The Future of the Right

Policy Exchange

A Policy Exchange Essay Collection

Lord Goodman of Wycombe, Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP, Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise, Baroness Shawcross-Wolfson OBE, Jean-André Prager, Katie Lam MP, Salma Shah, Edward Barlow, Matt Goodwin and Hon Alexander Downer AC

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The Right Way – Lord Goodman of Wycombe

A word at the start

This paper isn't a manifesto - a sales pitch for the Right. Nor is it a manual, a guide for the Right in government.

It's more like a map. It shows where the Right should travel to, and is free for anyone to pick up - which is just as well, since there are lots of people around to do so.

Conservatives, Reform, Orange Book-style Liberal Democrats - it isn't clear if the future of the Right lies with any or none of these.

But the opportunity is there for them to journey in the right direction - the right way, towards the light.

Introduction – A Crisis of Trust

Here in Britain, Labour won a landslide a year ago. But in many comparable countries, the Right has been forming governments.

The most eye-catching example is the United States, which delivered an emphatic win for Donald Trump last year. The most recent comparable one is Germany, where Friedrich Merz has formed a coalition. In Italy, there is Giorgia Meloni. In Hungary, Viktor Orban. In Argentina, Javier Milei. In New Zealand, Christopher Luxton. The Nordic countries have been trending right.

These results are partly a product of the usual swings and roundabouts of democratic politics, and partly a reaction against the governments in place during Covid.

But, evidently, something else is happening. For even where there are governments of the Left, many have in key respects moved rightwards - as in Denmark.

What's going on?

In a nutshell, the Right is persuading voters in these countries and elsewhere that it will deal better than the Left with a crisis of trust.

Ageing, multicultural, technologically advanced but slow-growing countries have their pluses and minuses.

Some of the pluses, here in Britain, include sport, the arts, financial services, heritage, life sciences, technology, and the best of our universities.

The most striking one of the minuses, which we share with others, is that we are a low trust country - at least when it comes to government and politicians.

The drivers of this decline in trust in both are a combination of social change and low growth.

If you don't speak the same language as your neighbour, who wasn't necessarily born in the same country…

…Consume different media…

…Don't have the same outlook on women's rights and free speech…

…Show your legs when your neighbour won't display even her face…

…Don't share the same assumptions about sex, family life and gender…

…And laugh at different jokes…

…there is a knock-on effect on trust - at least in institutions. Especially if you feel that your standard of living or quality of life are in decline.

The effects of mistrust ripple out. When populations age and trust shrinks, the state steps in. Healthcare and pension bills climb. So do the costs of disorder, border control and crime. The response of the authorities is less to impose the law than to manage community relations. Diversity, equality and inclusion policies become means of holding the ring. This feeds a sense of grievance and unfairness.

Taxes rise higher, growth slows and investors quit. Older voters mourn a more cohesive past. Younger ones are anxious about the future, believing that they will have less opportunity than previous generations to earn well, buy a home and start a family. Those in between feel their quality of life fall. Mental health problems and worklessness rise. Trust in institutions, politics, and the media falls further. The country may seem ungovernable.

For better or worse, the Right's response throughout the western world has been to take a twin-track approach to restoring trust.

First and most fundamentally, it is drawing deep on patriotism - controlling borders, policing vigorously, imprisoning and deporting offenders and, in many cases, championing the West's Christian and enlightenment inheritance.

Second, it is stressing enterprise - lower taxes, cheaper energy, less regulation, public service reform and appointment on merit, not by quota.

All this is a description, not an encomium. Being behind the times isn't always a bad thing - and there are aspects of the Right abroad that the Right in Britain shouldn't follow.

For example, there is a temptation on the Right, to which some have yielded, to protect unsustainable welfare systems and uncompetitive businesses through tariffs, subsidies and protection. Trump is the most spectacular example of the genre

Above all, the Right in the western world is divided about how to deal with communist China and Putin's Russia - especially his bloody war in Ukraine.

Parts of the Right are outside the democratic family altogether - like much of the AfD. Or are, in the real sense of the word, racist. Or are incapable of or unwilling to differentiate between Islam, one of the three Abrahamic faiths, and Islamism, the supremacist political ideology. Or believe not in an alliance of western democracies, but in amoral deals between strongmen.

In particular, the effect of Trump's breathtaking disruption of the international order has yet to be realised. The recent elections in Australia and Canada went well for the Left. And Trump's allies abroad, like Meloni, are under pressure.

But though particular parts of the Right abroad are not examples to follow, the general thrust of its patriotic, enterprising approach certainly is - for example, that of Meloni to migration and Merz to defence.

The Right in Britain can learn from elements of the Right abroad, and apply "traditional values in a modern setting" - beliefs, ideas and principles that endure to a world that's always changing.

And those that endure are tried, tested and have been electorally successful before, after the Right's defeats in 1945, 2005 and, especially, 1974: accountability, enterprise, ownership, neighbourliness, patriotism.

Above all, perhaps, the Right in Britain has been a guardian of our institutions. Institutions are memory - and without memory, one can no sense of identity.

But our main institution of government, Parliament, is plainly failing to work properly. Some on the Right are tempted to tear down our institutions and start all over again.

However, the conservative instinct - with a small "c" - is that Britain needs its institutions as a person does his memory. So the task of the Right is reform - with a small "r" - not revolution.

Today and in particular -

- Government needs to be more accountable to voters.
- Enterprise means boosting small and medium-size businesses.
- The natural end of ownership is property-owning democracy.
- Neighbourliness, or society, starts with helping families.
- Patriotism means strengthening citizenship.
- And our defence and security need greater domestic resilience.

The six principles above, and the work that flows from them, are the meat of the Right's mission - the structural changes that the Right should seek to deliver in government.

For delivery in government is the precondition for restoring trust: recent experience shows that it rebounds when governments take office with strong leaders and clear missions. 1997, 2010 and 2019 showed upticks.

But does the Right in Britain really want to govern in the first place? The question is counter-intuitive but pressing, for reasons to which this paper now turns.

Progress, Not Reaction

One of the consequences of the breakdown of trust has been a retreat from electoral politics, demonstrated by lower voter turnout. However, political activity has not so much been abandoned as displaced. It has moved from the market square to the attic, from the party political broadcast to TikTok,

from doorstep canvassing to the thread on X, from voting to trolling.

In this sense, politics in Britain isn't in decline: indeed, it's thriving. There is a burgeoning ecosystem of media - old, new and social - in which the Right is loud, out and proud. More broadly, the sympathies of social media owners are shifting rightwards worldwide. With this transformation come new means of earning a living and perhaps making a fortune.

But while technology has changed, character has not - and fundamental to the Right's psychology is a love of the past. But love, like all human things, can be twisted. Reverence for the past can, in a country thwarted by mistrust and suspicion, deteriorate into nostalgia, that narcotic for the wounded, abandoned and unhappy.

Parts of the Right look back to an age in which fewer women worked outside the home and the British people were more white, and in which people were both more equal and, in some respects at least, more free. There will never be agreement on whether the present is better than the past. But a country that believes the future must be worse than the present has given up on itself.

So the very first decision for the Right turns out not to be about the size of the state, the trade-offs between security and freedom, or the effects of tariffs on trade. Rather, it's whether it now believes in conventional politics at all: whether it wants to be a governing venture or a protest movement, and sees itself a shaping force for the future or merely "on the wrong side of history".

An element on the Right has always yearned to retreat into private space and mourn a vanished past. But whether or when this urge has been justified or not, one point is certain: had the Right collectively yielded to it, it would not have been the co-author - some would say the main author - of social progress in Britain since before the age of universal suffrage.

This long story includes Disraeli's social reforms, Salisbury's free education, Chamberlain's paid holidays, Willink's NHS White Paper, Butler's Education Act, Macmillan's 300,000 houses a year, Thatcher's council house sales, Major's disability discrimination act and Cameron and Clegg's free schools, state pension reforms and universal credit.

All these are part of a broader tale of progress founded on stability, and the absence of invasion for almost a thousand years. Constitutional monarchy, representative government, liberty under the law, secret ballots, independent judges, a free media: these are blessings so familiar that we sometimes take them for granted.

The strength of our institutions has helped to shield us from bloodshed - the coups, civil wars and revolutions that have sometimes wracked our neighbours. So while our institutions may be crumbling, their foundations have endured. The Right has a duty to repair those institutions and, in doing so, restore trust both in them and itself.

The language of duty may sound outdated - certainly old-fashioned - in an age scarred by mistrust. But one can summarise the choice for the Right by asking: is its faith in social progress exhausted? Does its future lie in Parliament or only on Substack? For Parliament, where monarchy,

executive and the legislature meet, is our core institution. This paper now turns to its future.

Six Principles for the Right

1. Accountability not Bureaucracy

Make Parliament Work Again

The five action points of this paper begin and end with the King's Coronation - which marked a significant moment in our story, and was designed to hold a mirror up to the country.

Royal charities and young people were prominently represented, as were celebrities, foreign dignitaries, former refugees and religious leaders.

The number of Parliamentarians present was lower than at Queen Elizabeth's coronation over 50 years earlier, and the standing of MPs and peers has fallen during the decades between them. The change sent a signal about national taste, and a message about the disinterest, not to mention contempt, with which Parliament is widely viewed among voters.

What's gone wrong? Certainly, MPs have never been popular. Nonetheless, there is a modern crisis of Parliament. The talent pool from which Ministers and MPs are drawn is drying up. Ministers are reshuffled too often. MPs scrutinise legislation poorly. Too few of either are first rank politicians. What's going on?

Over the last half century or so, MPs have increasingly become taxpayer-funded full-timers. At a local level, this works well - if you want MPs who replicate the role of local councillors. At a national level, it doesn't: top entrepreneurs and professionals won't sign up for the diminished horizons, relative impoverishment, hostility and physical danger of politics.

These changes have been driven by a growing and sophisticated lobbyocracy. MPs spend more time responding to its campaigns and less time making laws better. And as scrutiny of legislation has waned, the powers of the Executive have waxed. The control of the timetable, of estimates and appropriations, the rise of skeleton legislation: all have led to a parliamentary imbalance.

This change has had a dual impact - on parliamentary scrutiny of the laws that govern us, which has slackened, and on the quality of those who make them. At the same time, there has been a gradual flow of power from Ministers themselves to arms-length bodies, such as the Climate Change Committee, the |Sentencing Council and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The right to vote in a secret ballot - to put in and throw out the people we choose to govern us - is fundamental to liberal democracy in Britain. Earlier generations protested, campaigned, suffered and sometimes died for it. But that right isn't valued when people feel that voting makes no difference. The future of democracy is at risk.

The key to salvaging it is accountability. This requires Ministers taking responsibility for the duties with which they're charged (as they failed

to do in the notorious case of the Post Office scandal) rather than hiding behind arms-length bodies. But if they are to act effectively, they need clearer priorities - and fewer. And they need, themselves, to be better.

So accountability turns out to be inextricably linked to better MPs who would, in turn, provide better Ministers making better decisions. The starting-point needs no structural reform at all. It is simply: fewer reshuffles. If Britain has 17 housing Ministers in 15 years, as it has done, it is unlikely to have enough good homes to go round.

Ultimately, if we want a better Parliament, voters must choose. If they see MPs as part-time representatives, they should back lifting restrictions on earnings, in order to attract more able people into the Commons. If, however, they see MPs as full-time workers, the logical solution is to split the legislature from the executive - with the constitutional upheaval such change would entail.

Meanwhile, Ministers and MPs would prioritise work more effectively were it truly theirs - rather than being, as it is in so many instances, that of local councillors. Greater powers for elected Mayors and local councils complement the constitutional role of Westminster rather than contradict it. But more powers for local authorities shouldn't mean less work for Parliament.

Much of what happens in the Commons is displacement activity: debates in Westminster Hall to appease the lobbyocracy and proliferating meetings of its main product: all-party groups. So until the Legislature takes back control of timetabling, the scrutiny of legislation, and the accountability of spending, little will change.

The growth of arms-length bodies and the dilution of parliamentary legislative scrutiny doesn't seem to be uncongenial to the top flight of the civil service, which needs fundamental reform - more specialists, less churn, more openness, better procurement, more outsiders - as championed by politicians of all parties since the late 1960s, and indeed by many within the civil service itself.

There has also been a shift of power from MPs to judges. Part of the reason is Parliament itself: shoddily drafted legislation gives the courts more scope. But another part is wider legal trends, including the growth of judicial review. If the rule of law is not to be confused with the rule of lawyers, Parliament must take responsibility for deciding where the balance between different rights lies.

Voting isn't everything, and nor is the accountability principle. Britain has a hereditary monarchy, an independent judiciary, bishops in its legislature, and some appointed Ministers. The Right has long supported this constitutional balance, and distinguished voices within it have sometimes inveighed against "elective dictatorship"

Nonetheless, an unelective dictatorship would be at least as big a problem as an elective one. More accountability requires more power for those we put it and throw out - and, thereby, an irreversible shift of power to those who put them there: working people and their families, whose standard of living has been hit hard in recent years, and is now

being hit even harder.

2. Enterprise Not Planning

Boost small and medium size business

The past 15 years have been the worst for income growth in generations. Some of the causes originate from outside Britain: Putin's invasion of Ukraine, the financial crash, the Covid pandemic. Indeed, many of the country's structural economic weaknesses stretch back decades, though others are more recent.

The older ones are accentuated by Britain's geography: one of the greatest cities in the world, London, crowns the country's most prosperous area, its south east. The city's gravitational pull gradually fades outside the Home Counties, and much of Britain's old industrial heartland in the north and midlands is scarred by poor connectivity, recession and low growth.

The newer ones are of government's own making. During the past 30 years or so, the economy has become increasingly dependent on migration, which both puts downward pressure on wages and increases pressure on housing and public services without raising GDP per head. And the implementation of Net Zero has driven up costs and prices.

This combination of problems may help to explain why incomes for people of working age have grown slower than in many of our main competitors since the financial crash. The challenges reach wider: technological change isn't delivering the productivity boost that it did post-war, our continent is facing demographic decline…and now the western alliance is under strain.

Solving some of these difficulties will take decades, but many of them can be tackled much more swiftly. Put simply, government needs to be smaller, more strategic and stronger - and rebalance political conversation, which in recent years has stressed wealth redistribution over wealth creation and what drives it: business, and in particular smaller and challenger businesses.

Covid and war drove up public spending, and at 45 per cent of GDP it remains high. That might matter less if Britain were not running a deficit, a balance of trade deficit and high net debt all at once - which helps to explain why the Chancellor is boxed in and the Government vulnerable in the financial markets, just as defence spending must rise substantially.

The state therefore needs the real zero-based spending review it has never had - as Canada did during the mid-1990s - and to shift expenditure from current to capital. The most obvious candidate for reform is welfare: nine million people of working age aren't looking for a job or are unable to start work, so driving up the demand for migration to plug the gap.

Reducing the demand for immigration would help to reduce some of the pressure on housing costs, but the need for more homes in the south east would remain. So planning reform is essential, and there are fewer voter objections to building more homes in a few places, through new

towns and villages, than more homes in many places.

But, simultaneously, government should lessen the economic pressure on the south east and help improve the rest of the country's prospects. That requires upgrading the infrastructure that joins up provincial cities, and their links to Scotland and Wales, and localising more powers in relation to skills, welfare, education and transport - throughout the whole UK.

The state can only create the conditions for wealth, not wealth itself. A country can't simply industrially strategise its way to growth, any more than it can borrow to it - though war, of course, upends everything, since during it a country must prioritise a single aim, winning, over the multitude of aims that its people pursue in peacetime.

We are not at war, but must prepare for it, given the current state of the western alliance. Security of supply in energy and food, upskilling the workforce, safeguarding our infrastructure and universities from infiltration, utilising our Brexit freedoms, drawing up the right AI framework - all these now matter even more.

But while protection is sometimes necessary, it is seldom desirable: the Right's should continue to champion free trade under rules that are fairly enforced, the system that brought unparalleled prosperity for much of the postwar period - and seek both to reconstitute the western alliance and build better relations with our European neighbours.

And while business creates wealth, not all businesses do so - since crony capitalism, in which some firms exploit client status with the state, undermines the system. Bigger business can absorb regulatory burdens that smaller firms can't. It can reward shareholders at the expense of the taxpayer. It can use its muscle to lobby for more migration and lower its wage bill.

Green firms lobby for subsidies. DEI and ESG can compromise free speech, profits, jobs, fair employment, women's rights and promotion on merit. Growing compliance mirrors higher costs. Social media giants wield global power with no tangible accountability. The culture of many bigger firms can be best measured by the growth of their Human Resources departments.

In focusing on these negative developments, its easy to forget about the positive ones - the small and medium-sized firms that make up 99 per cent of UK businesses, generate over a quarter of Britain's GDP and employ over 15 million people. Here are the forgotten heroes of the British economy, whose profits fund the public services we consume.

Perhaps the Right's focus has become so blurred in recent years, as it has chased shifting groups of voters, that it has neglected this core element of its own identity: wealth-creating business, lower taxes and less regulation. But a smaller, more strategic and stronger state is not enough.

Britain needs a stronger society, freer people - and more ownership.

3. Ownership not dependency

Create a property-owning democracy

In Great Expectations, John Wemmick, a bill collector for a lawyer, owns a cottage in Walworth. He models it on a castle - surrounding it by a moat and furnishing it with cannon. An ordinary job, attachment to tradition, ownership of property: in the character of Wemmick, Dickens was presenting an enduring aspect of Britishness.

For centuries, our families have tended to be smaller, less inclined than their European equivalents to live inter-generationally, and more mobile: meanwhile, the English have distinguished between common and private land since the Anglo-Saxon period. For the best part of a century, the Right has drawn on this inheritance to help bring labour and capital together.

In the aftermath of the First World War, Noel Skelton, a young Unionist MP, argued that the right of people to vote was unbalanced by their lack of stake in the system: "for the mass of people - those who mainly live by the wages of industry - political status and educational status have outstripped economic status".

He advocated aligning the two in a "property-owning democracy" - an idea that recognised the link between property ownership and engaged citizenship. In 1946, in the aftermath of World War Two, Eden took up Skelton's idea and branded it "a nationwide property-owning democracy". Then in 1951, Harold Macmillan was made Minister for Housing.

Serving in this post under Churchill, he delivered a Government target of building 300,000 homes a year - and argued that "no property is more suitable for the creation of a property-owning democracy than house property". But the most significant advance in home ownership came during the 1980s under the Thatcher governments.

That period brought together an attachment to the Skelton inheritance, a new stress on the individual person and their family, and the need to modernise Britain's economy. These impulses came together in the form of selling council houses to their tenants at a discount. The policy survived the New Labour era of the early 2000s.

In 1980, 57 per cent of dwellers were owner-occupiers. By 2004, that proportion had risen to 71 per cent. Since the crash in 2007, mortgage lending has become more restrictive and house prices have continued to rise: the combination has driven home ownership down. It now stands at about 65 per cent.

The Thatcher governments' push for ownership wasn't directed at housing alone. It introduced Personal Equity Plans and employee share ownership schemes to increase share ownership, and its privatisation of state assets offered further opportunities for workers to gain a stake in capital. British Telecom, the electricity companies, British Gas - all saw share sales.

The "Tell Sid" campaign to promote share ownership during the sale of the last was an icon of the Thatcher period. Like home ownership, share

ownership has endured as part of a political consensus - until now. The Labour Government appears to believe that those who own shares aren't working people. And it plans to restrict the right to buy.

The Right could easily be suckered into aiming only to roll back these negative developments, push home ownership back up towards the 70 per cent of the early 2000s, and share ownership up from 11 per cent to the 20 per cent or so of the 1980s - in other words, into revitalising the most familiar parts of its recent legacy.

However, this would represent a thin conception of ownership: a thicker one would encompass wealth more broadly, including inheritance, savings and pensions. Inheritance Tax combines a 40 per cent rate with a series of exemptions - though it is far from being the only tax which leaves less for the flow of wealth down the generations.

The savings rate was depressed by quantitative easing: what's essential during crisis conditions is damaging during more usual ones. Meanwhile, a third of Britons expect to retire drawing the state pension only. The tax and regulatory system should be geared to boosting private pensions. The lifetime cap on saving has been scrapped. Its return should be resisted.

A broader interest in ownership would also encompass more employees having a stake in the firms that they work for, and widen from individual ownership to institutional ownership. In the mid-1990s, pension companies held some 30 per cent of UK quoted shares. That proportion is now under five per cent. For insurance companies, the equivalents are about 23 per cent and five per cent.

Not everyone wants to be or can be an owner. Some will prefer to rent property. Others will have no alternative but to do so. Those with severe disabilities, or who are unable to work altogether, will depend on others - families, neighbours, charities, government. As will those who have retired with low savings or none; as will students whose studies are financed by debt.

But inadequate savings and debt, the barriers to work and leisure that disabled people encounter, the insecurity inherent in private renting - all these link dependency to lower agency, deprivation, and higher taxes. Ownership and property, by contrast, are means of acquiring independence, gaining a stake in society, and enjoying leisure.

Skelton would have argued that the benefits of ownership are not felt only by the individual, or even by his family, immediate circle and friends. He believed society is fullest and happiest when people have a stake in it - which ownership delivers. Each new exercise in it may be a small step, but enough small steps will lead to a bigger society.

4. Society not government

Help families

Families in Britain are small - at least, when compared to those in most previous generations and in many other countries. But their social contribution is so big as to be impossible to measure fully. Parents help

educate their young children, children care for their ageing parents, and families pool their income across the generations, in good times and in bad.

So no wonder family life is so central to the British people - more so, if surveys are right, than to many abroad: some 92 per cent of our people say that it is "very important" to them. The role of families as mini-welfare societies, improving life chances and saving taxpayers' money, is a reminder that government has an interest in making their lives better.

But the treatment of families with children by government over the last half century has been neglectful at best and abusive at worst - with the state treating them as a resource to be atomised, taxed and treated as a means to an end. While the retired have gained from higher spending on health and pensions, childcare for parents is complex, expensive and discriminatory.

The growth of two earner couples is part of the story of social progress. But change in the tax and welfare have not kept pace. Family members are assessed by the tax system as individual people, but by the welfare one as household members. Nor are these systems neutral between different types of families.

Childcare payments have been crafted to support those who care for other people's children, but not their own - part of the drive within government to get the parents of young children into the labour market. Meanwhile, the price of more university places has been higher student debt, with some courses offering poor value for money.

The key principles for family policy should be fairness between different kinds of families, more choice for all of them, and more freedom to pass wealth down the generations. But families are not only welfare societies in themselves, but at the heart of larger ones - a concretic ring neighbourhoods, clubs, voluntary groups, faith communities, charities: everything that makes up society.

The voluntary sector contributes about £18 billion to the economy. And over fourteen million people volunteer at least once a year. Unsustainable debt, drug and alcohol dependency, illiteracy, reoffending, self-harm - all can be tackled with the help of actors who have no taxpayer funding. None the less, the state and the voluntary sector are deeply intertwined.

Government provides about 30 per cent of the voluntary sector's income. The Big Society project is out of fashion. But at its heart was the conviction that individual volunteering, localism and civic action could improve social capital and people's lives - and value for money for the taxpayer. Parts it survive to this day: City Deals, free schools, combined authorities.

And just as there is capacity to double down on localism, so there is for removing barriers to volunteering. But a welfare society will be completed in any modern country by the welfare state. The key to a better one will be political consensus, when possible, new providers, when practicable - and value for money.

It's a formula that has worked for education in England and pensions

throughout Britain. How it delivered for each has lessons for health and social services - over which policy has oscillated wildly, within governments as well as between them. It will also be required in the university sector where the balance between academic and vocational courses is askew.

First, schools. Over time, successive governments developed a consensus over state education. Thatcher and Major's grant-maintained schools, Blair's academies and Cameron's free schools combined more autonomy, exam reform and curriculum overhauls: the result has been improvement in school standards in England. This consensual progress is now under threat from Labour.

Next, pensions. In the late years of New Labour, under the Coalition and to the present day, there has been a shift from means-tested payments and a second state pension to today's triple lock, plus auto-enrolment at work and later retirement. The latter has taken place without the mass protests that have sometimes disturbed France.

If health and social care is to follow where pensions and state education have led, the starting-point is likely to be Government initiatives to expand the role of the independent sector within the NHS - drawing on the mid-New Labour years, during which the then Health Secretary, Alan Milburn, drove its biggest ever expansion within the system.

But more private, independent and voluntary provision in health and social care, while necessary, is not sufficient. There is a short-term trade off between more health provision and lower taxes - unless AI produces efficiency savings on an unexpected scale, or birthrates rise and the population ages less rapidly, or migration control is further loosened.

It will take a Royal Commission, or some equivalent, to hammer out the necessary consensus: to strengthen personal responsibility for health and wellbeing, rework the relationship between the individual patient and GP, prevent illness and cut hospital admissions, get people out of admission faster, fund the provision of social care and review the state pension.

Public services will remain publicly funded but not necessarily publicly provided, and those who provide them should be empowered to provide them better. In education, this has meant free schools. In the NHS, it would mean more mutuals, local control and innovation - anathema to those who believe healthcare should always be provided as though the year is always 1948.

5. Belonging and not rootlessness

Strengthen citizenship

The NHS is not, in fact, our most popular institution: the Fire Brigade claims the laurels. But neither have, as our monarchy does, the duty to represent the country. The King's Coronation sought to do so by marrying old and new. The service was Anglican. But, for the first time at a coronation, The King prayed publicly for grace to be "a blessing to all … of every faith and belief".

With "Crown Imperial" and a gospel choir, Stephen Fry and the Unicorn

Pursuivant, bishops of an Established Church and multi-faith religious leaders, the Coronation could have collapsed beneath the weight of its own contradictions. Its mix of ancient and modern could have satisfied neither traditionalists nor radicals.

Instead, it provided a guide to negotiating a settlement which has been more successful than many feared, but less so than some hoped - and claim. Britain has experienced mass immigration on a scale unimaginable at the time of the previous coronation, and is set to be one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world by 2050.

The proportion of minority groups living here will rise to 40 per cent. Islam will be firmly established as the country's second faith. Currently, one in six if the UK population is aged 65 and older: by 2050, one in four will be. Britain will be less white, less Christian and older. This is social change on an unprecedented scale.

There is reason to believe that this transformation can be negotiated and the potential of the future realised. For while trust in our politicians has fallen, polling shows that trust in our neighbours has risen. But the challenges are considerable. Diversity of background is one thing. Diversity of values is another.

If some believe that you can choose your sex and others don't, some in blasphemy codes and others in free speech, and some that women are men's property and others free agents, a country won't cohere. These problems will be exacerbated if there is competition for housing, the NHS, welfare and other public services.

These tensions can't be eliminated. But they can be reduced, and the precondition of improvement is slowing the pace of change. That means much lower immigration - breaking the cycle of business demand, low wage work, higher migration, domestic worklessness and pressure on housing and public services.

In the medium term, upskilling, higher wages and less worklessness can replace our reliance on migrant labour - though, in the shorter term, there is likely to be a trade-off between less immigration into Britain and present public service provision: managing the transition between the two will be a formidable undertaking.

Lower migration is unlikely to be achieved, in any event, by any single country acting alone. For Britain, like other western democracies, is wrestling with a system of agreements, treaties and obligations that are over half a century out of date. Unilateral action should be held back as a last resort. Multilateral renegotiation is preferable.

But while less migration is necessary, it is not sufficient - at least, if greater integration as well as lower numbers is the objective. Reports into integration and cohesion have come and gone. But there has been little agreement on solutions - other than the promotion of English and more opportunities for women. Perhaps the Coronation, once again, provides a guide.

Integral to the ceremony was the idea of citizenship: that the King who was crowned reigns over a country, and that the country, by definition,

has citizens. The most elemental way of strengthening integration would be to stress the distinction in public policy between citizens and non-citizens - and to strengthen the equality before the law under which they live.

Drawing a distinction between citizens and non-citizens implies a difference between the treatment of the two. Non-citizens have no automatic right to remain in the country indefinitely. Nor to anything other than the emergency provision of public service. And those who are criminals have no right to live in it at all.

Meanwhile, equality before the law requires police whose priority is to enforce that law rather than manage community relations: who are on the streets fighting criminal gangs, not in offices tracking social media. That means cultural as well as legal change - appointment on merit, politically neutral public sector workplaces, presuming innocence unless proved guilty.

Our equality laws conflate anti-discrimination legislation with public sector duties. The former should be ring-fenced, the second scrapped, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission streamlined to that end. Recent reviews of integration policy have recommended the swearing of an oath of integration by all migrants on arrival on Britain.

The nation to which they would be pledging themselves is a union of four parts, one of which voted ten years ago to remain in the Union, another of which is set on a different island to the rest. While the Union is now a complex organism, a main task of Unionism is relatively straightforward - namely, to break down barriers that obstruct the UK's own single market.

Having borders implies defending them - and upholding them against those who seek to make them unmanageable, import disputes from abroad into Britain, or threaten our national security. Defending Britain tends to become a political priority only at times of international upheaval. Such a moment is upon us.

6. Defence not disarmament

Improve Britain's resilience

The bedrock of Britain's defence, foreign affairs and security policy for over three quarters of a century has been the western alliance, pursued mainly through our membership of NATO and relationship with the United States. The Right likes to portray itself as the champion of this approach, and did so with special panache during the Reagan-Thatcher partnership of the 1980s.

It has gained electorally in doing so - contrasting its approach with the Left's itch for unilateralism and disarmament, demonstrated most recently by Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of Labour. Parties of the Right continue to lead those of the Left and Centre in opinion polls that ask which would best handle defence and security.

Nonetheless, the fall in defence spending of the past 40 years took place partly under governments of the Right: the Coalition and Conservative

years in government saw defence spending drop from 2.5 per cent of GDP to 2.3 per cent at a time when threats to our national security were proliferating. Nor can the Right claim a monopoly on patriotism.

The western alliance was established by a wartime coalition and consolidated by the post-war Labour Government. This is not to downplay the role that governments of the Right played in winning the Cold War. But their anti-communism was common to our main political parties for most of the time, and masked an absence of distinctive strategic thinking.

The unpredictability of the Trump administration is prompting a dramatic reappraisal. At a time when the Right is divided between different parties, it is questioning the assumptions that it has clung to from habit for over three quarters of a century, as it seeks to respond to new dangers that multiply in unpredictable ways.

Some of these are external, such as those posed by Russia, China and Iran. Others are internal, including far left, Islamist, far right and eco-extremist actors. These threats interact: Russian submarines shadow our waters, China's money infests our universities, Islamists recruit from abroad, cyber crime and espionage menace our infrastructure, and our supply chains are vulnerable.

Strengthening those supply chains is the first essential for improving our security. Some defence capabilities are easily deployable and relatively cheap - such as drones. But Britain won't have the flexibility it needs even for home defence without a stake in the industries of the future: AI, semi-conductors, robotics, quantum computing, telecommunications, cyber.

Improving our capacity to deliver these - together with more STEM subject graduates - must be at the heart of industrial strategy. But we are not in a position to provide for our needs in isolation: hence the importance of deepening our partnerships with technologically advanced allies. The CPTPP and AUKUS are examples of these.

Donald Trump is amplifying a message that previous U.S administrations have been sending for many years - that Europe must do more for its own defence. Our relationship with our neighbours, and the security of our common continent, is inextricably linked to our own safety. Hence Britain's role in rallying support for Ukraine.

But a Europe-only defence policy, shorn of our relationship with America, would be strategically dubious and technologically impracticable: our security arrangements are global, preserving our relationship with the United States is essential, and many of our strengths - special forces, "five eyes", intelligence - can and do work and operate outside the European theatre.

A right-wing defence strategy should therefore prioritise modernising our defence capabilities, by deepening our relationship with partners worldwide, while consolidating our home security. The impact of Covid brought home the fragile nature of our supply chains - of how the authorities must plan for "just in case" rather than rely on "just in time".

So the Right should double down on domestic security. The balance of farming policy must swing back to food production from environmental

management. In energy, we should max out on domestic production, whether the source is wind, wave, oil or gas, while refurbishing our nuclear industry. The health service must plan for spare capacity and the possibility of further pandemics.

And while we cannot sever all ties with hostile powers, we can work to keep them out of our essential infrastructure and institutions. Our electric cars are dependent on Chinese critical minerals, and some of our universities on Chinese money. Our renewables market is also exposed. We need to diversify our supply chains still further.

The threat to our security is not only to our sea lanes and air space, to the integrity of our institutions and the resilience of our infrastucture, to the work we do and the goods we buy, but ultimately to our own safety. Our armed forces are stalked by lawfare and our computers by spyware. Terrorist attacks in Britain may be fitful but they are real.

At home, our counter-terrorism and counter-extremism strategy needs a new focus on countering subversive movements and non-violent extremism. Abroad, our aid programmes should be more closely aligned to our foreign policy objectives. Overall, NATO membership, an independent nuclear deterrent and the western alliance remain fundamental to our security.

Whatever happens next in America, our defence spending must rise: indeed, security policy will be at the forefront of domestic policy for the first time since the aftermath of 9/11. If this programme is to maintain public confidence, better value for money in procurement is essential, as is an end to the vexatious pursuit of our servicemen through the courts.

Accountability Not Bureaucracy – Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP

> *'It is hard to imagine a more stupid or more dangerous way of making decisions than by putting those decisions in the hands of people who pay no price for being wrong.'*

The British state no longer works - and Thomas Sowell's words tell us why. For decades Ministers of all political stripes have found themselves swept into Government but unable to enact the change for which they were elected. As the state has got bigger and bigger, decisions have moved further away from those who are accountable for their consequences. Ministers are on a conveyor belt of expanding responsibility but diminishing control.

How should the Right respond? Too much of our discussion is often rooted in a smaller state simply to deliver lower taxes. Low taxes matter, but there is a better case to be made. A moral case for a highly accountable, smaller, state. A case for radical reform in four areas - the civil service, Parliament, quangos and the judiciary - to create a more responsive state that delivers for the British public. At the heart of this reform is the restoration of accountability, and ensuring that decisions are firmly in the hands of people who pay a price for being wrong.

The Civil Service: Bigger government, worse delivery

For decades the state has been expanding in all directions: more employees, more regulations, bigger budgets, and many more public bodies.

Public spending is at its highest for 40 years. The tax burden is on track to reach a record high.

Despite frequent calls for bonfires of quangos, there are now over 300 arms-length bodies, and their spending has more than doubled in a decade.[1] [2] Within these bodies there has been a vast expansion in the number of staff. Ofgem, the regulator charged with protecting consumers in the energy market, has grown from 339 people when it was created in 2000 to over 2,000 people in 2025[3] – with no commensurate increase in consumers feeling protected when it comes to their energy bills. Although formally accountable to Parliament, it is rare to see proper scrutiny of Ofgem there. Instead you are much more likely to see Parliament place additional virtue-signalling duties on them, like the Net Zero duty from the 2023 Energy Act, rather than any critical examination of whether that duty or any other aspect of Ofgem is genuinely serving consumers.

1. Times reporting of TPA analysis, link.
2. Public satisfaction with the NHS | The King's Fund
3. Horgan, 'Ofgem staff costs soar as re-cruitment drive continues', Utility Week, 30/1/25, link

There are around 118 ministers with responsibility to Parliament for managing over 500,000 civil servants, ultimately accountable for everything that they do. Ministers have to make dozens of difficult decisions every day – often falling into the categories of the mad, the bad, and the 'will send BBC news notifications berserk'. But there are many thousands more subtle decisions being made, often with wide ramifications.

A key example from my time as Energy Secretary was the costing of different energy sources. This was presented to Ministers for years as "proof that renewables are cheap" – but it did not factor in all the hidden costs of wind and solar power. I commissioned work to model these costs correctly but this work has now been cancelled by a Government rushing to put more wind and solar power on our electricity system than any other country in the world. For one of the most radical and statist intervention in decades, it should shock us that there has been no calculation of what impact this might have on energy bills, no data which has been published to clearly and transparently record the expected impact from these policies.

Since 2016 the headcount for the civil service has increased by a third, including 17,000 extra policy professionals with large increases in communications staff as well.[4] [5] Meanwhile there are many brilliant and expert civil servants who are leaving because they, too, are frustrated by a machine where risks are unrewarded, and poor leadership is unpunished.

Parliament: More legislation, less scrutiny

The growth in the size of government has been mirrored by a rise in the amount of legislation – but also by a decline both in the responsibility of Ministers for implementation, and of the Commons for scrutiny.

The fall in the number of Acts of Parliament over the past 25 years has been offset by a rising page count, more statutory instruments, and an increased use of skeleton or framework legislation.

And this bigger legislative burden has been accompanied by reduced scrutiny time in the Commons - with more Bills programmed and fast-tracked, a growth in Henry VIII powers, and limited capacity to scrutinise secondary legislation. What does it say about Parliament that an amendment as controversial as decriminalising abortion up to full term can be passed with just 46 minutes of debate?

Select Committees are where you might expect the many arms-length bodies alongside Government Ministers to be suitably grilled. However, the larger a Government's majority, the more members of the party in power, many of whom have high hopes of being future ministers, sit on the Select Committees tasked with scrutinising its work. The amount of minutes and questions allocated to each sitting member can often be counted on one hand. Under the current Labour majority, this has led to questions at a recent Liaison Committee - the King of Kings Select Committee - such as 'What keeps the Prime Minister up at night?' With questions of such toothless flummery, the answer is clearly not: being questioned by the Liaison Committee. It should be.

4. Civil Service World, link.
5. Cabinet Office, Civil Service statistics, link.

Quangos: More opinions, worse decisions

More and more of our decisions are being taken by quangos and regulators. Consider our energy system. There is no shortage of state bodies involved. Supply will be directed by a new National Energy Systems Operator, prices are set through an energy price cap by Ofgem, reduction of carbon emissions is advised upon by the Climate Change Committee, delivery of Government's nuclear plans is undertaken by Great British Nuclear, building of nuclear is regulated by the Office for Nuclear Regulation, the Environment Agency and a Planning Inspectorate among others. Furthermore, we now have Ed Miliband's new pet project Great British Energy, whose remit even the hand-picked Chair struggles to define.

Among this panoply of bodies, all of whom play a significant role in whether we can deliver cheap energy to consumers - who faces any penalty of any kind when household bills go up? Is there a single individual amongst them whose future career prospects will be dampened in any way if energy is no longer cheap?

Take the Climate Change Committee alone. Its advice, which has legal footing through the Climate Change Act, has significant impacts on the cost of living and loss of jobs through deindustrialisation. It is accountable for neither. It is not even judged by its effect on global carbon emissions which will only increase if we continue to offshore our industry to more polluting regimes. As Energy Secretary, I was acutely aware of the committee's powers - since, as a consequence of them, I was being sued by multiple climate activist groups in relation to changes we made to protect consumers and the economy.

The Judiciary: More courts, less consent

That Parliament makes law and the courts interpret it would have been unchallenged 50 years ago. But developments over half a century have thrown this principle into contention.

The European Court of Human Rights rulings on asylum and deportation have stymied democratically elected politicians' ability to prioritise national security by deporting foreign offenders and illegal immigrants. Tens of thousands of cases have engaged the Human Rights Act to varying degrees since 2000.[6] During the 1980s, there were approximately 500 applications annually for judicial review,[7] but by 2013 this number had risen to 15,594.[8]

There are 10,321 Foreign National Offenders in prison – an eighth of the prison population – and yet the cases where the deportation of criminals has been blocked on human rights grounds have become as common as they are offensive.[9] There is simply no democratic consent for the human rights of foreign born rapists, paedophiles and violent criminals to trump the safety of the British public and yet we see this happen time and again.

Court litigation is also holding back our economy. Only nine per cent of all town and country planning judicial reviews brought against Government departments in the last 15 years ruled in favour of the

6. UK Parliament, 'The implications for access to justice of the Government's proposals to reform judicial review - Human Rights Joint Committee', link
7. Cusick, 'Judicial review procedures to be made simpler', *The Independent*, 28/10/1999, link
8. Coleman, 'Judicial Review reform: An attack on our legal rights?', 1/12/2014, *BBC News*, link
9. UK Parliament, Tudor, 'Foreign national offenders in UK prisons: Powers to deport', House of Lords Library, 17/4/2024, link

claimant. This is a system that might almost have been designed to damage growth.[10]

The UK is also bound by the Aarhus Convention, which introduces several legal pathways to challenge developments on environmental grounds. The Convention allows repeat activist group litigants to have their costs capped at a meagre £10,000. In consequence, they can carry on bringing weak judicial reviews against developments. None of these litigants will have any accountability for the increased costs of building infrastructure the country needs.

In recent times we have also seen another momentous judicial overreach in courts setting wages. In the case of Next, under the auspices of equal pay law, a court has decided that warehouse workers and shop floor workers should be paid the same – despite there being a shortage of the former, and the latter rejecting an offer from the company to move over. The courts have deemed this work of 'equal value' even though the workers themselves clearly have not. If companies cannot compensate for the undesirability of jobs, which may have less sociable hours, or comfortable conditions, by paying higher wages, then who will do them? This is clearly not something which troubles the courts. And why should it? They bear no responsibility for the health of the labour market or the economy after all.

The Economy: Bigger businesses, less responsibility

The lack of corporate accountability is also affecting Britain's economic health. Multinational corporations are increasingly removed from negative externalities.

Thames Water for years ran rings around its regulator which responded by increasingly detailed regulation which did not improve performance. Instead, the layers of bureaucratic complexity has ended up with a £3bn rescue loan and Thames Water avoiding nationalisation by the skin of its teeth.[11]

Private equity companies are increasingly prevalent in state provision for our vulnerable: in children's homes, social care with their sights on the childcare arena as well. The combination of regulation that creates sky-high barriers to entry, and statutory duties which mean a price must be paid no matter what it is, has left taxpayers like a sitting duck, footing increasingly high bills without improving outcomes. Food delivery firms like Deliveroo and JustEat have been caught hiring illegal workers from asylum hotels, again a failure of both enforcement and business leadership.

We can and should be pro-capitalism, pro-challenger and anti-corporatism. We should seek to reduce barriers for enterprise and competition and be tough on vested interests. It is clear the Left has neither the ability nor the interest in taking on broken markets. The Right should.

10. MoJ database, link.
11. BBC News, 'Why is Thames Water in so much trouble?', 31/3/25, link

Why accountability matters to the Right

The Right has begun to recognise the challenge of a bloated and unaccountable civil service, Parliament, judiciary, and economy. But we have struggled to articulate why this clashes so fundamentally with our beliefs.

First, bureaucratic multiplication at the expense of accountability undermines our democratic system – as our right-of-centre traditions have long understood.

The Right has long had faith in the Burkean 'little platoons': family and community-based organisations that create a strong sense of our obligations to each other.

Second, the absence of accountability has allowed our institutions to expound the demands of a radical minority even when opposed by the majority. For many of the most radical proponents, advocating for change has become not just costless but income-generating. Just Stop Oil, Palestine Action, The Good Law Project, Stonewall - all have gained footholds in our institutions and used them to spread their ideas, often unchecked by a metropolitan elite within those organisations who are at best passive and at worst sympathetic.

The cultural changes of the last decade now applaud the campaigner and critic over the risk-taker or deliverer. This in itself is a triumph in the unaccountable over the accountable. Why go through with the daily grind and compromise of delivering change when you can reap more public rewards for simply calling for change?

Third, and perhaps most importantly, to be on the Right is to believe in free markets, free speech, and free people: individuals making millions of individual decisions are better at discovering truth than unaccountable elites in a rigid bureaucracy.

Restoring accountability

The guiding project for the Right is to return power back to the people, with a state that serves instead of subjects. Only a society built on accountability can promote the values necessary for a prosperous economy and a functioning democracy.

Articulating that project is a significant task, which involves unpicking much of British public policy over the last few decades. This is by no means a definitive list, but a starting point:

- Seek to replicate the success of free schools by finding areas where we can both increase freedom and rigorous accountability for public service leaders.
- Halve the size of the civil service, replace policy and communications personnel with those with expertise in delivery and enforcement, double the salaries, and address the imbalance between pensions and salaries to attract better talent.
- Seek reforms to improve scrutiny of legislation, Government and arms-length bodies in Parliament.

- Introduce annual league tables of the total costs to consumers and businesses of regulation created by each Government department and regulator. These should also regularly be reviewed against our global competitiveness.
- Review quangos and return power to Ministers, or other democratically elected individuals.
- The right to make law must be unambiguously returned to Parliament.
- Overhauling Judicial Review, including through through ouster clauses, remedy reforms and tighter procedural rules, and cracking down on the organisations who exploit the system.
- Crack down on shell companies, increasing identity requirements to register businesses.
- Review business regulation to increase competition and consumer outcomes with a particular focus on closed and broken markets.
- Review private equity's presence in state provision, particularly for the vulnerable.

Together, these steps are the beginning of reforming accountability in the civil service, public bodies, the courts and the economy to create a system that rewards competence, promotes growth and safeguards our values. The answer to the UK's problems cannot be further bureaucratic enlargement. The Right must be bold in restoring accountability.

The Case for Liberty – Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise and Baroness Shawcross-Wolfson OBE

Part One: Foundations

Growing up, it felt as if the world could only get better. Liberty, tolerance, peace and prosperity were in the ascendancy. In every continent, authoritarians were in retreat. Communist dictatorships toppled across Eastern Europe and Asia; China thawed; and apartheid gave way to truth and reconciliation. We no longer needed to make the case for freedom. Politics could be left to politicians. History was ending, and liberal democracy would have the last word. Job done. How wrong we were.

Today, the cornerstones of the free world are starting to crumble. Individual liberty, freedom of conscience, free markets, free trade and the rule of law - all are under threat.

The neo-imperialism of Russia and China. The assault on free trade in the US, the tightening grip of theocracy in parts of the Middle East and the policing of speech in our own universities. The drive for discrimination and identity politics, dressed up as social justice. Our economy is weighed down by more and more regulation and poor planning. Authoritarian evils rebadged - protectionism, imperialism, tribalism, intolerance - return. Each in a new disguise but all dressed up as virtue, necessity, or both.

Who is to blame?

We have to accept responsibility. It is all of *us*, the peaceful, reasonable majority who have allowed this to happen. For too long we have allowed fashionable but bad ideas to go unchallenged – in truth we have done little more than grumble. We tell ourselves we deserve better — but do little to earn it. Paying our taxes, obeying the law is not enough. In a democracy, we choose who and what to believe. We all shape the political debate and elect our leaders. There's no one else to blame.

Blaming ourselves is the beginning. It gives us agency - and that agency demands effort. Not just slogans or protest, but the harder, quieter work of defining principles, shaping policy, and persuading others. And that persuasion is necessary because freedom itself is counterintuitive.

Liberty runs counter to instincts - for left and right alike

Promoting liberty may sound like an easy sell. It isn't. Liberty is uncomfortable: it demands trade-offs and offers no certainty — unsettling both left and right.

For those seeking social progress, prosperity often comes at the cost of equality - the faster the growth the more likely that some will race ahead. And free speech means tolerating views that will offend. Hard truths, when fairness and inclusion are the goal.

For conservatives, liberty can be just as unsettling. It allows social change that disrupts much-loved traditions and brings disruption to familiar landscapes and communities.

For those seeking certainty, freedom brings risk and responsibility - and all the anxiety that comes with them. History tells us liberty offers a proven path to progress - but it is not a panacea or a promise of utopia, which those seeking a perfect world find hard to accept.

The case for liberty will not make itself.

For many, its ideals are profoundly counterintuitive: freedom of thought, free trade, free markets, free speech, individual responsibility and the rule of law are not instinctive. We are naturally drawn to authoritarian solutions because they appear to offer clear answers to complex problems, and promise swift action when institutions seem to be failing. At times of economic disruption or social change, authoritarianism can seem not just credible but necessary - that is what gives populism its power.

Liberty must be argued for again and again. If we don't make the case, no one will. We must perfect our arguments — and, at the risk of being a crashing bore, take them to dinner tables, selection meetings, podcasts, and wherever else people are still listening. This effort is crucial because currently so few are prepared to make the case for freedom.

Political Power Is Rooted in Coercion

Those of us who oppose authoritarianism realise that government is - ultimately - based on coercion. The ability to impose law and order relies on the legal right to use force. Governments can imprison, fine, confiscate, and, in extreme cases, use lethal force - all legally. If you refuse to pay your taxes, you're fined. If you refuse to pay the fine, you're imprisoned. If you resist arrest, the state may use physical force to detain you.

Many politicians come to power with grand dreams of reshaping society. The impulse to improve the world is the cornerstone of progress throughout history. And yet, in government the desire to do "good" inevitably collides with the limits of what can be compelled, prohibited, or taxed. In general, the more ambitious the plan, the more power its advocates will seek.

Some argue that the pursuit of a better society should override the virtues of individual liberty. We start from the opposite point of view. It's not that the Government should *never* use its powers of compulsion to improve society — indeed, there are plenty of times when it *must*. But

those powers must never be used lightly. There must be a cast-iron reason for doing so. The starting point should be a presumption of individual liberty — and with it, individual responsibility — overridden only when there is clear and compelling justification.

Economic Power Is Founded on Reciprocity

Where political power compels, economic power persuades — offering something others value more than that which they give in return. In short, reciprocity.

This power can be abused, but it is fundamentally different from political power. An economic exchange - whether it is a country trading goods, or an individual trading labour for pay - should advantage both parties. Indeed wealth creation - the process of generating things that people value - happens most effectively when there is free, fair and voluntary exchange. Markets work because they allow millions of individual bargains to guide production and trade. This decentralised process uses local knowledge and personal preferences in a way that central planning never can.

The economic power of freedom

For those of us who believe we should be the masters of our own destiny, liberty is an important philosophical ideal and political goal in its own right. But it is also the economic condition that lets societies harness the dispersed knowledge, creativity and energy of their people. It is the best system we have to meet people's needs and deliver prosperity.

Matt Ridley uses the example of London, where ten million people manage to eat lunch every day without anyone planning it. Supermarkets, cafés, delivery bikes and corner shops all respond in real time to unpredictable choices. There is no lunch commissioner calculating what should be cooked or delivered - yet somehow, it all works.

From a £150 restaurant meal to a £1.50 lunch from Aldi, this daily miracle is made possible by the invisible hand of voluntary exchange - self-organising, responsive, and far more effective than any central plan. The market's spontaneous genius outperforms any top-down directive, creating order from chaos. Imperfect, but far more coordinated than any planned economy.

Conclusion of Part One

Freedom is not self-sustaining. It requires defence, constant argument, and the courage to challenge popular but dangerous ideas. It demands that we accept imperfection as the price of liberty.

In return, it gives us something priceless: freedom of conscience, freedom to speak and think, freedom to innovate and grow.

The choice before us is stark. We can let bad ideas go unchallenged, watch as authoritarianism advances under the banner of 'progressive' or 'traditional' values. Or we can reclaim our agency, perfect our arguments, and make the case for liberty wherever people are willing to listen.

Freedom does not defend itself. It needs champions. And if Liberty is

to have a chance, there must be a party that stands for it - a party of the Centre Right that can carry its standard in our generation.

Part Two: A Party for Liberty

A commitment to liberty - personal, political, economic - should be the basis for a renewed Centre Right. Too often, we are forced to vote for the party we fear the least. In the 1930s, that kind of thinking led people to back communism as a bulwark against fascism — and fascism as a defence against communism. But lesser-of-two-evils politics is no choice at all.

There is a better alternative: Liberal Conservativism. A practical philosophy rooted in the rule of law, institutional humility, and individual dignity. An Ideology that marries the liberty espoused by John Stuart Mill - the simple principle that we should be free to live as we choose, so long as we do not harm others - with a Burkeian respect for institutions, family and community. It sees society not as a blank slate for social architects to impose their grand designs, but as a shared endeavour — shaped by traditions and with institutions that should be reformed over time with both care and vigour.

It is time for Conservatives to reclaim the true values of liberalism — a philosophy rooted in individual freedom and the responsibility to respect the freedom of others. This classical liberalism stands in sharp contrast to the so-called liberalism of the progressive left, which uses state power to impose social change from above.

How can we govern well?

All too often, those in opposition ask little more than one question: "How can we win?" It's the wrong question. The right question is: "How can we govern well?". And the answer begins with principles — because clear principles are central to effective leadership.

Every government will face countless policy dilemmas. It will have hundreds of MPs, hundreds of thousands of civil servants, and millions of public sector employees. Ministers — let alone the Prime Minister — cannot answer every question or micromanage every decision. Instead, they must rely on clear principles to guide sound judgment and collective endeavour. That is the essence of leadership — and the only way to get things done in any large organisation.

So Liberal Conservatism is not a slogan. It is a framework for governing with both restraint and purpose.

Making the case

Principles are also the best way to communicate clearly to the public. And so we need to set out our understanding of liberty and the rule of law, and how it fundamentally differs from laissez faire - so often used as a straw man caricature of liberty.

We have to explain why authoritarian governments and populism invariably fail, despite their superficial appeal. We need to demonstrate

why freedom and responsibility is so remarkably successful, both socially and economically. This means explaining why economic systems work so much better when the Government acts as an impartial regulator rather than seeking to dictate outcomes.

Crucially, we must reassure people that a belief in open markets is not at odds with an effective and fair welfare state. In fact, we would argue that an effective welfare state is central to the operation of a free market because a well-designed safety net gives people the confidence to partDicipate, accepting the ever-present threat of new competition and technology. Ultimately, we must explain what we believe the Government is for, and what it is not for - setting the boundaries on state intervention and defining the size of the state.

Leadership not followership

This principles-based approach is no longer the natural order of politics. Around the world political parties are embracing the science of followership: of asking the public what they want to hear and trying to provide it. The increasing supremacy of the pollster has eroded trust in politics - while delivering neither prosperity nor popularity. We must have the courage of our convictions. We should be confident that the electorate is rational and capable of accepting difficult choices - if they are clearly explained.

It was that faith in the good sense of the British electorate that gave Margaret Thatcher the platform to win the 1979 election - and to keep winning, as the success of her policies became clear. We must harness that same *moral courage* and clarity of purpose if we are to succeed.

And, precisely because they are rational, we believe voters would welcome this kind of leadership. The popularity-seeking drift of political discourse has ultimately eroded trust in politics. We believe the public is ready for something better: a politics led by principle.

From principles to policies

The hardest task, by far, is to apply our principles to the most pressing policy challenges of our time. There is no shortage: the chronic undersupply of housing; the cost and performance of the NHS; defence of the realm; immigration; fiscal discipline; our underinvested road networks; and free speech in the digital age.

All too often politicians, on all sides, believe the problems of government are essentially *managerial* - "If only our people were in power, things would be done so much better." But the problem is rarely the wrong people. It is the wrong ideas, systems, regulations, and laws.

And getting the right systems is about rigorously applying our principles to our policies. So, if we have a belief in free markets, a scepticism of planned economies and a belief in the rule of law, then we ought to challenge our planning system head-on. That would mean replacing top-down planning with principle-based building controls and rules - a complete overhaul rather than usual tweaks.

The same applies to infrastructure. For example, if we want more effective investment in our roads, we should replace fuel duty with some form of road pricing. That would link the revenues from road use directly to investment in road capacity — allowing private capital to fund public infrastructure, where it's most needed. A market-based system is what you would expect from a party that believes in markets.

These policies may not be universally popular at first — but if we truly believe they will benefit the country, we must be prepared to make the case. Because if they are right, and we explain them well, good sense will prevail.

Opposition - the time to think and plan

It is frequently the case that the best thinking in government is done in Opposition. All too often, governments win power before really deciding what to do with it. So for the Centre Right to succeed, we will need to set out carefully thought-through White Papers, written and published in Opposition; and a plan for legislation ready the day we enter Downing Street; critical executive decisions ready to enact from day one.

In Conclusion

The task ahead is not merely to win power, but to deserve it.

We must return to restating principles in terms that can be understood in our age. We must craft serious policies, and persuade a sceptical public that liberty - messy, uncertain, and demanding as it is - offers the only sustainable path to prosperity and human flourishing.

The alternative is a choice between competing statist ideologies, each promising simple solutions to complex problems. That is no choice at all. Liberal Conservativism, rooted in the principles of liberty and the rule of law, awaits those bold enough to claim it, and the rewards for doing so could not be greater. Britain can be prosperous and free again - but only if we have the courage to make it so.

Ownership, and Not Dependency – Jean-André Prager

Introduction

The concept of ownership has always been the province of the Right. We have assigned it to home ownership, share ownership and pension ownership. All these are a consequence of a way of thinking about the individual's relationship to society and the state. A correlation has long been drawn between the notion that the more ownership one has, the greater one's stake in society.

This narrow formulation was apt for the 1970s and 1980s: buy your council house, buy a piece of formerly state-owned industries; British Airways, British Telecom, British Gas were placed in the hands of shareholders. Share ownership rose by a third. Home ownership grew from 55 per cent to 67 per cent.

But British adults now hold the smallest amount of equities of any G7 country.[12] Over half the housing wealth in our country is owned by those over 60, and home ownership for those under 35 is at 6 per cent.[13] However, I don't believe this is the cause of our present national malaise – I believe it is a reflection of it. Even if these woeful statistics improved, ownership in its historic right-leaning context is inadequate to tackle our current generational fragmentation and disaffection.

Owning a possession does not equate to a sense of ownership of one's life; of its direction, its aspiration, its quality. That sort of ownership represents hope; hope for the future, hope for today. The question the Right now needs to answer is how it creates a society where people feel that they own their future; where we feel in control of our lives, our country and our destiny. We lack a sense of agency. The Right needs to expand its definition of ownership to combat the growing pessimism about our individual and collective futures.

Reactionaries Can't Govern

Our society is riven by grievance, with progress apparently rendered impossible and voices raised loudly to silence those with whom they disagree or simply find disagreeable. The anger of reactionaries has filled the air with a toxicity as potent as any ULEZ-offending diesel lorry.

First from some on the Left, whose certainty of moral superiority

12. Dojan, 'UK adults hold the smallest percentage of wealth in investments of all G7 countries', Investment Week, 6/1/2025, link
13. Savills, 'Housing wealth held by over 60s hits record high', 26/4/2025, link

condemns the rest of us to purgatory to await judgement. And while we've been waiting, their realisation that it's not so easy to govern - and that moral superiority and problem solving may not be obvious bedfellows – is eroding that certainty, replacing it with doubt and indecision. And indecision, as every government learns, is incompatible with a hopeful future.

And then from some on the Right, whose prognostications of recurring national catastrophe have proven to be a potent recruiting sergeant for the disaffected. Powerful stuff when leading lemmings off a cliff. Not so compelling in creating a vision of the future which is full of despair and division. Projecting catastrophe to win elections falls short of inspiring hope;

Both of these are called "reactionary" for a reason. If you want to take ownership of your future, you need to know what you believe in, not merely what you oppose. The former is harder.

Throughout history, reactionaries—both Left and Right—have been potent in provoking an adjustment in a government's direction of travel but have struggled to govern; once in charge, they find they have only themselves to react against. They are arguing in a mirror. Reactionaries don't create functioning stability and improvement. Rather, they exist to exploit; to alienate. Gifted at gauging the national mood; deficient in articulating a unifying vision of national purpose; incapable of uniting disparate viewpoints to create a cohesive whole. In government, reactionaries inevitably disappoint. They do not own their future. Instead, they depend upon the efforts of others to inflame their base and frame their vision.

Reactionaries address today with no vision or plan for tomorrow - pied pipers fanning discord, disappointment and disaffection, leading their supporters on a merry dance. It feels good to focus on the limited horizon of the here and now, to assert certainty, and to score points. But the future of the Right cannot be glimpsed through a lens inducing this sort of myopia.

From Equity to Fairness

Over the last decade, the Right has increasingly become dependent upon the Left's framework to define its own vision for the future. The Left has set the moral framework and assumptions for the debate. The cries for "equity" and "equality"- a shorthand for equality of outcome - have eclipsed aspiration for fairness. Demands for increased funding, whether wage settlements, health, education or benefits, have overridden the necessity of measuring outcomes. Unfortunately, spending more money does not necessarily guarantee better outcomes. But "equality" sounds like a good thing – who wouldn't want it? Say it and make it so.

Sadly, there is an obvious flaw in the altruism and ideological purity of the Left. It is both fanciful and unobtainable. The facts are inconvenient: life is unfair. It's inherently unequal with many factors simply outside one's control, including the circumstances of one's birth. Creating equal

opportunity can change a life's trajectory. Assisting fair access to equal opportunity should be government's proper role, not trying to define and legislate concepts of equality.

Nonetheless, the Left's altruism feels more attractive than the cold reality of life's hard truths. This has trapped the Right, which has been focused on articulating what and who we are for. Defining oneself in terms of one's opposition is a sign of philosophical and strategic calcification. This is a fundamental problem for the Right. It has given up authorship of its future. It has traded ownership for dependency.

Offering a Future

So the future of the Right lies not in convincing voters they have something to be angry about today, but in offering a future in which they, their families and their neighbours will be better off tomorrow. No political party or political movement can survive without hope. Hope unifies us. Hope allows us to see a tomorrow which is better than today. It is the birdsong of democracy. How do we get there?

We have lived in the age of slogans for far too long: "Smash the Gangs", "Stop the Boats", "For the Many not the Few", "Strong and Stable", "Change". Slogans that promise but don't deliver. We must no longer be defined by the problems we face as a nation, but rather by the solutions. The Right must cultivate a younger constituency; appeal to younger voters by finding policies that reflect the promise of the future, not simply a nostalgia for the past. We need to shrink the distance between aspiration and realisation and seek to give ownership back to younger voters, making them the architects of their future.

A simple policy example: the Child Trust Fund,[14] in which, from the moment of birth, the state invested up to £500 in the future by giving each British citizen born the seed money for a trust fund that would vest at the age of 18. Originally a Labour initiative realised between 2002 and 2011, it was forsaken by the Coalition Government, with over 670,000 savers not claiming the funds invested on their behalf and nearly £2 billion abandoned.[15] This initiative should have given those savers a sense of ownership in society. The Government was literally investing in their future; a downpayment to create opportunity rather than a welfare benefit to provide a standard of living.

The Right needs to expropriate qualities commandeered by the Left to describe a future that can once again unite the United Kingdom: empathy, fairness, opportunity and, yes, hope. Why is this important to the Right's future? In a democracy, our obligation to each other is our unwritten covenant. The Right must promote a new non-threatening covenant between the people and their government, redefining how they interact and what their expectations of each other should be. A covenant that builds in fairness and rewards endeavour, transcending the status of birth and recognising the power of creative thought and hard graft.

Student loans are an expected piece of support that the State gives to encourage higher education and attainment among its brightest young

14. Sharefound, 'What is a Child Trust Fund?', link
15. UK Government, HM Revenue and Customs, '671,000 young people urged to cash in their government savings pot', 24/9/2024, link

people. Should the State support entrepreneurs who eschew higher education in the same way by funding their new ideas and businesses? The Right, by advocating for investment in the potential of young people, would support a culture of endeavour and achievement, rather than complacency.

The new covenant that the Right promotes must place ownership at its core, but must transmute that concept beyond accumulation. It must celebrate an individual's achievement as a manifestation of communal commitment. We must embark on an ecumenical endeavour where we all embrace the responsibility to contribute to the betterment of society, whatever that might be, for each individual.

We need to reward people who add value rather than simply extract value, whether they are illegal economic migrants, benefit cheats, tech companies or carpetbagging private equity firms. Greed tends to concentrate wealth and exacerbate the gap between rich and poor; helping a small cohort, while harming a significantly larger group. It belies the notion of common national purpose, and that's where the Right's sense of ownership needs to live. We need to own our shared sense of national purpose. The Right needs to be the proponent of a new covenant which understands that we have an obligation to each other to advance communal purpose, personal responsibility and financial contribution, and that government's role should be that of partner rather than parent. What the state can do is different than what the state should do. From time to time, our covenant will need to be revisited and reviewed. If the Right is to be its author it needs to ask hard questions, think the previously unthinkable, in order to build positive policy that both provides solutions to the challenges that have plagued us for years and capture the imagination of the British people.

Such questions include: how do we tackle generational fairness? Is the triple lock sustainable?, Can we afford to spend £100 billion on health and disability benefits? Is our definition of disability too broad?, "Should healthcare be free to all at the point of use? Is Net Zero a fool's errand? Should money be spent on reenforcing our shoreline because the battle against climate change is lost?, Is it in our national interest to mandate energy self- sufficiency?, Has Brexit killed growth for the long term? We have to look hard at the sacred cows that have been untouchable in conventional politics for years, if not decades. The Right needs to ask these questions to remind ourselves what it believes in; to find our lode star, because it currently lacks one.

Choice in the Age of Big Tech

The rejection of dependency and path to ownership has three obvious obstacles: paternalism, infantilisation, and disaffection.

The Right has drifted into a state of dependency that has eroded our sense of a national mission. It may not be entirely our fault. Our national mood is plagued by a general sense of insecurity. When proselytising for the great pillars of the Right - "smaller government", "individual

freedom", "lower tax", we find ourselves rowing against public opinion. This flows from the Black Swan events of Covid 19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine: because for both big government served as a lifeline for many, and the arguments against state intervention seemed to grow tenuous. For some, state paternalism became an accepted way of life, usurping human agency.

With the unrelenting ascent of "Big Tech", we are, under the guise of being empowered, in fact, being infantilised. The "Everything Store" of Amazon, [16] the "Infinite Browsing Mode" of Netflix[17] and the "Global Community" of Facebook[18] create a mirage of choice and ownership.

However, all these limit rather than expand our experience by creating echo chambers that reinforce biases. Code dictates our experience and directs our thoughts in deciding what we should see and hear. It controls our perception of the world. The raw material of human experience is being transmuted into behavioural data. We believe we are thinking for ourselves, but our thoughts are being shaped, tailored, our ignorance exploited, our fears provoked, and our ability to think for ourselves reduced. We risk becoming a society with access to facts but unable to synthesize them or think for itself. Finding objective truth will become more and more difficult as opinion, or as Oprah Winfrey calls it, "your truth", becomes the currency of societal interaction.[19]

We are sleepwalking into the age of AI in which old ideas will be repackaged as new, human creativity can be stolen without recourse, and job opportunities shrink to unimaginable levels. Dario Amodei the CEO of Anthropic, one of the world's most powerful AI companies, predicts an unemployment armageddon, with 20 per cent of the educated white collar workforce redundant within five years, increasing dependency on government and eroding confidence in the future.[20]

For many, the nature of the interaction that Big Tech promotes results in alienation and a feeling of helplessness. Nothing changes. There is no hope. We have become pawns. Digital serfs. It has about it a flavour of nihilism that risks damaging our nation's prosperity.

Up to now, governments have left Big Tech broadly unbridled. Indeed, the Right has largely argued for limited interference and regulation. But is this a sensible path for the future of the Right? The continued concentration of power and wealth in an extremely small number of people and companies? The greatest wealth gap in human history? So that while the big tech companies gain from higher profits through increasing our productivity, we lose our ability more fully to access information and communicate with each other (to name just a few tangible benefits).

It is time for review. Although government interference in business is anathema to many conservative thinkers, Big Tech poses a threat to democracy, children's health, education, discourse and, well, truth. This prospect terrifies politicians who recognise the enormous power that Big Tech now wields and are reluctant to intervene. Perhaps this tells us that we need a new order of courage in the politicians we select and support.

The Right is not a fan of tax as a tool of redistribution of wealth, but it does

16. Popomaronis, 'Jeff Bezos: Amazon turned into 'the everything store' thanks to an email to 1,000 random people', CNBC, 9/10/2020, link
17. Pete Davis, 'A Counterculture of Commitment', link
18. Zuckerberg, 'Building Global Community', link
19. Demille, '"Your Truth is the Most Powerful Tool"- Oprah's Globes Speech, in Full', Golden Globes, 9/1/2018, link
20. Vanderhei and Allen, 'Behind the Curtain: A white-collar bloodbath', 28/5/2025, link

recognise paying one's fair share as the price of civilisation and effectively a share certificate in society. With that in mind, does the ascendancy of Big Tech decrease our sense of ownership in our society? Is it beneficial to a democracy or does it increase our sense of disenfranchisement? The shopkeeper and small businessman or woman who was a part of your local community and the backbone of Britain's economy has been sacrificed for a Tech company resident elsewhere to avoid tax.

The Right shouldn't celebrate this – as some would argue. Instead, it should expect those companies to invest in our country, in our people and in our future. If the values of the Big Tech companies do not align with our national values, then government must intervene. Big Tech may profit but it should not exploit the British public and must take responsibility for the services it provides. In the same way that we look to government to make sure food producers do not poison us, we should look to government to protect our young people. This isn't overreach.

The Right should make social media companies subject to the same obligations and liabilities as publishers. This isn't curtailing free speech: it is asking Big Tech to adhere to the same societal standards that prevent someone from falsely shouting "fire" in a crowded cinema, or failing to tell someone who is severely allergic that there may be nuts in their snack. Big Tech needs to own the impact it has on society generally and the UK specifically. The Right's call for ownership should extend to the actions and implications of Big Tech.

Solutions, Trust and Empowerment

Ask voters in Grimsby today if they have seen the change from Labour they thought they voted for. How do you think they'd answer?

The pollster James Johnson recently went to find out. The language being used is startling: "hundreds of homeless Britons on the streets, while floods of illegal migrants are housed in hotels on the taxpayer"; "children hobbled with mental health problems", "criminals and junkies with politicians and local police powerless to stop them". "Disgraceful", "disgusting" and "managed decline". And perhaps a sentiment that is the most alarming, "there's no democracy in the UK anymore".[21]

With this kind of language, one would think that such voters would reach for the centre right or right-wing Alternative. But they're not. Such is their disaffection that they are not voting. It's not just happening in Grimsby. It's being repeated in communities across Britain.

A slogan emerged from Johnson's research: "Britain First". This wasn't seen as far-right demagoguery or racist language but rather a plea that the interests of Britain be a government's primary focus. It is the parochial call that 'charity begins at home'. But while "Britain First" may be an appealing slogan, the Right needs to reconnect with the nation to build policy, not marketing campaigns; policy which would improve the nation's outcomes in five years, not slogans to enhance the prospects of an impending election.

The Right must empower the individual and identify and celebrate the

21. Johnson, 'James Johnson: pollster's thoughts on political swing in UK', Channel 4, 19/3/2025, link

values that define our nation: democracy, rule of law, respect and tolerance and individual liberty, because irrespective of whether the problems are migration, energy, tariffs or war, the solutions will require communal purpose and individual aspiration.

We need to improve lives. Return the rule of law. Shrink the wealth gap. Create equal opportunity. Protect freedom of speech and promote common sense. And not a single one of those should be a slogan. They should be fearless policies of political pragmatism, not paralysing ideological purity - policies that return common purpose and celebrate unity. There should be no ceiling on what one can achieve if one is given the tools, encouragement and freedom to rise. Our fate should not be written by others, but rather, by ourselves; we should look up to the horizon of our future.

The Right needs to be empowering. It needs to be forward-thinking, diverse and resistant to the vagaries of the culture wars that devalue our history and erode the integrity of our cultural touchstones. We must be proud of our past, proud of our cultural heritage, proud of our Union and building upon it to secure a better future together.

The Right must be synonymous with solutions. We must eschew reaction; recapture the trust of voters, and instil confidence by describing a hopeful future; one in which all boats rise. A future we own. Here's a new slogan we should be committed to realising for the good of the entire nation. One we would be wise to own: "Onwards, Together".

Society Not Government – Katie Lam MP

Earlier this year, I appeared on a regional television show with a Labour MP, and the conversation turned to volunteering. The presenter played a clip featuring various volunteering organisations, like a support hub for elderly people and a community transport initiative, designed to help people in rural Kent to travel in the absence of public transport.

My Labour colleague was first to speak. He said that it was terrible that the state wasn't fulfilling these functions, forcing people to volunteer instead. This was presented as an apolitical point – so obviously true that no right-minded person could possibly disagree.

But I believe exactly the opposite. Of course, there are some things that only the state can do, but that list is short. Where communities are unable to do things for themselves, or where nationwide coordination is necessary, the state can step in. But if a group of volunteers are providing a service that works for the people who value it, then surely that's the best case scenario for everyone?

Unfortunately, the opposite kind of thinking is all too common in our politics. We are far too squeamish about the idea that some services are better delivered by bodies outside of state control – whether that be private companies, charities, or other volunteer organisations. We are even more squeamish about accepting that this means some of these services might sometimes fail. This makes no sense, because services provided by the state also fail, all the time.

Volunteerism has been a feature of British life for centuries, and it is a social institution worth celebrating. We have a long history of small families and relative mobility, as highlighted by the work of historians like Alan Macfarlane and Peter Laslett. As people moved around the country in search of opportunity, often as part of a small family unit, their lives were sustained and enriched by a thriving civil society which rested on a foundation of mutual interest. Unlike in other societies, where extended family networks often formed the basis of an individual's social and economic life, the British way has instead been to organise ourselves based on common interests – common geography, common hobbies, common challenges, and common goals.

It was an interwoven web of personal connections and affiliations, a network of people who relied not just on themselves and their families, but on each other. Even today, most of the institutions which make our country such a fulfilling place to live are voluntary. After decades of

government efforts to 'build community', it is still volunteerism which actually connects us to the places that we live and the people who share them with us. It is voluntary society which gives us the Scout hut, the five-a-side football team, the amateur theatre troupe, and the village fete. No dead-handed bureaucracy could replace these institutions, which thrive, in large part, because they address the real needs and wants of their communities, rather than following direction from the political centre.

And on a smaller scale, our approach to family has been informed by the same instincts. We've created social systems which allow people to have the best of both worlds – the right amount of independence, with a healthy degree of voluntary association with extended family. Ideas like private property ownership enable young families to carve out their own path, put down roots, and build a life collaboratively. In turn, those families are less likely to be reliant on the state, instead building their own wealth and their own support networks.

Of course, the mutual society of the 19th and 20th centuries wasn't perfect. Many people fell through the cracks, and the strength of civil society wasn't spread evenly; due to history, geography, and economic conditions, some areas were simply better served than others.

The political answer, over successive decades, has been for the state to pick up the slack, or perceived slack (some places actually didn't have certain things because the people there didn't want them enough to create them themselves). Whenever a harm arises or something goes wrong, "something must be done", and so politicians will busily engage in finding creative new ways to prevent that harm from ever happening again. The approach, typically, is the same: "*the world is a scary place, and people can't be trusted to run their own lives. We need more regulation, more restrictions, and more political control.*" And the "solution" is then applied in a blanket way across the country, often creating at least as many problems as it solves in communities that were already absolutely fine, thank you very much.

On a case-by-case basis, any one of these interventions might be understandable, or even attractive. In the aggregate, they create a system in which organic volunteerism is impossible. Take the infamous street parties, which are such an enduring symbol of the late Queen's coronation in 1953. Even amidst rationing and rain, communities came together to hang bunting, share food, and celebrate the coronation. No Whitehall direction was necessary.

Today, the aspiring organiser will need to tell the council about their event four to twelve weeks in advance, provide a full list of properties and businesses affected, and perform a full consultation with their immediate neighbours. Thanks to the cultural memory of the 1953 coronation, street parties are actually one of the more lightly regulated events that a community can host.

If your event is going to have music, you'll need a music license under the Licensing Act 2003. If you plan to sell alcohol, you'll need a temporary license under the Temporary Events Notice. If you use social media to advertise your event, and the advertising is designed to attract people

from outside of your immediate community, that's another set of permits entirely.

And perversely, while governments have heaped on this kind of regulation for decades, they've also failed to address many of the biggest barriers to a genuinely thriving civil society. Our housing system no longer enables the kind of mobility and movement that once allowed communities to grow, shrink, and form organically. Over decades, we've failed to build enough houses in our biggest cities, exporting their demand to commuter belt towns. Increasingly, our villages are composed of people who sleep there, but wake up at the crack of dawn to head into the city. At the same time, those who work in villages – the school teacher, the publican, the nurse – can't afford to live there, and in turn become commuters.

How can we build a thriving mutual society like this? How can you sing in a choir that rehearses near work on a Wednesday night, when faced with a gruelling commute home afterwards? Or play in a sports team that practices in the week but plays at the weekend, or become a parish councillor, or do almost any of the voluntary work that communities need to be communities?

Then there's the broader economy, which has stagnated since 2008. While wages flatline and inflation pushes the cost of living ever-higher, is it any wonder that many people don't have the means to engage with the community around them? Add to that the disruptive impact of mass migration, and it should come as no surprise that we no longer live in the kind of thriving, self-sustaining society that we used to.

At every step, governments have made it impossible for society to provide for itself. This failure is taken as proof positive that more state intervention is needed – further crippling society's ability to support itself. This is a vicious cycle, and one which 21st-century conservatism must break for good.

At times, there has been a grudging acceptance of the idea that the state isn't best placed to deliver every service under the sun. Particularly on the political right, there is an awareness that bureaucrats in Whitehall are rarely the best people to direct resources and determine the needs of our communities.

But in the past, when governments have worked with charities and other non-governmental organisations, they have rarely been willing to cede real control. Instead, they have used these institutions to deliver the services that the state has already decided must be delivered. While we may have, at times, accepted that society is best placed to handle the supply of certain services, demand has still been determined by Whitehall.

Of course, this has also been accompanied by massive grants, at great expense to the taxpayer.

In doing so, we have created an enormous industry of charities, campaign organisations, and NGOs, which rely on government funding to survive – a kind of 'charity-industrial complex'. Their reliance on government funding means that these organisations can never truly exist independently of the state; they will always seek more funding, more

support, and more special accommodations. At the same time, the fact that these organisations are nominally charities means that they can still behave contrary to the interests of the government. They are also, perversely, disincentivised from actually solving the problems they nominally address, because that would see the grant funding dry up. This is the worst of all worlds; financial backing, indefinitely, at the taxpayer's expense, without meaningful control.

Since 2019, the 'Race Equality Foundation', a charity which focuses on tackling racial inequalities, has received over £2 million in taxpayer money. It has supported the Labour Party's proposed Race Equality Act, and condemned the previous government's Rwanda deportation plan for asylum seekers. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation received £1 million from the government in 2023, to support its work on 'promoting social justice'; it has called UK borders 'systematically racist', and says that our immigration system is rooted in 'colonial enterprise and racially hierarchical worldviews'.

The list goes on and on; there are too many examples to recount here. Do these charities fulfil a real function, for which there is organic demand? Maybe – but we will never know for sure. This kind of advocacy is deeply disagreeable, but it would be far less so if it weren't also funded by the taxpayer. When the state makes decisions about which charities, volunteer groups, and community initiatives deserve funding, it changes the incentive structure that those bodies operate within. Rather than allowing genuine civil society to flourish, we instead have the elaborate charity-industrial complex.

This uncomfortable reality was ultimately the reason for the failure of the 'Big Society' project pursued by the Coalition government of the early 2010s. Rather than accepting that a smaller state would mean less political control, the Coalition tried to have the best of both worlds – and instead ended up with an unhappy medium.

But where previous Conservative governments did give up control, they saw remarkable success. It's no surprise that one of the major achievements of the party's fourteen years in government – free schools – came from a willingness to step back and let parents and teachers make decisions about the schools that they run and to which they send their children. When we think about reform of our major public services, such as schools, social services and the NHS, we shouldn't just be asking 'what should the government do differently', but 'who is the right person to be making these decisions?'

It is obviously true that a lack of control sometimes means that we don't get the outcomes that we'd like. Not every family will raise their children in the way that politicians think is best. Not every charity will spend its resources on the most pressing concerns, and not every community event will run smoothly. Things will go wrong, people will disagree, and not every community will be equally well-served.

But we must accept that a healthy mutual society cannot grow under government direction. Wherever it has been tried, it has failed – and not

just failed, but created a parasitic class of activists.

If it is to adapt to the realities of the 21st century, British conservatism must recognise this truth. We should be willing to celebrate the role that volunteerism can play in our society, and should resist calls for every aspect of our lives to be managed by the state. Where people can rely on one another, rather than on the government, we should enable them to do so (including by simply getting out of the way).

But after decades of the opposite approach, this will require bold action. It will mean cutting back red tape, and removing grants for activist charities. It will mean fixing our housing system and controlling the borders, so that organic communities can form, grow, and thrive again. It will also mean, crucially, accepting that downsides, trade-offs, and bad outcomes are the price that we pay for living in a free country with a genuine sense of community.

Belonging and Not Rootlessness – Salma Shah

Western democracies including the UK are facing uncannily similar challenges. The ever-enlarging state applying pressure to political leaders to be omnipresent**;** the slow rebound we have suffered from economic shocks from the financial crisis to the pandemic. Even the certain order of the Western Alliance has come under pressure. There is a pattern emerging across once advanced economies, when systems no longer flourish, a collective identity crisis.

In this disordered world, do we know what we stand for? Do we have a values and belief system that retains an ability to deliver? Are we rootless or have we merely been allowed to drift? How does one belong, when there is little confidence about what we belong to?

The Infrastructure of Belonging

Too often the Right centres its discussions of belonging on social and cultural factors, focusing closely on immigration controls, ethno-religious identity or loyalty to a singular sense of Britishness. While socio-cultural dynamics are certainly part of the picture, they cannot neglect the impact of economic factors.

The state has many limitations. It cannot fabricate belonging: for the individual to belong, it is only the smaller units of family or community that hold society together. The 'little platoons' on which Burkean Conservatism was formed is still a necessity today - often communities that exist across national borders with online communities and international clubs are the very forces that Burke favoured, but why is it that communities can exist globally in the guise of an internationally mobile elite, but are nonetheless difficult to form across postcodes in the UK?

No army can march on an empty stomach, and the soldiers of the little platoons must recognise this simple fact. Without jobs, opportunities and growth there is desperately little time or inclination to form the forces of belonging. It must be acknowledged that civil society, in the form of voluntary organisations and charities, works tirelessly against deprivation to sustain community bonds, funding and creating hubs and spaces for those most in need, sat between families and the state, but this provision is precarious and coming under increasing pressure from economic demand.

The decline in charitable funding is illustrated by the eight per cent decline in charitable donations from the British public from 2019 to

2024.[22] Equally, government grants fell from 26 per cent from 2021–22 to 2022–23, dropping to about £3.03 billion,[23] while local authority funding shrank in a quarter of financially precarious councils by 75 per cent.[24] Finally, corporate donation has slowed significantly: in 2023 corporate donations were £1.82 billion, a drop from £1.85 billion.[25] The slowdown in charitable donation has left voluntary organisations and charities in a difficult position in supporting communities.

Charities alone cannot bear the brunt of supporting those areas in the most need. Previously they were accompanied by private philanthropy, which has also been declining and stands at risk of further decline. The top one per cent of wealth-holders[26] donated about £7.96 billion in 2025, while the remaining 99 per cent gave around £13.9 billion.[27] Philanthropy from the wealthiest has been trending downward with donations from the top one per cent undergoing a 20 per cent decline between 2012 to 2019.[28] Given the current rate of capital flight, private philanthropy is also at risk – and with it the ability to support communities.

The need to belong is universal. Whilst we may not share a common forms of worship or have the same politics, we still on the whole believe in each others' right to live a life of our own choice and making. What enables this is capacity through the skills we obtain and the opportunities we can take. As Burke recognised, the family is first of 'the little platoons we belong to in society' and is 'the germ of public affections.'[29] Family is a central, if not the central, part of the infrastructure of belonging – but such infrastructure cannot be supported by family alone. Families themselves must be supported by the wider system of belonging whether that is voluntary organisations, employment or community spaces.

Supporting families must also be understood within the context of labour mobility. Moving for work and opportunities is necessity for many, but comes at the cost of diminishing the networks of family support. Taking the family as the central element of community bonds, the need to move for work applies significant pressure the networks of mutual support necessary to belonging. Instead, we must provide jobs and support where people are – not uprooting families in the pursuit of economic opportunity.

The Ownership of Belonging

Taking our small platoons to be the basis of belonging, the Right should enable their participation by providing economic opportunity, and subsequently autonomy - the most important part of which is the ownership of capital. The first step to returning to a rooted politics is to give individuals a stake in their communities. It is only by turning people from bystanders into active participants through ownership that a shared sense of identity and belonging can be strengthened.

One cannot expect belonging in the absence of ownership, because to own something is to be responsible for it. Responsibility is as much a material concern as it is a moral condition. Here lies the deeper purpose of ownership as part of belonging: the individual holds a moral responsibility

22. Charities Aid Foundation, 'British Public Gave £15.4 billion to charity in 2024 but far fewer people are giving', 31/3/2025, link
23. Wait, 'Central government grants to charities fall by over a quarter', Civil Society, 25/7/2024, link
24. Preston, 'Financially at-risk councils cutting grants to charities, research finds', Civil Society, 4/7/2025, link
25. Charities Aid Foundation, 'Donations From FTSE 100 Companies to Charities Have Not Kept Pace With Profits Over the Past Decade', 16/9/2024, link
26. Approximately 536,000 people with £trillion in investable assets
27. Charities Aid Foundation, 'High Value Giving: How the UK's Wealthiest Give', 2025, link
28. Commission on Civil Society, 'Charity donations from UK's Richest Down 20per cent Despite Rising Income', link
29. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

to maintain the social fabric of the place where they live. Multiplying ownership generates an overlapping set of individual obligations toward a sense of common cause founded in local belonging. Owning property thus expresses the synthesis of physical and personal belonging by providing a personal stake in the community alongside a sense of common purpose – and responsibility for defining that purpose.

It is no surprise, therefore, that in areas defined by low rates of home ownership people reported a diminished sense of belonging. As David Goodhart identified 'Somewheres are more rooted and usually have "ascribed" identity...based on group belonging in particular places'[30], meaning that belonging depends on a clear and firmly held sense of rootedness in a specific place. One Government study notes that in Manchester, where 37 per cent of homes are owned, compared to the national average of 65 per cent,[31] only 54 per cent of people had a sense of belonging.[32] The same study found 'There was variation in feelings of belonging between adults from different index of…deprivation deciles… Adults living in the highest (least deprived) decile (70 per cent) were more likely to feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood than adults living in all other deciles (54 per cent in the lowest).'[33] Across the most deprived areas of the country home ownership is a consistent issue. Taking Blackpool as an example, which frequently ranks among the most deprived areas in the UK, with 26,139 people on universal credit in 2024,[34] 31.4 per cent of households own their home[35] and only about half of residents feel a sense of belonging to their local area.[36]

Declining control of economic capital has led to concomitant decline in social capital. As the rate of property ownership declined so did people's belief that they could influence decisions affecting their local area, that people would be willing to help their neighbours and the feeling of strong local belonging.[37] The absence of economic-social capital and the withering community bonds has left a vacuum filled by ineffectual statist integration. The 'megastructures' of the state 'are not helpful in providing meaning and identity for human existence'[38] because they are not rooted in organic forms of social association. Such overarching structures cannot cohere individuals into a whole, instead they create 'a mass of abstract individuals who are solitary and isolated as human beings.'[39] It is only through the social responsibility of economic capital that communities can gain a genuine sense of belonging as the imposition of statist integration cannot grant the 'practical medium for the expression of moral and intellectual qualities'[40] necessary to rootedness.

Creating a property-owning democracy is not just a matter of holding a stake in one's community, but also of autonomy. It is vital that the small platoons possess autonomy through capital ownership because it is this freedom that allows individuals to engage with the organic and personalistic process of belonging.

Platoons can only create a culture and an identity (social capital) through the autonomy afforded by the accumulation of economic capital. The socio-cultural existing downstream from the economic means that a

30. Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere*, (London: Hurst & Co, 2017)
31. UK Government, 'Community Life Survey 2023/24: Neighbourhood and Community', (4/12/2024), link
32. Ibid
33. Ibid
34. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Blackpool, (9/12/2024), link
35. Ibid
36. UK Government, 'Community Life Survey 2023/24: Neighbourhood and Community', (4/12/2024), link
37. Office of National Statistics, Social Capital Survey, 2014-2021, link
38. Berger and Neuhaus, To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy, (Routledge, 2021), link
39. Röpke, The Social Crisis of Our Time, (University of Chicago Press, 1950)
40. Skelton, 'Problem and Principle', and 'Democracy Stabilised', The Spectator, (19/5/1923)

future Government of the Right should prioritise economic opportunity as the basis of a deep and genuine sense of belonging. Failing to do so spells a return to the deeply ineffective methods of state-led integration which failed to provide the opportunity and autonomy necessary for real engagement with others.

Creating the economic opportunity necessary to autonomous belonging cannot occur without some degree of state intervention. This does not seek to channel individuals into a predetermined framework of identification. Rather, the Right should provide the basic level of skills and investment as the prerequisite to economic opportunity.

Home ownership is not merely a capital resource. It is the safety of home, the manifestation of our hard work identity, the security we provide for future generations. We cannot be invested in putting down our roots if we are denied a place in which to do it.

The Distribution of Belonging

Burkean platoons through Thatcherite ownership of capital must involve a degree of Johnsonian levelling up.

The most deracinated areas are primarily characterised by the cycle of poor skills attainment, economic inactivity and unemployment. This is borne out in the statistics as the national unemployment rate for people aged 16 and over was 4.4 per cent from December 2024 to February 2025[41] with an economic inactivity rate of around 22 per cent.[42] In the Northeast specifically the 2024 employment rate fell 4.6 per cent from the previous year in tandem with a 3.8 per cent increase in economic inactivity.[43] Simultaneously a survey conducted by the British Chambers of Commerce found that 73 per cent of organisations said that they were suffering from skills shortages.[44] The skill shortage is unevenly spread across the regions with 71 per cent of adults in London holding a degree compared with 29 per cent in Hull and East Yorkshire while in the West Midlands 27 per cent of workers have qualifications below GCSE level.[45] The coincidence of unemployment and economic inactivity with skills shortages presents a clear opportunity to engender rejuvenation, but this must start by providing individuals with the tools for participation.

Skills must, therefore, be at the heart of the economic opportunity which induces belonging. There has been significant progress on skills in recent years through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 which strengthened the role of technical education while establishing for reskilling amongst adults and employer-led training through Local Skills Improvement Plans. These were important measures in improving access to training aligned with industry, but more must be done to remove barriers to training.

Investment in skills must be accompanied by investment in economic infrastructure. Infrastructure building, introduced in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, was intended not just to improve economic outcomes but to address the productivity problem through "'agglomeration benefits": big, usually urban centres allow for more

41. Office of National Statistics, 'Labour Market Overview, UK: April 2025', (2025), link
42. British Chambers of Commerce, 'Business Barometer', (2024), link
43. Office of National Statistics, 'Labour Market in the Regions of the UK: July 2024', (2024), link
44. British Chambers of Commerce, 'Business Barometer', (2024), link
45. Stewart, 'Warning of "Skills Chasm" Amid Huge UK Regional Divide in Qualifications', The Guardian, 6/1/2025, link

knowledge-sharing, leading to specialisation and businesses having a wider pool of workers to enable better matches to jobs.'[46] Investment in transport, energy and connectivity should provide the latticework for a more highly skilled population to produce sustained growth. In turn, this kickstarts the economic opportunities required for individuals to buy into British identity on their own terms, and from individual engagement comes a broader sense of mutually constituted identity.

Investment in long-term economic infrastructure rests on the same underlying logic as promoting skills. That heightened productivity works through the individual to create community to the benefit of both. Improving productivity through infrastructure investment to support skills will benefit individuals by creating better paying jobs while benefiting the community by creating economic opportunity. Both of which support the economic autonomy and personal engagement needed for belonging.

The Changing Nature of Belonging

Currently the Right's thinking on belonging is focused almost entirely on the rate and character of immigration. To some degree this is a consequence of the significant increase in quantity during the last five years. The need to control immigration is a sentiment with which few would disagree. One result of shifting the emphasis toward immigration control is a neglect of integration policy and its position within a broader landscape of economic disenfranchisement.

British integration policy should prioritise economic opportunity as a central lever for building cohesive communities, as economic exclusion is a key driver of the tensions often associated with migration. As was noted by the 'Integrated Communities Strategy'[47], disparities in access to the labour market, skills development, and quality housing can entrench segregation and resentment, particularly in areas facing economic decline. While debates about migration frequently centre on numbers and borders, the underlying frustrations in many communities stem from feelings of economic disenfranchisement, stagnant wages, and lack of opportunity – problems experienced by both migrants and settled populations. New migration will compound these problems in areas of already stretched resources.

This is not to say that the Right should ignore socio-cultural dynamics. It should continue with non-economic approaches to integration such as English language testing, citizenship tests and an expectation of broad values alignment. The focus must be on crafting an effective framework for integration if we are to return to a more rooted politics. We should not use the levers of immigration control without understanding integration strategy. Equally, radically reducing the rate of immigration will work to the detriment of public services, the NHS heavily relies on immigration to sustain its workforce. Overturning this system would spell serious difficulties for the ability of such services to continue functioning let alone actually improve on their challenging record.

Providing individuals with the tools to better themselves and giving

46. Pope, Shearer, Hourston, 'Levelling Up and Infrastructure Policy', Institute for Government, (2022), link
47. HM Government, 'Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper', 3/2018, link

them the ability to buy into success is critical to allowing people to autonomously shape their own sense of belonging. The means to capital, through ownership, skills and employment, should be the focus of the Right's thinking as economic capital generates social capital, from which the personalistic process of belonging can occur. Further, restoring economic enfranchisement will ease the social pressures on social cohesion.

Conclusion

Much of the Right's discussion has been centred on how to control immigration rates, not without reason, but this discussion is hopeless without a coherent integration strategy. Rootedness begins in the everyday structures through which individuals engage with their communities – through families, employment, ownership, and opportunity. For this reason, the Right must focus its thought on cultivating belonging primarily through economic capital, from which shared social capital flows. This requires the infrastructure of rootedness: stable homes, meaningful work, community institutions, and civic spaces. Without access to economic capital the small platoons of society cannot thrive. Integration, therefore, is not merely about proximity or conformity, but about empowerment and participation. It is through the autonomy to shape one's environment that individuals begin to see themselves as part of the wider British story. If the Right is serious about renewing national cohesion, it must start by giving people something real to belong to – beginning not with the rhetoric of nation, but with the quiet work of restoring the conditions for human flourishing.

Defence Not Disarmament – Edward Barlow

Introduction

Britain faces an increasingly unstable global security environment evolving at unprecedented pace, principally characterised by the rising tide of authoritarian states seeking to revise the liberal international order. The UK must defend its own homeland, support Euro-Atlantic security and forge deep cooperation with partners in addition to building resilience in its industrial capacity and civil society.

The Right must first acknowledge that it is no longer the natural guardian of defence. Conservative governments allowed defence spending to fall after 2010, only turning a corner with substantial increases in 2021 and 2023. Meanwhile threats were multiplying, and the Labour opposition had articulated its plans to increase defence spending substantially. To regain its status as the natural guardian of defence the Right must propose a firm commitment to European security by the improvement and expansion of our industrial base alongside the development of deep global relationships at the same time as building a resilient society that can combat isolationism and subversion while safeguarding supply chain security.

This will prompt a difficult dilemma for the Right: defence spending must increase but it cannot come from raising taxes, in which case it must come from cutting spending which in turn risks undermining efforts to create a more resilient and cohesive society. The risks to resilience carried by spending cuts are undeniable, but raising taxes would suppress the growth necessary to sustain continued spending and create the same opening for subversion as austerity.

Euro-Atlantic Security

The basis of any future right-of-centre Government's defence strategy must be an unerring commitment to NATO. The alliance has historically been not just the basis of Euro-Atlantic security, but a point of pride for the Right given the Left's fluctuating commitment to Atlanticism.

It might be expected that the Right has an unassailable position on defence credibility, but this is not the case. The Conservative-led governments allowed the number of armed forces personnel to fall from 178,380[48] to 148,230[49] between 2010 to 2024 and spending to fall from 2.5 per cent to 2.3 per cent of GDP. The decline in defence spending occurred against the backdrop of growing Russian aggression,

48. UK Government, Ministry of Defence, 'Latest UK Armed Forces manning figures released', 26/8/2010, link

49. Kirk-Wade, 'UK defence personnel statistics', House of Commons Library, 13/8/2024, link

a proliferation of hostile transnational non-state actors, the breakdown of regional security architectures and Chinese efforts to substantially alter the US-led international order. Simultaneously, the Trump administration has made clear its hesitance about foreign involvement and its expectation that European NATO members will take greater responsibility for European security.

The Right must reverse its waning image as the natural guardian of defence, meet Washington's expectations and rise to Russian aggression by championing higher defence spending. The Right must also stake its future credibility on the British leadership of European security through NATO. NATO-first is not the same as NATO-alone. Meeting the foremost threat of Russia requires the interlinkage of interests and capabilities globally. So while the UK should take a leading position in confronting Russian aggression, it cannot do so without deepening its relationships with partners outside Europe – the Right must articulate this delineation of priorities clearly. These would help restore its standing by confronting Russia and protecting British interests further afield in addition to providing a right-of-centre bulwark to isolationist tendencies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Rejuvenating the Industrial Base

Higher defence spending requires rejuvenating British industrial capacity. We have repeatedly seen throughout the course of Russia's war in Ukraine that Western states are unable to support the Ukrainian army without depleting their own supplies. The UK has provided £13 billion in military support across 400 different capabilities.[50] In doing so it has depleted its own supply to a 'woefully deficient' state. [51] Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, Chief of the Defence Staff, has stressed the need to make British armed forces 'more deployable' and the Strategic Defence Review set the target of 'warfighting readiness.'[52] This shortfall has immediate consequences for the combat ability of NATO states and bodes poorly for future attempts at deterrence. Moreover, the West cannot allow itself to fall behind on the next generation of military technology for the same reasons. A combination of mass and agility is needed – the only way to get there is by growing our industrial base.

The Right must champion this expansion for the defence and economic benefits it carries. Reviving British industry would provide thousands of jobs, with the nuclear deterrent alone supporting 9,000 jobs, new munitions factories creating around 1,800 and the wider defence sector employing 440,000 people.[53] The jobs created by defence are high skilled, well-paid and productive ones which create genuine prosperity. In addition to creating munitions and jobs, the UK must invest in research and development. R&D investment generates innovation spillovers, meaning that breakthroughs led by military-driven technology provide productivity enhancing boosts to the civilian economy. Dual-use technology should play an important role in supporting prosperity and security, meaning that R&D investment is a necessary part of taking national security and

50. UK Government, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, Ministry of Defence, Home Office and Department for Business and Trade, 'UK support to Ukraine: factsheet', 30/5/2025, link

51. Zabrodskyi, Watling, Danylyuk and Reynolds, 'Preliminary Lessons in Conventional Warfighting from Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: February–July 2022', *Royal United Services Institute*, 7/2022, p.55, link

52. Ministry of Defence, Strategic Defence Review 2025', 2/6/2025, p.4, link

53. Ibid, p.33

economic growth seriously. Expanding and improving the UK's industrial base would, therefore, provide the basis for the stronger military necessary for enhanced security in addition to kickstarting the productive economy Britain needs.

This is not to deny that similar economic improvements could be realised through investment in economic infrastructure. The point is threefold: increased spending is a significant cost that could be spent elsewhere, but it is a wholly necessary expense that should be pursued, and comes with benefits that will ameliorate but not compensate for the cost. The Right should articulate this clearly, highlighting the necessity and benefits while remaining aware that it must fit within a framework of sound economic policy.

Linking Our Capacities

If the UK is to improve its innovative capacity and the security of its supply chains it must deepen its cooperation with allies not just in Europe, but also in the Indo-Pacific. Japan, South Korea and Australia have GDPs of $4,186,431 million, $1,790,322 million and £1,771,681 million respectively, a significant proportion of which derives from their leadership in high-tech fields.[54] Expertise in the fields that will define the security over the next industrial revolution requires the UK to develop deep engagement with these partners. It is this connection between the geostrategic and geoeconomic that defines British Indo-Pacific partnerships. The 2023 Integrated Review Refresh made clear the Indo-Pacific should retain a key position because 'developments there will have disproportionate influence on the global economy, supply chains, strategic stability and norms of state behaviour.'[55] The National Security Strategy 2025 noted that the priority will remain European security, but the multi-theatre character of the threat alongside the diffusion of power means the UK 'must look beyond its immediate neighbourhood' to work 'against economic coercion and the potential fragmentation of the international economic order.'[56]

The same goes for British interests in investment flows to and from the Middle East, particularly the Gulf. The Right should not be tempted down the path of seeking regime change in the Middle East. Our interest is not in prolonged military engagements, but in fostering mutually beneficial economic ties supporting our strategic aims.

The interlinkage of economic and security interests means that the Right must maintain its commitments to international partners in tandem with the core transatlantic security interest in the shared pursuit of technological leadership against common adversaries.

Creating the Resilient Society

A future Government of the Right should seek to build a more resilient Britain if it is to achieve these global objectives. Recent years have made clear supply chains are a core element of national security, and from semiconductors to uranium the UK does not have strong enough supply

54. International Monetary Fund, 'World Economic Outlook Database', 4/2025, link
55. HM Government, 'Integrated Review Refresh 2023', 3/2023, p.22, link
56. HM Government, 'National Security Strategy 2025', 25/6/2025, p.35 link

chains if the worst were to happen. The polycrisis of Covid, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and instability in the Middle East alongside potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait have demonstrated that Britain must plan for the worst. Currently, China is the largest individual country supplier for over half of UK manufacturing sectors,[57] particularly in the critical minerals required for electric cars and batteries, meaning that war (trade or otherwise) would have dire economic consequences. If the UK was unable to produce semiconductors, telecommunications equipment or advanced materials the consequences would directly affect defence as well as our economy.

The Right should promote sovereign capability as the basis of this approach. While a system of interconnected economic, industrial and strategic interests is necessary, it should rest on Britain's own sovereign capabilities in critical sectors. Politicians on the Right have enthusiastically used the language of sovereignty, but it must now be followed by action to ensure the UK can independently develop, produce and maintain critical technologies and essential resources. Emphasis on sovereign capabilities does not negate deep cooperation with international partners in research, investment and some degree of manufacturing. Rather, the Right must recognise that in a world increasingly defined by supply-chain disruption, the UK must retain a basic level of self-reliance by ringfencing industrial capability in critical sectors alongside building deep relationships with allies.

The issue of resilience is not just material; the UK must also root out the influence of foreign money flowing into the country. Our housing market, universities and infrastructure have all become permeated with foreign capital, often originating from hostile states. Britain must act pre-emptively to remove the influence of such states in our economy and society, and to safeguard against collapse if wider conflict occurs. The Right must build on the progress of recent years to draw economic statecraft into the centre of national security policy. A centrepiece of future policy should be legislation to constrict the flow of illicit finance to subversive campaign groups as well as organised crime and terrorist networks. Externally, the UK must continue to use economic statecraft in its efforts to shape the international environment. While deterrence will always be rooted in conventional force, the portfolio of options must include economic levers and greater financial resilience against hostile state activity.

A right-wing Government would also have to address resilience at a societal level. The current Government is in process of reconfiguring the UK's security apparatus to address the new paradigm of proliferating sub-threshold subversion threats intertwined with counter-terror and counter-espionage concerns. Hostile actors have adopted increasingly assertive steps to undermine confidence in public institutions and to radicalise individuals with ideas that are diametrically opposed to British interests. While these measures are not directly terrorism or espionage, their backing by foreign states spells the return of subversion intended to grow the constant thrum

57. Bank of England, 'A portrait of the UK's global supply chain exposure', 30/9/2024, link

of sub-threshold action into direct security threats. These hybrid threats have incubated radicalism, and in more direct forms has led to cyber-attacks on infrastructure that threatens to bring the country to a standstill.

To counter this new threat paradigm of semi-state subversion and its attendant terror and espionage threats, the Right must be willing to be firmer and further reaching in its efforts to root out domestic subversion. This means empowering cyber forces to pursue forward defence measures aggressively, removing informational and cyber subversion at its source. The Right must introduce legislation to widen the scope for banning non-violent extremist groups, promoting early intervention in addition to introducing guidelines empowering the police to better control protests. For the Right to become the natural guardian of security it must be willing to take the strongest possible measures to combat subversion, and to draw the connection between hostile actors and those in this country who hold beliefs that threaten our country.

National security requires the Right to resist isolationist impulses. As concerns grow over the UK's ability to secure its own borders there appears to be growing suspicion of foreign engagements. We must break this false dichotomy between border security and global security, the two are inter-related. A stronger position on preventing irregular crossings, deportation and the use of third states must be pursued alongside a range of other immigration reducing measures to provide border security for its own sake and to resist the temptations of isolationism.

There appears to be a growing tendency on the Right to seek to choose between European and global security. But security depends on our ability to innovate, to capitalise on our immense human capital and to build resilience alongside partners. At no point can security be limited to one region alone. A retreat to European security alone would be as ineffective as not doing it all. Instead, the Right must champion the deep relationships capable of improving our security without limiting ourselves to Europe alone. If the UK is to bind the economic, technological and human capabilities of allies to our own in fulfilling British strategic interests, a future Government of the Right must reject any isolationist tendencies within its own ranks.

Paying the Bill

The final issue facing a future right-wing Government is how to pay for higher defence spending, at a time when the UK runs a deficit of £70.3 billion deficit (95.5 per cent of GDP).[58] One school argues that the only way to reach the five per cent target quickly is tax hikes: that immediate and existential threats require a commensurately fast increase.

It also believes that the economic activity created defence funding will ameliorate the effects of increased taxation. Its best argument is the belief that austerity will diminish already fragile trust in the political system, acting as an invitation for subversive informational operations intended to inflame political discontent undermining efforts to create a resilient society.

58. Office for National Statistics, 'Public sector finances, UK: April 2025', 22/5/25, link

But cutting the public sector to avoid raising already historically high taxation is the only viable means of raising defence spending. The Right must grasp the difficult nettles of pensions, welfare, and the size of public sector. Continuous tax rises would drain the capital needed for sustained funding and inward investment from the country at a rate not replenished by industrial investment. It simply is not a sustainable approach. Moreover, while the opening for subversion created by austerity is undeniable, taxation in this context would have the same effect as cutting public services. Subversion aimed at dissatisfaction caused by diminished standard of living will have the same consequences if it is from tax or cuts. There is no way around the problem apart from reassessing the size of the state.

Conclusion

For the Right to return to being the natural guardian of defence it must promote British leadership in European NATO, spearheading European efforts to deter Russia. This will require the Right to be the strongest voice supporting increased defence spending. Most of this spending would go toward rebuilding British industrial capacity in tandem with that of our allies. A rejuvenated industrial base would have the added economic benefit of job creation and productivity enhancing innovation. Highlighting economic and defence benefits will be vital to the Right's success: it must champion prosperous security. Expanding our industrial base means Britain cannot disengage from partners in the Indo-Pacific or the Gulf. Deep relationships of capital, expertise and defence exchange will bolster economic and security efforts meaning that security in Europe cannot be disentangled from elsewhere. Domestically, the Right must pursue resilience addressing supply-chain vulnerability and sub-threshold action, underpinned by resistance to isolationism from within its own ranks.

The New Right – Matt Goodwin

Realignment and the New Right

The Right in Britain is in a state of considerable flux. Ideologically, electorally, and politically, the Right is divided. Its path forward remains unknown. Its future unclear.

Writing in this collection, Lord (Paul) Goodman outlines the contours of this debate, suggesting the future of the Right should be shaped foremost by six principles: (1) accountability not bureaucracy; (2) boosting business and enterprise; (3) creating a property-owning democracy; (4) pursuing pro-family policies; (5) strengthening citizenship; and (6) and improving Britain's resilience through defence and security.

Rather than responding to each principle individually, in this essay I aim to offer broader thoughts about the suitability of this programme to the Right, which in recent years has become divided between what we might call the Old and New Right.

At least until 2016, the main representative of the Old Right was the Conservative Party, which governed the country for much of the preceding century. Since then, however the Conservatives, the Tories, have been in retreat. In fact, they may be dying.

By summer 2025, the Old Right has arguably now been fully replaced by the New Right, represented by Reform UK. Reform has emerged as the dominant representative of the Right, averaging close to 30 per cent of the vote in national polls, recruiting 50 per cent of all Brexit voters, attracting close to one in three people who voted for the Conservative Party at the 2024 general election, and becoming the first party outside the 'big two' to win a set of local elections in contemporary British history.[59]

The primary cause for the decline of the Old Right was its failure to respond to the post-2016 Brexit 'realignment'. The word 'realignment' is used to refer to a long-term if not permanent shift in the relationship between key voting groups and parties.

Reflecting a wider trend that is visible in most, if not all, Western states, the realignment that is still reshaping British politics today is one that, in broad terms, has seen the 'cultural axis' in politics (national belonging versus universal liberalism) become just as important, if not more so, as the 'economic axis' (markets versus the state).

Clearly, this is not to say that debates about economic security no longer matter. After all, Britain remains locked in the sharpest cost-of-living crisis since the Second World War with stagnant growth, low productivity, and very high levels of debt.

59. YouGov polling results July 2025, link

Rather, it is to say that actual or perceived concerns about belonging, culture, and identity --sharpened by mass immigration, broken borders, and the rise of Islamism--have become a much more important lens through which voters interpret and navigate politics.

While the precise nature of these concerns varies from one country to the next, in Britain, in political terms, they represent a strong and growing public rejection of the post-1997 Blairite consensus which the Old Right, under the Tories, accepted.

Mass uncontrolled immigration. Weaker if not porous borders. Universal liberalism. Untrammelled free markets or 'hyper-globalisation'. Identitarian politics. An instinctive preference for elites over citizens. A reframing of national identity along post-national multicultural lines that also promotes group difference over commonality.

And a new authoritarian progressivism that uses hate laws, speech codes, censorship, and expanded taboos ("far right", "Islamophobia", "hate", etc) to try and stigmatise if not shut down legitimate opposition, undermining free speech.

The Decline of 'Progressive Conservativism'

The Old Right became discredited in the eyes of many voters because of the extent to which it accepted or accelerated these changes. While the Blairites broadly accepted the Thatcherite economic legacy, self-styled 'progressive conservatives' such as David Cameron and George Osborne accepted and then embedded the Blairite cultural legacy before, later, Boris Johnson sent this to new heights by presiding over a further loss of control over Britain's borders and the wholesale liberalisation of mass immigration.

In fact, Boris Johnson openly betrayed the Old Right's promise, in 2019, to 'lower overall numbers' and reshape Britain around small amounts of 'high skill' migration, a move that might otherwise have been able to integrate the post-1997 migration flows and maintain public support for the social contract which is now rapidly collapsing.

Instead, he directly undermined the social contract and weakened the nation by allowing an influx of masses of low-wage, low-skill, and mainly non-European migrants from radically different if not incompatible cultures. Some 81 per cent of all migration into Britain now comes from outside European nations.

Path dependency matters in politics. From where you start determines your eventual destination. Because the Old Right responded to the realignment by starting here, with broken promises along the cultural dimension, it had nowhere to go. A party founded as the traditional defender of the nation-state, its borders, and people has for too long looked like a party that is actively engaged in the destruction of these things.

Which is why Reform UK has now emerged as the primary beneficiary of the post-Brexit realignment, with lowering legal immigration and stopping illegal migration on the small boats emerging as the two most

important motivations for Reform voters.[60]

The Post-Blairite State

The New Right has also picked up more directly on issues and themes that are downplayed if not ignored in Lord Goodman's otherwise excellent analysis.

What the New Right has recognised, foremost, is the need to not just reform the system but bring about what I call a full-blown 'factory reset' in this country.

Like an old smartphone that has become slow, sluggish, overloaded with apps, and is now a major source of stress, many voters perceive Britain the same way and so would support pressing the 'factory reset' button by returning to the institutional and legislative architecture of the pre-1997 era, even if they cannot fully articulate this.

Ending, fully, the experiment with mass uncontrolled legal immigration which the evidence now makes clear is weakening our economy, worsening the housing crisis, and driving crime. Restoring national sovereignty and regaining control over our borders by fully exiting the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Reforming the Human Rights Act that entrenches the ECHR into domestic law. Re-establishing a genuinely independent judiciary, in which judicial activism and the blatant politicisation of the criminal justice system are curtailed. Reasserting meritocracy and equality before the law over a crude and divisive identitarian politics.

Reforming the Equality Act to help remove an unBritish and divisive woke politics from public institutions, from our schools and universities to the NHS. And reassert a national representative democracy that, unlike Quangos and supranational institutions that are insufficiently democratic and/or have no meaningful competition for executive office, prioritise citizens over distant, unaccountable and often out-of-touch elites.

In his insightful essay, for instance, Goodman talks about the duty of the Right to repair our institutions and restore public trust in them. But this cannot be done without first acknowledging, and grappling with, the extent to which these public institutions were openly and deliberately politicised by changes brought in under the Blairite regime, and then continued and entrenched by successive conservative administrations.

The New Social Contract

Two deeper shifts have also fed into this. The first is a different conception of power that the New Right is instinctively more comfortable with but which the Old Right avoids. In recent years, what we might call an 'elite' conception of power, characterised by power flowing horizontally from one group of elites to another (Davos, Brussels, Washington, etc), and which is often indifferent if not hostile toward the masses, has been forced to make way for a reassertion of popular sovereignty, through which power flows vertically, from citizens up to the people they elect, and back down.

60. Who votes Reform and why? Matt Goodwin Substack April 2024, link

The rise of UKIP, Brexit, the Brexit Party, Boris Johnson in 2019, and now Reform UK, all, in different ways, tapped into this reassertion of popular sovereignty at the expense of an elite class that has too often refused to compromise with voters (as we saw after Brexit) or relinquish power in the face of citizens demanding that the state performs its basic functions, such as controlling borders and fighting crime. To what extent is the Old Right willing to engage with this tradition of popular sovereignty?

We see this most vividly, today, in calls to fully exit, not just reform, the European Convention on Human Rights and reform if not repeal the Human Rights Act, as precursors to re-establishing the ability of the Right to defend the territorial integrity of the nation-state, remove foreign criminals, and uphold the social contract. Indeed, rejecting this concentration of power in elite institutions and conventions that are undermining our borders is a crucial prerequisite to building a viable, credible Right.

So too is embracing a second key principle that has come to define the New Right, but which is increasingly absent among members of the Old Right –a principle of national preference. On everything from social housing to welfare to pro-family policy, it is the hardworking, tax-paying, law-abiding majority of British citizens who must be prioritised on these islands above newcomers and immigrants.

Lord Goodman talks correctly about the need to create a property-owning democracy and give young people a stake in the system but how does this square with the fact we built short of 200,000 homes last year while running a net migration rate of 431,000, or that close to half of all social housing in prime areas of our capital city has gone to households that are headed by people who were not even born in the UK?

How is this upholding the social contract? The New Right acknowledges openly, for example, that you can have affordable and available housing or you can have mass migration –you cannot have both. Similarly, we cannot hope to resolve our country's looming demographic crisis unless we pursue far more ambitious pro-family policies that prioritise the need for more children, not just by tweaking the tax system but bringing about the same kind of radical change in cultural norms that we have seen in areas of policy such as smoking and environmentalism. Because unless we do, the country, nevermind the Right, will not survive.

The principle of national preference also demands that the Right make an unequivocal and unapologetic case for protecting and promoting the distinctive national culture, identity, and way of life that has united these islands and peoples for generations –not only against an openly unBritish and unBritish 'woke' or radical progressive ideology but a similarly dogmatic radical Islamism and a bland, globalist universal liberalism, which would have us believe the only thing that defines these islands is that we welcome others (the implication of which is that we have no real identity of our own).

This will also require us to set out something else that would fall under Lord Goodman's emphasis on patriotism and active citizenship, but

which is currently missing –a successor to the visibly failing state policy of multiculturalism, which prioritises group difference over commonality. What is the Right's successor to multiculturalism?

Foremost, if we are to protect and maintain the social contract in this country, we will need to rapidly replace this failed policy with a far more active and assertive model of assimilationism that makes it clear newcomers must not only, at a bare minimum, speak the language and respect our laws but integrate fully into wider society, including the removal of parallel legal systems, anti-British and anti-Western cultural practices, and a reassertion of our cultural values and rights over others.

It is these ideas about the urgent need to bring about a factory reset, pursue national preference, and respect popular sovereignty that, above all, unite the New Right that is gaining momentum in not just Britain but around much of the world. This is why so many movements are now on the rise, connecting with voters in the shadow of a 'liberal' consensus that never quite understood what drives voters outside the big cities and university towns, and which is now being openly rejected at elections. And this is also, I suspect, what will shape the future of the Right here in Britain, too.

Restoring the Nation State: A Conservative Responsibility – Hon Alexander Downer AC

Introduction

When asked to summarise his political philosophy, Benjamin Disraeli offered a single word: "England." That simple statement captured a profound truth—one that seems curiously absent from much of today's political discourse. At the heart of conservative politics must be an unambiguous commitment to the nation-state. Not because it is electorally advantageous, though it often is, but because it remains the most effective vehicle for liberty, prosperity, and democratic accountability.

In an age where global challenges are complex and interwoven, the nation-state remains the fundamental unit of moral and political responsibility. It is the institution through which people express their shared identity, protect their sovereignty, and shape their future. For the Right, placing the nation-state at the centre of political life is not merely a tactical choice; it is a principled imperative.

To meet this obligation, the Right must focus on three priorities: restoring control of immigration, renewing economic dynamism through individual enterprise, and reaffirming Britain's role in the world through principled, value-based diplomacy. These are not abstract policy goals. They are essential to preserving the integrity, cohesion and future of the country.

Immigration: Regaining Control, Rebuilding Trust

Immigration policy has become one of the most contentious and poorly managed areas of British public life. The sheer scale and pace of recent migration—nearly 7 million people arriving in the UK within five years—has left the public unsettled, institutions overwhelmed, and national cohesion under strain. The Right must rectify this record to regain public trust and control of the UK's borders.

This has occurred not because of a conscious policy, but in many ways, due to the absence of one. Britain's immigration system has been compromised by its inability to enforce the law, distinguish genuine cases from opportunistic ones, and set sustainable levels. Whether it's the flow of small boats or the overuse of low-skilled visas, the lack of strategic control undermines the very idea of borders—and by extension,

sovereignty itself.

A future government of the Right must take decisive steps. That means setting firm but fair annual caps on migration, targeting skilled migrants to meet labour shortages, and reforming family reunification rules to focus on immediate family members. The UK also needs to reconsider its refugee policy. While the country should continue to offer sanctuary to those genuinely fleeing persecution, it must not confuse irregular migration with refugee status. Most people arriving by unauthorised means are not refugees under the original intent of the Refugee Convention. Yet courts have expanded substantially the definition of a refugee. That needs to be reformed. Furthermore, giving a refugee protection is not the same thing as granting residency or citizenship. The obligation on a receiving state is to provide protection only.

It is time to implement offshore processing in safe third countries, introduce temporary protection visas with annual renewals, and work with international partners to uphold the spirit—but not the overextension—of refugee law. The Right must recognise that Britain's duty of care must not come at the cost of national cohesion or the credibility of its legal institutions.

Above all, this debate must be framed in terms of both practical capacity and cultural confidence. Uncontrolled migration not only burdens public services—it erodes the shared cultural framework on which citizenship depends. The Right has a duty to ensure that immigration policy reflects the values of the British public and supports a cohesive national identity.

The Economy: Rebalancing the Role of the State

Economic policy, particularly on the Right, must be underpinned by one core insight: growth cannot be legislated into existence. It can only be enabled. The primary role of government is to create the conditions for private enterprise to thrive. That means encouraging investment, reducing regulatory barriers, and lowering taxes—not as ends in themselves, but as tools to empower individuals and businesses.

Britain today faces the slow suffocation of excessive state intervention. A tax burden at historic highs, a ballooning welfare system, and bureaucratic overreach have discouraged productivity, dulled incentives and stifled growth. The solution is not austerity for its own sake, but discipline and reform. We must lower the corporate tax rate, reintroduce dividend imputation, and move toward a simpler and flatter tax structure that rewards effort rather than penalising it.

Regulatory reform is equally essential. Reducing red tape will free small businesses from compliance burdens and encourage innovation. Crucially, we must pair this with monetary prudence. A stable currency and sound inflation management are not optional—they are prerequisites for long-term investment and public confidence.

None of this implies abandoning the state's responsibilities in health, education, or welfare. But the design of these systems matters. A welfare state should support people to become independent, not keep them

dependent. It should act as a trampoline, not a permanent cushion. The Right must reject the growing temptation to embrace populist statism. Instead, it should believe in the capacity of people to manage their own lives, not rely endlessly on government for support.

The essential distinction must be understood: the nation is not the state, and the state is not the nation. The state is a means, not an end. The Right must promote a political economy that respects personal responsibility, supports upward mobility, and protects the dignity of work.

Foreign Policy: Leading with Confidence and Conviction

Britain has always been more than an island. It has been a voice—at times a leading voice—in the global defence of liberal democratic values. Today, that voice is still needed. The global order is increasingly threatened by authoritarian regimes in China, Russia and Iran. In such a world, Britain must not retreat from the international stage – and the Right must be the strongest advocates of its leadership.

That leadership begins with a renewed commitment to our allies—particularly NATO, but also our Indo-Pacific partners such as Australia, Japan and South Korea. Defence spending is not merely a budgetary matter—it is a signal of national seriousness. And diplomacy must be grounded in shared values, not just transactional interests. Britain's global influence is amplified not only by its economy or military strength, but by its credibility as a liberal democracy.

Yet we cannot defend those values abroad if we disown them at home. The Western Left's current bout of self-criticism has weakened confidence in our history and diminished our capacity to lead. We must acknowledge our past honestly, but also with perspective. The British Empire, though not without flaws, was a historic force for liberty, law and economic development. It abolished the slave trade, spread democratic institutions and raised living standards across the world.

To take pride in this legacy is not to ignore its complexities—it is to understand its net contribution. A confident foreign policy requires a confident domestic culture, one unafraid to assert that our values are worth protecting. That includes using international aid strategically—to promote good governance, education and the rule of law, not simply to transfer funds with little accountability.

Britain's voice in the world should be principled, clear and morally coherent. It must speak up for democracy and stand with those who seek to uphold it. If the Right is to offer leadership in foreign affairs, it must do so with a steady hand, a firm commitment to alliances, and a deep belief in Britain's global role.

Conclusion: Nationhood as a Moral Imperative

Lord Goodman's essay, 'The Right Way', and the essays that follow it are a highly valuable starting point for the debate concerning the Right's future. In particular I commend Lord Wolfson's essay on economic and political liberty, a cause that we should never lose sight of. Of course, we all have

our own views on the future of the Right, and my belief is that the central task of the modern Right is to reassert the importance of the nation-state—not in abstract terms, but as a practical and moral foundation for public life. The nation-state is where loyalty is rooted, democracy is made real, and liberty is defended. It is not a slogan. It is a moral framework.

This demands serious policy reform. On immigration, we must restore territorial integrity. On the economy, we must liberate individuals and businesses from overreach. In foreign policy, we must lead with principle and purpose. These are not separate goals. They are connected by a deeper commitment: to ensure that Britain remains sovereign, secure and confident in its identity.

To govern well, the Right must believe, and articulate, that the country it serves is worth preserving. Not just through words, but through actions. Britain is not simply a place on a map. It is a community, a civilisation and a legacy of freedom. That legacy must not be forgotten or diluted. It must be safeguarded—and, where necessary, reclaimed.

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