



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

CONFERENCE 2025

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY
STATEMENT**

OPPOSING THE THREAT OF THE FAR RIGHT

A wave of far right politics is currently sweeping the world, pushing the political agenda to the right, threatening the role of trade unions and democracy in general. Radical, right-wing parties and organisations have come to power or are threatening to come to power across the globe. The trade union movement in the UK and internationally must wake up to the scale of this threat and organise and educate our members as to why we should oppose these politics of division.

Donald Trump's election victory in the United States (US), and his first months in power have driven the global political agenda to the right. Trump has already taken a wrecking ball to international relations, started a tariff war and begun imposing his own 'deals' on local and regional conflicts. Trump has also begun to attack the jobs and living standards of US workers, while promoting deregulation and tax cuts to benefit US billionaires.

Far right governments are already in power across Europe, in Italy, Finland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and the Czech Republic. Hard right parties have won very high votes in Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria. In France, far right Marine Le Pen's National Rally is polling at over 30%, while the Alternative for Germany has also surged with similar levels of electoral support.

Far right in Britain

The threat of the far right is also a real factor in British politics. In the 2024 general election, the Reform UK party won more than four million votes, 14% of the total and secured five seats in the Westminster parliament. Reform UK was also second in nearly one hundred seats, most of them won by Labour. Reform UK now has a large paper membership, as well as councillors and its own activists.

Nigel Farage, leader of Reform UK, has been a high-profile fixture in British politics for several decades. Farage is a privately educated former commodities trader with longstanding ties to the far right internationally and within the UK. He headed the UK Independence Party, which won almost four million votes in the 2015 general election. In 2019 he formed the Brexit Party, which won more than five million votes in European elections.

In 2021, the Brexit Party – a private company – was renamed Reform UK. Farage and the multimillionaire property developer Richard Tice are its shareholders. Between 2021 and 2024 Tice provided most of the party's funding, however it receives large donations from multimillionaires. Reform UK is a party of business, for business.

Reform UK defines immigration as the central problem facing working people. It indulges in hostile rhetoric tying issues like the NHS, education, crime and public services back to immigration. It is openly hostile to asylum seekers, migrants, travelers, and other vulnerable minorities. This was visible during the July 2024 riots, in speeches of Reform UK MPs in parliament and in their media commentary.

Further to the right is a movement around Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, known as "Tommy Robinson". Yaxley-Lennon formerly led the English Defence League (EDL). Over the last year, his supporters have organised large demonstrations in London and elsewhere across the UK, sometimes outnumbering anti-racist and anti-fascist counter-protesters.

The rise of the far right in British politics has also pulled the Conservative Party to the right. The policy and language used by Tory politicians overlaps and intersperses with far right narratives. The last Conservative-led governments already imposed more deregulation and privatisation, along with minimum service levels against trade unions and also threatened strike bans.

All these forces speak up for private business interests. All are funded by wealthy individuals and corporations. Whatever their superficial references to working class people, they are all hostile to working class communities and to workers' organisations. They seek to divide the working class, in order to exploit us. They are enemies of working class self-organisation and trade union power.

Labour movement response

The trade union and labour movement internationally and in the UK must urgently prepare themselves for the onslaught of the far right. This is an immediate threat and cannot be put off while we pursue our own agendas. If the far right come to power, they will attack workers' pay, conditions and other freedoms.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) must play a prominent role in countering the far right. That means educating ourselves about the scale of the problem and debating the issues openly. It means clarifying union policy and finding answers for and within working class communities to counter far right ideology. It means standing up for public services, standing with the oppressed and uniting our forces. The labour movement must mobilise for large-scale mass action, with demonstrations on the streets and activity in the workplace. The FBU must catalyse maximum unity in action against the threat of the far right.

Conference resolves to;

- publish articles educating members and warning about the far right threat, answering its lies and distortions utilising our publications and social media
- work with the trade unions and the wider labour movement to counter the threat of the far right, on the streets and in our communities
- work with organisations and campaigns like Hope Not Hate
- make contact with and build relations with local community based anti-fascist organisations
- include and discuss the threat of the far right in our education programme for FBU reps
- mobilise FBU members to counter the threat of the far right, on the streets and in our communities.