austerity government

Robert Stevens  
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Reform UK's conference held last week in Birmingham was a declaration to Britain's ruling elite that the far-right party is ready to take office as a militarist, austerity-imposing government.

The centrepiece was the appearance of Jordan Bardella, president of France's fascist National Rally (NR), and the signing on stage of an anti-immigration memorandum. Reform leader Nigel Farage said NR leader Marine Le Pen and Bardella were "odds-on favourites" for the 2027 Presidential elections, requiring "a genuine new *entente cordiale* between our parties and our countries."

The agreement commits a Reform government to intercepting small boats of migrants in British waters and returning them to France. Bardella denounced French President Emmanuel Macron for treating mass migration as "not a problem" but "a project," describing the deal as "the beginning of the cooperation" with Reform.

The conference was also opened to leaders of fascist mobs. Ryan Bridge, co-founder of Raise the Colours, was invited while still on bail. This week he was charged with charged with 14 offences, including racially aggravated harassment, threatening behaviour and assault.

Bridge's campaign saw thousands of Union flag and St George's flags hung on lampposts and public buildings last year, as mobs laid siege to hotels housing asylum seekers. At a session hosted by GB News presenter Jeremy Kyle, Farage praised Bridge's efforts, saying, "If we can help you legally, we will."

What Reform intends for its political opponents on the left was shown in the hall, where hecklers were dragged out four times. One young woman was manhandled to the ground by punch-throwing delegates, dragged by the hair, and struck by a man with a walking stick—all while Farage grinned on stage.

The following day, senior Reform figure Robert Jenrick mocked her on Sky News: "Oh boohoo... a far-left protester goes into a party conference, tries to wreck the leader's speech, and cries foul if a pensioner knocks her over the head with their Zimmer frame, I mean, come on, get a life." Nadine Dorries, another former Conservative cabinet minister who defected to

Reform, told a fringe meeting that protesters "are not really going to get gentle treatment".

This conference was described by Channel 4 News as a "high-end corporate charm offensive." In a first, one day was reserved as "Business Day", opening with a closed session between Reform MPs and business leaders. Executives paid £495 for the opportunity and a separate £395 for an evening dinner.

Among the businesses represented were Vodafone, EE, Heathrow and JCB, the latter chaired by Lord Bamford who has given Reform £200,000. Meta's public policy director spoke alongside Reform MP Danny Kruger, head of the party's "preparation for government" unit, and Google and TikTok ran sessions. Fuels Industry UK, whose members include BP, Shell and ExxonMobil, hosted an energy reception. Since 2019, Reform UK has received more than £24 million from donors with financial interests in fossil fuels—67 percent of its funding, according to DeSmog.

The conference was presented in the media as being one in which Reform would attempt a "reset" after a series of financial scandals. In an attempt to cast himself as a "man of the people" up against a hostile "establishment", Farage even stood down as an MP in July to then contest, and win, his seat again with none of the major parties standing against him.

As the conference opened, another scandal broke with Channel 4 News broadcasting undercover footage, filmed by Verbatim Investigations, showing two of Farage's closest lieutenants discussing how to secure foreign donations. Foreign funding, including donations in kind, is illegal.

The two people involved were Farage's chief of staff and longstanding aide Dan Jukes, and Reform's head of policy James Orr, a Cambridge academic and confidant of US Vice President JD Vance. Reporters posed as an American financier and his UK-based son. Jukes suggested the son act as registered donor (floating £500,000), while the money came from his father. Reform had separately received £32,500 worth of polling paid for by the same donor.

Farage is already undergoing parliamentary inquiries over an undeclared £5 million gift from crypto financier Christopher

Harborne and undisclosed support from convicted fraudster George Cottrell.

While Jukes and Orr stood down, Reform insisted it had broken no law. Farage dismissed the footage as “loose pub talk”, declaring the political establishment was “scared of us.”

Reform pledged around £80 billion in cuts annually by the end of a first Reform-led parliament: £50 billion from welfare, £10 billion from scrapping net zero policies, £8 billion from the civil service and £7.1 billion from foreign aid. Farage praised Jenrick’s plans to “slash benefit spending in a big way.”

In his speech, Jenrick told the ruling elite that Labour Prime Minister Andy Burnham could not deliver the level of attacks on the working class required to fund a vast increase in military spending because, “You’d have to cut benefits for migrants. You’d have to cut benefits for those choosing not to work. He won’t. You’d have to cut the foreign aid budget. He won’t. You’d have to scrap the net zero subsidies. He won’t. Well, we will.”

Jenrick added, “And I’ll tell you this: we won’t need a decade to do it.”

Responding to recent threats by the fascistic president of Argentina Javier Milei, Jenrick said he “would not for one minute think about taking our British sovereign territory in the Falkland Islands if Nigel Farage was our prime minister,” as the armed forces under Reform using “every lever of the British state” would “crush Argentina.”

He described Chancellor John Healey—who resigned as Keir Starmer’s defence secretary over inadequate military funding, before being installed in the Treasury by Starmer’s successor Burnham—as “the biggest fraud” for since offering the forces “nothing.” In August, Jenrick travelled to the US and told Vance that a Reform government would reach 3 percent of GDP in defence spending by 2030 and 3.5 percent by 2035, with £45 billion of savings already identified to fund it, mostly through cuts to welfare spending.

To get its agenda through, Farage pledged his party would declare a national emergency, pack the House of Lords second chamber, strip judges of recourse to the European Convention on Human Rights, and purge what it described as obstructive civil servants.

Section of the media welcomed Reform’s proposals. The *Sun* handed Farage an op-ed to outline his programme for office. The *Telegraph* hailed “the existential debate Britain needs,” calling the £80 billion pledge “pleasingly ambitious”. It noted that, as debt-servicing now exceeds the entire military budget, without cuts, “Britain will be unable to pay for its defences.”

Even those less overtly enthusiastic intervened to advise the would-be prime minister. The *Sunday Times* argued that Farage needed to add “substance” to his “style”, including by enlisting more government-experienced Tories.

Reform UK, like every party of the far-right, is a political cesspit—gathering what Trotsky described as “human dust”. But its rottenness will not determine whether it survives.

Every word at its conference was calculated to draw in leading figures within the Conservatives while consolidating a hardened far-right base, winning back support lost to Restore Britain—led by a former Reform leader, Rupert Lowe

The main figures around Farage—Jenrick, Suella Braverman, Lee Anderson, Zia Yusuf and Danny Kruger—were all recruited from the Tories, with Farage once a Tory member. The scandals around Reform’s funding and backers were of concern only to *Guardian* readers and have derailed neither Reform nor their future careers.

Immediately following the conference, masked fascists clothed all in black held anti-migrant protests blockading roads at Dover, with a another, violent protest in Portsmouth—both targeting recently arrived asylum seekers. These were organised by the Patriot Platform of Daniel “Tommo” Thomas, a convicted criminal and supporter of the fascist Tommy Robinson.

Farage and Jenrick criticised the blockade for being disruptive but were careful to endorse its cause. Jenrick said to the media, “Do I understand why people are extremely frustrated? Yes, absolutely... you saw at our conference Nigel Farage and Jordan Bardella signing an agreement which has the prospect of ending this once and for all.” Farage declared, “The scenes at Portsmouth are proof that the government isn’t taking this invasion seriously.”

The rise of Reform is part of an international phenomenon. Political representatives of almost a dozen countries attended Reform’s conference. On Sunday, the far-right Alternative for Germany was victorious in the German state of Saxony-Anhalt, doubling its vote since 2021. A far-right government is in power in Italy, with fascistic forces gathering strength in France and Spain.

The path for these forces has been laid by the repeated betrayals of the working class by the parties and organisations of the nominal “left”, including the trade union bureaucracies. Only a socialist internationalist programme of struggle against war, for democratic rights and a vast improvement in living standards can call a halt to the far-right. This must be fought for against all efforts by the pseudo-left groups such as the Socialist Workers Party and Revolutionary Communist Party to boost those responsible for the disaster, the Labour Party and the trade union leaders.



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