

The Class Character

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About Climate Vanguard

Climate Vanguard is a youth-led organisation empowering youth movements through radical political education.

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Introduction

The far right is on the march. Led by Trump’s MAGA movement in the US, the ruling classes have re-aligned behind far-right forces around the world, including Giorgia Meloni in Italy, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, Nayib Bukele in El Salvador, and Javier Milei in Argentina.

There are many powerful analyses of the far right. Vijay Prashad assesses “the intimate embrace between liberalism and the far right,” uncovering how liberalism paves the way towards fascism, especially in times of capitalist crisis.¹ Anti-colonial thinkers Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon also draw important links between fascism and colonialism. Césaire identifies fascism as a “boomerang effect” where colonial violence “returns home” to the metropole, while Fanon explains how colonial relations can create fascist dynamics within former colonies.² While these are important analyses, there is also a need to assess far-right forces as they manifest in particular time-place conditions.

In this brief, we take a closer look at the British far-right party Reform UK (Reform), including the class forces funding the party, the class location of its leadership, and the class composition of its base. Studying Reform’s class coalition provides direction for strategies to counter its rise.

Background

Reform emerged from a lineage of right-wing parties beginning with the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which was founded by Alan Sked in 1993 as a single-issue Eurosceptic pressure group. After years of local campaigns and media presence fomenting anti-migrant sentiment, UKIP gained enough support to pressure David Cameron into calling a referendum on EU membership in 2016.³ UKIP and its then leader, Nigel Farage, played an instrumental role in winning the referendum’s outcome (i.e. to leave the EU).

Without a clear purpose after the Brexit referendum passed, UKIP entered a slow decline. This was accelerated by its *rapprochement* with

former English Defense League leader Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (commonly known as Tommy Robinson).⁴ Key figures, including Farage, left UKIP and reconvened around the newly formed Brexit Party – an impactful, but short-lived project that died out once the UK officially left the EU in early 2020.

The remnants of the Brexit Party eventually relaunched in January 2021 as Reform UK. Under the leadership of Richard Tice, Reform struggled to break into popular consciousness, with some uptick in national support in early 2024. However, things changed in June 2024 with the return of Farage.

Farage brought his public profile and charisma to the heart of Reform's campaign, winning a stunning 14.3% of the vote and five Members of Parliament (MPs) in the July 2024 general election.⁵ Since then, Reform's popularity has only continued to rise. Reform is setting the political agenda on key issues, has over 240,000 members, and is topping the polls (consistently polling above 30%).⁶

The party's core policy priorities centre on restricting immigration, cutting regulations (especially climate policy), backing small businesses, helping small landlords and farmers, and attacking state bureaucracy.⁷

Following the typology developed by the Tricontinental Institute, Reform's political orientation aligns with the modern-day far right.⁸ It is also notable that while Reform is attempting to keep fascist extra-parliamentary groups in the UK at arm's length, the party is attracting their attention. Mark Collett, leader of the fascist group, Patriotic Alternative, has "urged his supporters to view Reform not as a competitor but a vehicle for advancing their aims."⁹



Figure 1: Nigel Farage, leader of Reform UK. Press Association/AP Images.

Reform's Funders

According to Electoral Commission data, Reform has received £7.7 million between January 2023 and September 2025 in large donations.^{10, a} The table below lists the top 10 Reform donors over this period, representing well over 50% of total donations to the party.

Top 10 Reform Donors (January 2023 to September 2025)

Donor	Amount	Sector
Richard Tice ^b	£1,553,000	Real estate
Fiona Cottrell	£750,000	Landed aristocracy, banking
Nick Candy	£500,000	Real estate
Zia Yusuf	£406,000	Banking, luxury concierge service
David Lilly	£374,000	Investment fund (mining & minerals)
Jeremy Hoskings	£265,000	Asset management (fossil fuels)
Bassim Haidar	£225,000	Telecommunications
First Corporate Consultants ^c	£200,000	Marine cargo industry

a Based on a membership of 260,000 people, Reform generates additional revenue of £2.6-£6.5 million a year (annual membership costs £25 or £10 for under-25s).

b This figure includes Richard Tice's donations via Britain Means Business Ltd. and Tisun Investments Ltd.

c Terence Mordaunt, owner of First Corporate Consultants, used to be the chair of the climate-skeptic think tank Global Warming Policy Foundation, which itself is funded by an oil-rich foundation.

Johan Christofferson ^d	£200,000	Private equity
Evan Management Ltd.	£200,000	Real estate

The sections of capital most represented among Reform’s top donors are rentier capital (e.g. real estate, investment funds, and private equity funds) and elements of extractive capital (e.g. fossil fuels). This is reflective of Reform’s policies to deregulate significant sections of the economy. Their manifesto includes broad promises to “slash red tape,” while also proposing specific policies to expand drilling licences in the North Sea, accelerate NHS privatisation, and liberalise cryptocurrency usage.¹¹

Ultimately, sections of capital support Reform because the party’s politics could enable them to be better represented vis-à-vis other sections of capital (e.g. national capital seeking an upper hand over transnational capital), as well as other factions simply seeking new frontiers of accumulation amidst a stagnating UK economy (e.g. rentier capital).¹²

It should also be noted that the top four donors are all part of Reform’s inner circle. Richard Tice is Reform’s deputy leader, Fiona Cottrell is the mother of George Cottrell – a long-time associate and advisor to Nigel Farage – Nick Candy is Reform’s treasurer, and Zia Yusuf is Reform’s policy lead.

While Reform has recently been able to attract large donations from sources beyond this inner group, the capitalist class is still waiting to see if Reform can evolve into a competent political force. For comparison, in the second quarter of 2025, Reform received £1.3 million in large donations, while Labour received £2.6 million and the Conservatives received £2.9 million.¹³

^d This figure includes Johan Christofferson’s donations via Greybull Capital.

Reform's Leadership

With an unusual structure that sits somewhere between political party and corporate start-up, Reform's leadership core is composed of a leader and deputy leader, a chairman and deputy chairman, a treasurer, a policy lead, and a six-person board.

Below, we look at the class position of the party's most influential figures.



Nigel Farage (Leader, MP)

Nigel Farage is Reform's leader and one of the party's five sitting MPs. Functionally, he also performs the role of party spokesperson, making regular media appearances and boasting 1.3 million followers on TikTok.¹⁴

Despite casting himself as a 'man of the people,' Nigel Farage is the son of a wealthy stockbroker, he was privately educated at Dulwich College, spent time as a City banker before stepping into politics, and is a multi-millionaire, making almost £1.2 million annually, mostly through media appearances.¹⁵



Richard Tice (Deputy Leader, MP)

Richard Tice is Reform's deputy leader, having previously occupied the position of party leader before Farage stepped in. He is also the party's largest donor.

Tice is the grandson of property mogul Bernard Sunley. He was privately educated at Uppingham School and has served as CEO of two commercial property investment firms. He has an estimated net worth of £40 million.¹⁶



Figure 2: Property Week.

Nick Candy (Treasurer)

Nick Candy was recruited by Nigel Farage to become Reform's treasurer in December 2024. While entering the post with extreme bravado and confidence, claiming he would "raise more money than any other political party" and that he had "a number of billionaires prepared to donate," his promises are yet to fully materialise – the source of some frustration within Reform.¹⁷ That said, Candy has himself become one of the party's leading donors.

Candy was privately educated at Epsom College and went on to become a major luxury property developer. Candy is worth an estimated £2 billion.¹⁸



Figure 3: Photo by Ben Whitley/PA.

Zia Yusuf (Policy Lead)

Zia Yusuf was Reform's chairman from July 2024 to June 2025, a position he stepped down from before returning to the party two days later as the head of Reform's Department of Government Efficiency. In October 2025, he gave up that post as well, now serving as the Reform's policy lead. Yusuf is often credited for "professionalising Reform."¹⁹ He is also one of Reform's top donors.

The son of two NHS workers, Yousuf received a scholarship to attend Hampton School in South London. He went on to become an executive director at Goldman Sachs and eventually co-founded a luxury concierge service, Velocity Black, which he sold in 2023 for £233 million.²⁰



David Bull (Chairman)

David Bull is a long time ally of Nigel Farage. He rose to political prominence in 2019 when he became a Member of European Parliament for the Brexit Party, and would go on to play a “key role” in the formation of Reform.²¹ He has previously served as Reform’s deputy leader and is now the party’s chairman. He is primarily tasked with strengthening the party’s volunteer base and “inspiring” its activists.²²

Bull was privately educated at Framlingham College and then trained as a doctor. However, he built his career as a prominent TV presenter before stepping into politics. He, too, is a multi-millionaire.

Faux Populism

Reform’s leadership is firmly rooted in the ruling class. Many were born into wealth, all were privately educated, all have occupied high-level positions in either the media or business, and all enjoy significant levels of wealth now.

In this sense, they are faux populists. While Farage declares Reform the “anti-establishment party” and Tice pronounces “we’re the party of the workers,” they are firmly committed to maintaining the system that props them up.²³ Despite their faux populism, it must be acknowledged that Reform has developed a popular base, so it’s worth investigating who they are and why they support the party.



Figure 4: Reform UK Conference. Getty Images.

Reform's Base

The petty bourgeoisie (i.e. owners of small and medium enterprises, or SMEs, the self-employed, and management personnel) are a foundational section of Reform's base.^e The party's taxation policy is especially geared towards gaining petty-bourgeois support, including a reduction of corporate tax from 25% to 15%, lifting the VAT threshold to £150,000, tax breaks for landlords, abolishing inheritance tax for estates under £2 million, and changes to income tax that disproportionately benefit earners in mid-high income brackets.²⁴

It is notable that the historic class dynamic of fascism involves "a tenuous alliance between monopoly capital and a mobilized petty bourgeoisie."²⁵ When sections of the ruling class feel that their hegemony is under threat, they galvanise the petty bourgeoisie against the liberal democratic state by playing on fears of social decline.

^e While "petty bourgeoisie" usually refers to a class below the capitalist class that own their own means of production (i.e. small business owners and self-employed people), management personnel should also be included, as they "have an economic status which ties them to capital and ties them to the workers." They too have a contradictory position, carrying the interests of both classes ([Michael McCreery, 1964](#)).

Members of the petty bourgeoisie have a dual existence; they own small-scale property, but not enough to have all work done by employees. In other words, they are themselves involved in the production process, unlike members of the bourgeoisie. This contradictory class location, squeezed between big capital and the working class, makes them especially susceptible to the type of politics described above.

Much like Thatcherism and the MAGA movement, Reform's centre of gravity is the frenzied fear of the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie falling into the working class.²⁶ This class base is "far more significant politically than it is demographically because of its higher voter turnout when compared to the working class."²⁷ Additionally, the UK has a particularly large number of SMEs (5.5 million), many of which are facing precarisation.²⁸

However, Reform's class coalition is more expansive than the petty bourgeoisie, incorporating a significant section of the working class, despite limited overtures to them either rhetorically or in terms of policy. This has translated into electoral success in largely post-industrial (often seaside) towns like Clacton, Boston and Skegness, Great Yarmouth, and Ashfield.²⁹ The five seats won by Reform in 2024 were among the most pro-leave constituencies in 2016.³⁰



Figure 5: British high street. Shutterstock.

Additionally, since the 2024 general election, Reform has further expanded and diversified its base. Just two in five of the party's current supporters voted for Reform in the last general election.³¹ Between the 2024 general election and June 2025, 27% of Conservative voters, 15% of Labour voters, and 7% of Liberal Democrat voters switched to Reform.³² They have also attracted previous non-voters.

In terms of social views and demographics, Reform supporters are increasingly representative of the average person. Reform voters' views on gay marriage, women's participation in the workforce, and abortion rights are not especially extreme – they are generally in line with that of the public.³³ The gender gap in Reform's support has narrowed, now comparable with Labour's. The party also has a more even age distribution than Labour and the Conservatives.³⁴ Despite this 'normalisation' of Reform's base, there remain important exceptions. Relative to the general public, Reform supporters are more likely to be white, more likely to watch GB News and distrust the BBC, and less likely to have attended university.³⁵

While rooted in the petty bourgeoisie, Reform has become a "cross-class coalition which draws support from right across the social spectrum."³⁶



Figure 6: Reform UK rally. EPA.



Figure 7: Reform campaigning. Reform UK.

Reform's Class Coalition

Putting this all together, Reform can be characterised as an “anti-elite elite” party gaining popular support.³⁷

Reform is firmly rooted in the establishment, bringing together specific factions of capital that jointly feel the traditional ruling parties are not appropriately shoring up their interests. They are gaining support for their agenda by promising concrete gains for the petty bourgeoisie while mobilising an even broader section of society, tapping into popular discontent.

Indeed, there are two core issues that unite Reform's base. Polling of Reform supporters in May 2025 reveals that the biggest reason people back the party is a feeling that things aren't working, the country needs drastic change, and the mainstream parties won't deliver it.³⁸ The second issue animating support for Reform is anti-immigrant sentiment.³⁹ Other reasons for supporting Reform are dispersed and statistically insignificant relative to these two motivators.



Figure 8: UK Anti-immigration protest (2025). Chris J Ratcliffe/Reuters.

Reform is able to construct a broad class coalition on this basis because of the way in which capitalism constructs and reproduces racial hierarchy. More specifically, Reform is addressing people's real experience of social decline by promising to restore white people's material and cultural separation from racially minoritised people. In this way, the focus on immigration does not reverse material hardship in absolute terms, but resurrects a relative sense of (racialised) privilege.

Ultimately, this racist invocation of anti-immigrant politics builds support for the deeper political economy of Reform that seeks to defend domestic, national capital against globalised, transnational capital. While this strategy has enabled Reform to gain mass support, it has constructed a fragile coalition full of contradictions.

On the ideological front, Reform's base is incoherent, with many holding views that are opposed to the party's orientation. Over half of Reform voters support stronger wealth redistribution policies.⁴⁰ Many disapprove of far-right figures close to Reform, including Tommy Robinson, Elon Musk, and Donald Trump.⁴¹ Labour defectors tend to firmly support net-zero policies.⁴² The British far right, Reform included, have generally unpopular views on foreign policy, in particular strong support for Zionism.

But the deeper contradiction in Reform's tenuous class coalition is that Reform has no intention of solving the structural drivers of people's grievances. Cutting immigration will not reverse the rising cost of living, address soaring inequality, create the community that people yearn for, or increase people's sense of control over their lives. Reform is a party of and for the ruling class, and their plans are focused on securing their position within a crisis-ridden capitalism.

These frailties form the basis of a strategy to combat Reform.

A Strategy of Unity and Division

The focus of an anti-Reform strategy must be on fracturing their class coalition, especially peeling away sections that could be unified behind a project for eco-socialist transition. We put forward possible methods for achieving this, categorised according to short and long-term interventions.

Short-term: Point out the contradictions

The most immediate task is to constantly point out the contradictions in Reform's class coalition, exposing the party's hypocrisy and faux populism. In particular, the line of attack that will do Reform the most damage is their inability to address the rising cost-of-living.

Successful left campaigns, from Zohran Mamdani's mayoral victory in New York City to Morena's surging popularity in Mexico, show that a laser focus on affordability has the potential to supersede other issues in determining people's political allegiances. This approach can be carried out immediately and would remain relevant in the case of a Reform government.



Figure 9: Zohran Mamdani's Campaign.
Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images.



Figure 10: Morena Supporters.
Eneas De Troya/Flickr.

Long-term: Build a left alternative

Over the longer term, the task is to build an anti-establishment left alternative. This alternative must construct a new common sense that

recognises people's struggles, clarifies the root cause of their grievances, and articulates a positive eco-socialist vision.

The left populist campaign waged by Zack Polanski is an example of this type of politics. Since Polanski became leader of the Green Party in early September, the party's membership has doubled to over 150,000 members.⁴³

In addition to popularising a new story, a left alternative must also build trust and confidence that it can deliver a world transformed. Even before it has gained state power, it can do this by beginning to materially address the root causes of people's suffering.

A good example of this is the Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ). For decades, the KPÖ have campaigned hard on housing justice. Instead of just shouting from the sidelines, they became a practical force for change by setting up a tenant's hotline, providing legal counsel for renters facing eviction, and winning legislation that caps public-housing rent at a third of the occupants' income.⁴⁴ This organising work has translated into both electoral success and effective mitigation against the far-right Freedom Party of Austria.⁴⁵ Despite its birthing pains, Britain's new left party (provisionally called Your Party) could emulate a similar base-building strategy.

In the words of Clara Zetkin, "fascism is the concentrated expression of the general offensive undertaken by the world bourgeoisie against the proletariat."⁴⁶ It is our job to fight back on class-based terms. Indeed, only socialists have an analysis that accurately diagnoses the structural drivers of people's problems and the long-term strategy to build a just, equitable, and dignified world for all. We can prove this only through revolutionary struggle that unites the working and oppressed majority against those who benefit from our division. We have much to lose if we don't rise together against the far right and a world to gain if we do.





Figure 11: Anti-racism demonstration in London. France 24.

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