
POLITICS REVIEW

June 2026 - Starmergeddon

This month we cover the PM’s departure and the policies of his likely successor... will Andy Burnham be the cure to Britain’s problems, or will he be more of the same in an ungovernable system - **Owen Martin and Ed Bunting**

More features detailed below! **YEAR 12 MOCK ELECTION – PAGE 4**

Ed Bunting

The northern conquest

Why we should celebrate Andy Burnham’s ‘coronation’ day

After Keir Starmer resigned on the 27th of June at 9:36am, Andy Burnham expressed his interest in taking his job at 11:04am. Less than 90 minutes. If that’s not a man who knows what he wants, and knows he can get it, I don’t know who is.

Sky News and BBC had helicopter footage of his train heading down from Manchester to London, as if he were in a Mission Impossible action movie (to build upon Owen’s previous titular pun). He then arrived in Westminster, got sworn in as an MP, and took the rather audacious selfie below, with about 200 other Labour MPs.

Even his biggest opponent, Wes Streeting, backed him in a contest, seemingly drawn to winning the chancellorship, snaking away any values he had left. Even Darren Jones, a potential anti-Burnham candidate as seen by MPs, has endorsed him, ruling out a run. Hence, many are calling it a coronation for Burnham, with nobody really expected to challenge him. **article continued at the bottom of the next page.**



Andy Burnham’s triumphant selfie as the King of the North returns to Westminster.



Keir Starmer looks forlorn hounded by the press pack of Downing Street, in the big news story this month. Larry the Cat has officially marked his seventh Prime Minister whilst serving as Chief Mouser.

Owen Martin

Mission improbable

Keir today, gone tomorrow: Starmer’s resignation

Just under two years after guiding Labour to a monumental victory in the 2024 General Election, Sir Keir Starmer has stepped down as Prime Minister with his resignation marking the end of an unusual chapter in recent British politics. In his emotional statement, Starmer confessed that he and his party doubted his ability to lead the nation effectively going forwards.

This decision came after months marked by unfavorable polls, unsatisfactory local election outcomes, and mounting pressure from both Reform UK and his own party members, including a looming threat of a leadership election on the horizon. Now, his political legacy stands mixed with some supporters claiming he accomplished many goals since taking office in July 2024 and his critics: they believed otherwise.

Unfortunately for Sir Keir, many of these achievements didn't quite hit home with voters who still felt the pinch of rising living costs and were impatient with the visible pace of change. Starmer did, amongst other achievements, manage something big, though as he cut net migration significantly.

Official data from 2026 revealed that net migration was about 171,000, which marked a nearly 50% decrease from the 331,000 recorded in 2024, and more than an 80% decline from the peak of 944,000 seen in 2023 under the Conservative government. The government came out with an important Immigration White Paper to make the system stricter and lower long term migration numbers. **article continued at the top of the next page.**

Featured in this month’s newsletter...

Brexit: 10 Years On

Owen Howard & Eleanor Costa

As Tuesday marked the 10th anniversary of the EU referendum, its impact is analysed, along with the individuals who made it happen. **Pages 3-5**

The USA

Corey Sartin & Divya Tharakluthy

Two topics are dived into this month: the political impact of the 2026 World Cup, and the state of ‘peace talks’ between the USA and Iran. **Pages 5-7**

Henry Nowak

IN DEPTH ARTICLE FROM... Stan Lawrence

Was this proof of anti-white racism, or a far-right false narrative? The murder and the protests are chronicled and analysed in this jumbo article. **Pages 8-10**

Owen Martin

Mission improbable

Keir today, gone tomorrow



(cont.) This allowed Starmer to show how he'd tackled one of the country's most politically charged issues which other parties like Reform were capitalising on to gain support. Unfortunately for Starmer, this was hardly reported and fell flat in the media, resulting in a lack of any knowledge about the issue. Then there was the economy. A key aspect of Starmer's leadership was the focus on economic growth with the government often emphasizing that Britain led the G7 in terms of economic expansion, while wages stayed ahead of inflation. Labour achieved several trade deals with major countries like India, the United States, and the European Union over the course of Starmer's premiership and the Prime Minister cited these agreements as proof that Britain could succeed globally despite past political challenges, such as Brexit. Unfortunately, again, the beginning of the Iran war by the United States of America and Israel resulted in a spike of inflation for which Starmer was blamed despite his best efforts. As for public services, the government highlighted reduced NHS waiting lists as evidence of successful investments and reforms. By spring 2026, they noted that these lists were at their lowest in three and a half years and Labour argued that such advancements showed progress and created the hope that the government might be able to start to ease the strain on public services that has built up in recent years. Tax changes, however, stirred up quite a debate as Labour put forward

reforms amongst which focused on non-domiciled tax status, VAT breaks for private schools, and windfall taxes on energy profits which were controversial despite the government's assurances that there wouldn't be major hikes in income tax, VAT, or National Insurance for regular workers. Some saw these steps as fair and essential for funding public projects, but others worried about harming economic confidence and scaring off investors, as well as general outrage amongst those worried about how changes may affect themselves. During his time as Prime Minister, Starmer had to juggle Labour's wish for more spending with his commitment to keep finances in check. He also aimed to boost Britain's reputation on the world stage after a period of unrest with the government staying committed to supporting Ukraine, built stronger ties with NATO allies, and worked on closer cooperation with European countries. International observers praised these efforts, yet domestic issues often stole the spotlight in political discussions back home. Despite these accomplishments, Starmer's administration faced growing criticism for appearing indecisive and overly cautious as many reported policy reversals or "U-turns" hurt their image of strong leadership, while Labour found it hard to clearly communicate its successes. Although national statistics showed improvements, many households continued to feel economic pressure, leaving voters skeptical about any real impact on their daily lives.

Opposition parties took advantage of this discontent with Nigel Farage's Reform UK making significant gains in local elections. In opinion polls, the party positioned itself as a stronger choice on issues like immigration, taxes, and government spending. On the other hand, Kemi Badenoch, the Conservative leader, often criticized Starmer for not having control over his administration or the economy. Initially seen as competent and stable, Starmer's leadership soon faced questions about its direction and what he actually stood for. Ironically, many of Starmer's main goals were somewhat met: immigration numbers dropped significantly, NHS waiting times improved, economic growth resumed, and several important international deals were made but despite these successes, Labour struggled to gain the political traction it wanted. Voters tended to focus more on their personal finances rather than these broader accomplishments as economic signs didn't convince everyone that life was really getting better. Now, as Starmer steps away from Downing Street, people in the future might argue about his time in office. Was he a good leader who just couldn't win politically? Or did he struggle to show folks that what he achieved mattered? One thing we know for sure is his stepping down closes a brief but important chapter in British politics, allowing insights into powers held as the Prime Minister and likewise the power of the media as Labour now faces a fresh start with new leadership guiding the way onwards. OWEN MARTIN

(cont.) The rest of this article is essentially an opinion piece on why I think Andy Burnham will be our best Prime Minister since Blair, Brown at a stretch, and can turn the country around. Firstly, Andy Burnham seems to have a personality - which is crucial in the media age to connecting with voters. He has been given the moniker of the 'King of the North' by the media, as his successful policies of 'Manchesterism' have rebounded well with voters. This article however will not talk about the past, but about the future, as we absolutely should.

Personally, he could become the first Prime Minister with an English degree, proving that in my books he has more personality than a PPE robot wanting to be PM. Of course, that does not apply to all aspiring PPE students, just the Etonians and Prime Ministers. Never say that English or any other humanity doesn't get you a real job! Albeit this time it's the worst one in the country.

Now onto his potential policies - and why I think they will succeed. One of his potential flagship policies is in relation to housing, which proposes abolishing stamp duty, and replacing council tax with a property tax based on the value of their assets. Since stamp duty is widely seen as an obstacle to getting on the housing ladder or downsizing, as it requires new homeowners to pay a fee, this could get young people on the housing ladder - a huge issue that must be solved to stimulate the economy. Fairer Share estimates that only 39% of residents in Beaconsfield will be better off, however across the country this will be a whopping 77% who will see an increase in bills. In Wycombe, this is 59% better off. In his own Macclesfield, it is calculated at a huge 98%. Newcastle? 99%. Hartlepool? Durham? 100%. Along with 47 other constituencies. **article continued at the top of the next page.**

Ed Bunting

The northern conquest

Why we should celebrate Andy Burnham's 'coronation' day



Burnham completes his wildly successful Macclesfield run winning by 20% with a rally at Ashton Town FC.

Ed Bunting

The northern conquest
Why we should celebrate Andy Burnham’s ‘coronation’ day

(cont.) This could win back voters in the North and Red Wall, who have constantly been neglected by Starmer’s government along with 14 years of Conservative rule. Economically, he has said he would abide by Reeves’ fiscal rules, which would definitely help with the bond markets, but with a potential Wes Streeting or Ed Miliband chancellorship, the extent of the leftward shift in the economy is yet to be decided.

Trade unions, however, have warned against a Miliband chancellorship as he refuses to open oil and gas in the North Sea, something that Streeting favours. Whether Burnham moves on oil and gas is unclear at the moment but largely depends not on him but his new cabinet, with Kemi Badenoch mounting pressure on him.

However, there are two absolutely crucial areas that can contribute to his success. The first is constitutional reform, where he aims to devolve more powers to local government, and hopes that others can mirror his successes as Mayor of Greater Manchester. This is extremely necessary, given the complete exhaustion of the Westminster bubble, which could help

decrease the statistic of ‘Seven PMs in Ten Years’ that has been doing the rounds. The problems solved are outlined in Sam Freedman’s book ‘Failed State’, which is a great book to read if you don’t plan to leave the house for the next few days and do not have better things to do than read about politics. Next up is his personality - whilst Reform UK painted the (failed) narrative in Makerfield that Andy Burnham was a career politician using it as a stepping stone (ignoring the fact that their leader Nigel Farage stood in eight constituencies before winning Clacton), he seems like a genuine man - my parents that he at least does not speak like a robotic priest, as Keir Starmer did.

He has built a successful brand around him as King of the North, expertly utilising things like social media and connecting with young people - when Kemi Badenoch branded him as just “eyelashes and a black t-shirt” at PMQs, he responded with a short saying “it’s dark blue actually”. Unlike the technocratic rule of Starmer and the 14 years before him, he could perhaps unlock the hearts of working voters charmed by his personality.

He seems to have actually energized the Labour Party, stoking an undeniable hope in the membership, and for the first time in forever (or at least since Thatcher), the country is entering into a genuine social democratic centre-left direction that will steer the country down a better path for good. **ED BUNTING**

Eleanor Costa

The role of Johnson and Farage in Brexit
A historical revision of the EU referendum

Ten years ago 1 million votes or 3.8% of the votes was the difference between the UK leaving the EU. However, it is widely argued that without Nigel Farage (leader of the UKIP party at the time) and Boris Johnson (Mayor of London at the time) we would have never left the EU, as it was their loud campaigns that led many to vote for Leave.

Actively campaigning since the early 1990s, Farage increased UKIPs focus on EU withdrawal as their centre goal, under his leadership he helped pressure David Cameron (the prime minister during the Brexit referendum) to promise a referendum on EU membership. Farage was a prominent face for the leave campaign using media appearances, rallies and grassroots networks to mobilise voters.



The White Cliffs of Dover, a central image used in the immigration debate.

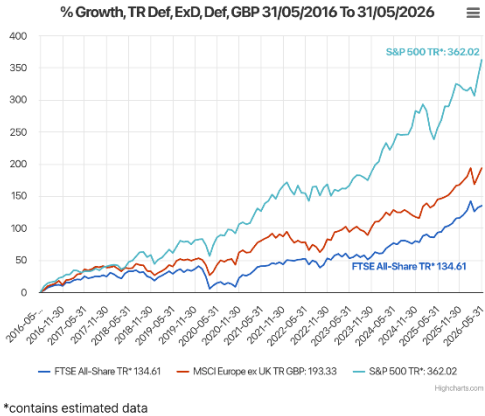
Owen Howard

Brexit: 10 Years On
Discussing the economic impact of Brexit

Take Back Control. This is what Vote Leave told us the purpose of Brexit was. Nevermind the approximately two hundred billion pounds a year larger that we now know our economy could have been. It was all worth it to control our borders they say. But was it? Vote Leave sold Britain a dream. A fantasy never achievable. The promise of £350 million more per week for the NHS in a Britain free from the bureaucracy of Brussels.

Maybe that sovereignty was worth it at a cost. But surely not at this cost. The National Bureau of Economic Research estimates that the UK economy has lost out on 8% of its potential growth. By leaving the EU, we abandoned every single trade agreement we already had, with a step into the unknown, where we had to renegotiate our trading relationship with our partners, large and small.

Even the uncertainty caused by this renegotiation and with the revolving door of three successive prime ministers, in under four years during negotiations, the UK stock market has been in a dire state. A trend started in 2016 and continued onwards, of poor performance has now led to a sizeable gap between the value of shares in British companies compared to their European counterparts, who are thriving within the world’s largest trading bloc. The graph says it all. **article continues at the top of the next page.**



Owen Howard

Brexit: 10 Years On

Discussing the political impact of Brexit

(cont.) Additionally, a lack of EU economic migrants has held the UK back, as labour shortages in key areas, including construction and hospitality, caused by Brexit contribute to weaker UK productivity overall.



Starmer and Ursula von der Leyen in 2024.

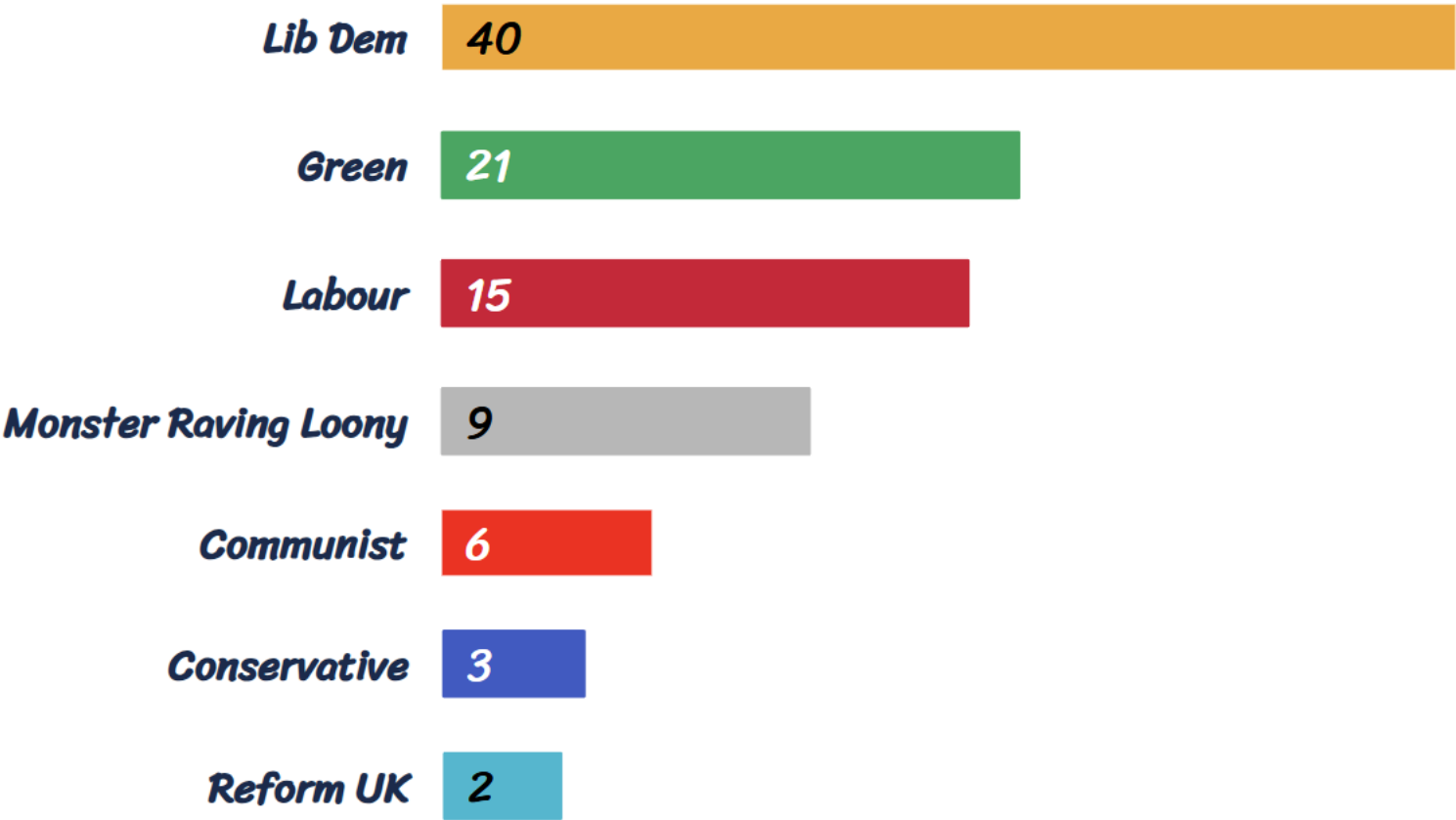
The new trade deals promised by those on the leave side of the fence have not exactly proven to be the prosperous opportunity they were sold to the electorate as. Trade overall is down 3.7% since 2019, with trade with the EU however, remaining just under half of total trade. So much for talk of newfound partnerships with the dynamic and thriving markets of the day. Turning to external investment and the story isn’t much better. Investment is a great metric for exposing just how confident external markets are in the UK, making the 21% drop in investment during the turmoil of negotiations all the more damaging to the overall economy and the reputation of the UK as one of the leading places in the world to do business.

Maybe there are many people still out there that consider all of this to be a small hiccup in the wider crusade of creating a better nation, but I am certainly not one of them. I still truly live in the hope that one day we will be back in the EU, perhaps during my lifetime as after all, right now everyone under 28 did not choose this reality, did not choose the consequences we all face, that are only going to get worse and worse and worse in the years to come. Happy 10th Birthday Brexit. OWEN HOWARD

Year 12 Induction Day – Mock Election

This week we had our new perspective year 12 come in to look at the school. For politics we hosted a mini mock election interested in what the future politics students would vote. Current year 12 and many teachers took part in our election too, the chart above shows the results. **Analysis carried out by Eleanor Costa. 2% spoiled ballots.**

If there was a general election tomorrow, who would you vote for?



Eleanor Costa

The role of Johnson and Farage in Brexit

A historical revision of the EU referendum

(cont.) Nigel Farage transformed UKIP into a national political force, his visibility and ability to hook the voters allowed him to promote his viewpoints on the EU. With slogans like “£350 million a week for the NHS” allowed him to show the contributions to the EU that could be used in the UK, however, his figures were misleading as it did not account for the UK’s net contributions. If this knowledge was public during the referendum, it can be argued that not as many people would have voted to leave, due to the lies of Farage and the UKIP party.

The charismatic London mayor, soon to be prime minister, Boris Johnson had the

love from millions over the country, it is widely argued that many of the Leave voters voted due to Johnson. Positioning Brexit as a way of reclaiming UK sovereignty and restoring democratic control, he used the campaign in optimism as a ‘turning point’ and a chance to restore public trust in democracy.

His use of his own popularity allowed him to become a ‘lead messenger’ alongside Farage, presenting himself as an ambitious person for Leave UK.

Both Farage and Johnson influenced voter perceptions and participation with their charismatic personalities with the public and their commitment to the course. Despite neither being solely responsible for the Leave outcome, their roles in campaigning strategies and media visibility is what ultimately led to the overall success of Leave UK and shaping the outcome.

ELEANOR COSTA

Divya Tharakluthy

The US-Iran Conflict

How it has unfolded in recent weeks

On 28 February 2026, the United States and Israel launched a series of strikes against Iran following weeks of escalating threats from President Trump and decades of deep-rooted hostility between the nations. Iranian military bases were the primary targets, while Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was reportedly killed during the attacks. subsequently succeeded by his son, Mojtaba Khamenei, who has remained largely absent from public view since the strikes that killed his father. **article continued on the next page**

Corey Sartin

The Trump administration & the World Cup

How politics is influencing football’s biggest tournament

Donald Trump’s receipt of the inaugural FIFA Peace Prize from Gianni Infantino prior to the 2026 World Cup draw in December was perhaps an early indication of FIFA’s relationship with the Trump administration.

Infantino’s 2018 assertion that “politics should stay out of football and football should stay out of politics” might have provided some football fans with a level of comfort following recent years of FIFA instability and corruption. However, eight years on, his sentiment seems to have expired. The introduction of a FIFA Peace Prize provides an exemplary example of this contradiction. His remarks during the awarding of the prize to President Trump painted a picture reminiscent of a legendary anti-war hero, who had “taken exceptional and extraordinary actions for peace” and “united people across the world”. This hypocritical alteration in FIFA's attitude towards politics is an excellent indication of the Trump administration's grasp on the 2026 World Cup.

Furthermore, as the world continues to shift beyond the scope of merely ‘uncertain times’, it becomes more clear that these comments were ill suited to Trump’s handling of both national and international political events. The Iran war provides evidence for this judgement. The USA's initiation of the conflict in February further strained already fraying ties between America and numerous Middle Eastern countries, including Iran, Lebanon and Iraq. Furthermore, the conflict demonstrates FIFA's inability to separate itself from significant international events, particularly when a host nation's foreign policy directly impacts such a significant FIFA event.

Recent developments in agreements to end the war are tentative, and as Trump’s previous erratic behavior has shown, could be subject to alterations in the coming days and weeks. It is difficult to ignore the irony in the decision to sign the 14-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the same building as the disastrous Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Additionally, Trump’s stated goal of eradicating the Iranian nuclear project seems not to have come to fruition, with Iran maintaining access to its stockpiles of enriched uranium underground, untouched by American missiles.

The extent of the influence that President Trump has over this year’s iteration of the FIFA World Cup is still unfolding. Numerous controversies have surfaced over the course of the tournament as it advances into the second round of the group stages. But one stands out to me as the most evidence for the Trump administration’s attitude towards foreign nationals.

The decision to deny the entry of the Somali referee Omar Artan was justified by US officials through the accusation of “association with suspected members of terror organisations". Despite the seriousness of this allegation, no formal evidence has been disclosed to the public, and Omar Artan has stated that he knows nothing of the organisation ‘al-Shabab’. Furthermore, the executive director of the White House FIFA task force, Andrew Giuliani, offered the explanation that Artan was denied for “very good reason”, but did not provide further evidence to substantiate this conclusion. When attempting to enter the country, Artan held a diplomatic passport and a single entry US visa, fully adhering to both FIFA and national rules.

Corey Sartin

The Trump administration & the World Cup

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Despite the lack of formal evidence of Artan’s association with suspected members of terrorist organisations, proving beyond any doubt that Artan has no connections to potential terrorists would be a herculean task, bordering on impossible. However, at present this is due to a lack of a sufficient justification behind the allegation, inhibiting any opportunities to disprove. Additionally, restrictions have not been limited to just officials, but have created challenges for fans of foreign nations wanting to enter the country. This directly challenges the reputation of the World Cup as an event that brings nations together, providing a sense of hope in times of worldwide hardship. Numerous countries have had fans prevented from entering the USA, including Iran and Haiti, with restrictions also being placed upon Ivory Coast and Senegal. Strict clampdowns on the movement of foreign nationals have affected the World Cup. A member of the Ivory Coast’s fan association, the National Committee for the Support of the Elephants has accused Trump (and not without justification) of “a form of segregation”, in an effort to separate African nationals from American soil.

The Trump administration’s efforts to enforce its own agendas on the World Cup have, so far, been successful. The refusal to allow a FIFA certified and supported referee to enter the country, a decision grounded in insufficient formal evidence, encapsulates the power that the Trump administration wields over the World Cup and FIFA. The war with Iran provides additional evidence that geopolitical affairs have a significant impact on the course of the tournament, culminating in restrictions placed on certain countries and their fans. The full ramifications of this World Cup remain to be seen. However they are beginning to lay the foundations for precedents that could alter international sporting events indefinitely. **COREY SARTIN**

Divya Tharakluthy

The US-Iran Conflict

How it has unfolded in recent weeks

Iran responded by launching retaliatory strikes against US military bases across the region. Drones and ballistic missiles targeted sites in Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, among others. Civilian and energy infrastructure was also affected, with a fire reportedly breaking out at Dubai's iconic seven-star hotel, the Burj Al Arab. Although the full extent of the disruption is difficult to determine due to limited access to the region, the conflict has had significant international consequences. Most notably, Iran blocked the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery of global trade and energy transportation. As approximately one-fifth of the world's oil and gas supplies pass through the strait, its closure triggered a global energy shock, causing oil prices to surge and creating economic ripple effects across the world. The continued exchange of attacks has intensified tensions throughout the Gulf region and severely disrupted the lives of millions. Iran's ambassador to the United States stated that at least 157 civilians were killed in a recent attack on an elementary school in Iran, while more than 3.2 million Iranians have reportedly been displaced by the conflict.

Israel's role in the war remains a matter of debate. However, it has continued extensive military operations, including repeated strikes across southern Lebanon and parts of the capital, Beirut, demonstrating its active involvement in the conflict.

But why was this attack carried out in the first place?

To answer this question, it is necessary to examine the history of Iran's nuclear programme. By the late 1950s, Iran had begun pursuing nuclear technology, with the programme expanding significantly following the Iran-Iraq War in the late 1980s as the government sought to strengthen national security. During this period, Iran received assistance from both Russia and China to develop its nuclear capabilities.

In 2002, it was revealed that Iran had been operating two undeclared nuclear facilities that had not been disclosed to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Diplomatic efforts intensified in 2003, resulting in an agreement under which Iran agreed to limit aspects of its nuclear programme while retaining centrifuges for civilian nuclear energy. However, concerns over Iran's lack of transparency persisted, leading the United Nations Security Council to adopt Resolution 1696 in 2006, which legally required Iran to suspend uranium enrichment. **article continued on the next page.**



Divya Tharagluthy
The US-Iran Conflict
How it has unfolded in recent weeks

Following the election of Hassan Rouhani as president in 2013, Iran continued developing its ballistic missile programme despite continued international pressure. However, President Trump's justification for military action based on an imminent Iranian nuclear weapons threat has been questioned. The IAEA has consistently stated that, while Iran has expanded its nuclear activities, it has not confirmed the existence of an active, structured nuclear weapons programme, nor has it verified that Iran possesses nuclear weapons.

Iran has also provided military aid, weapons and training to a number of militant groups, including Hamas, Shiite militias in Syria, Hezbollah and the Yemeni Houthis. Israel has cited this support as a key justification for its involvement, arguing that Iran has enabled Hamas, the group responsible for the 7 October 2023 attacks.

On Wednesday 17 June 2026, the United States and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at easing tensions between the two countries. The agreement was signed by President Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. Under the terms of the MOU, both sides committed to further negotiations, while Iran agreed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for the United States lifting its counter-blockade of Iranian ports.

Although this agreement represents only the beginning of a wider diplomatic process, it may signal a positive step towards de-escalation. One provision also calls for an end to the war in Lebanon involving Israel. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected this proposal, arguing that Israel must retain operational freedom within Lebanon. This raises an important question: could these disagreements ultimately create a rift between the United States and one of its closest allies, Israel? **DIVYA THARAKLUTHY**



IN DEPTH: Stan Lawrence

The murder of Henry Nowak

Proof of Anti-White Racism, or Exaggerated Far-right False Narrative?

Last year, 18 year old Henry Nowak was killed in Southampton on the 3rd December 2025, to not much public attention.

However, the recently released police bodycam footage from the night has sparked a fire of retaliation on an international scale. Many are now claiming that positive discrimination has pushed past its purpose, leading to a two tier policing system in the UK that prioritises political correctness and fear of being called racist over the wellbeing and lives of white people, causing the unnecessary death of Henry Nowak. Are these claims grounded in a hidden truth? Or is this yet another example of how racism and false narratives are becoming more accepted within mainstream society.

How the events unfolded: According to the Judge's final sentencing remarks, the events unfolded as follows. Henry was walking back from a night out, mostly sober, when he bumped into Vickrum Digwa (the convicted killer). He started recording Digwa with his phone and asked, “are you a bad man?”. At the time, Digwa was wearing a Kirpan (however this fact is disputed by many Sikh leaders) in a sheath visible on the outside of his clothing. A Kirpan is legal to carry in the UK due to its large religious significance in the Sikh faith. However, there are still strict regulations to this allowance such as the fact that the blade cannot exceed 9 inches long (but must be much shorter in other circumstances such as at school, on public transport or in secure venues); the blade must be covered up under clothing or in a sheath; the weapon can only be used offensively as a very last resort in line with the laws around self defence. Digwa was in fact following all of these regulations up until the incident. The sight of the sheathed blade however may have prompted Henry to make this remark, “are you a bad man?”.

Digwa responds, “yes I am a bad man” and grabs the phone from Henry. At that point the recording stops and what happened afterwards was only witnessed by the two men involved. The judge made the assumption that Henry attempted to get his phone back which led to an altercation during which Digwa’s turban was knocked off. Vickrum then unsheathed his blade and stabbed Henry in the chest, then stabbed him 3 more times all over his body.

When the police arrived Digwa continued with the narrative that Henry had racially abused him whilst keeping Henry’s phone, with the video evidence on it, and the weapons that he gave to his mother. This is undeniably obstructing the course of justice as the police fully believed the story. When they arrived on the scene proceeded to go straight to Nowak who was on the floor and arrest him. Whilst they were doing this Henry is repeatedly heard on the bodycam footage saying that he had been stabbed and that he was finding it hard to breathe. These claims were somewhat understandably dismissed by police due to the deep stab wounds not being easily visible in the dark as well as this false accusation of injury being a well documented strategy used by suspects to delay arrest and try to escape. As the police put handcuffs on Henry he slowly lost consciousness, and died. **article continued on the next page.**

Vickrum films Henry scrambling away over a fence and onto a communal bin, but falling and landing on a parked car: this is when the perpetrator’s brother arrives at the scene. The Judge claims that Digwa lies to his brother that the altercation had been accompanied with racism and that Henry had called him the P-word. Soon afterwards, Digwa’s mother and father arrived at the scene at which point he gave the murder weapon and the other smaller Kirpan he was carrying to his mother, who willingly hid the blade from police. (She has since also been arrested.)

This is the story that all of the large media outlets are running with on their headlines. Henry, an innocent white kid, mildly annoyed the Sikh, who then proceeded to brutally murder him and then lie about the incident to police. However it misses out a lot that largely alters the context of the situation. Firstly it is important to make clear how disgusting and awful it is that the murder took place and that Digwa should certainly be harshly punished, this extra context is in no way attempting to take away from that. But as well as this, it is important to know all of the facts.

We have got to ask the question, why would Nowak randomly approach a guy he saw on the street? Why would he randomly start filming him and asking him if he is a ‘bad man’? In the full transcript of the video shown to the jury Henry says “Innit bad man, what bad man. You’re a bad man, say you’re a bad man, go on.” All this whilst Digwa is still visibly walking away. Then he makes the comment “I am a bad man.” Digwa’s account is that, before the video starts, Henry barged into him, appearing drunk, and turned back to say to him “you could have moved up a little.” Do you think you're a bad man? I'm from Essex. You don't know what people from Essex are on." This part must be somewhat true as how else could Vickrum have known where Henry grew up.

After Henry continues with his aggravation, caught on the video, Digwa grabs the phone from Henry and the recording stops. The claim from the defendant is that Henry then punched him and pulled his turban, an incredibly important headdress in the Sikh faith, from his head. Digwa recalls, "As I'm bent over, he started saying: 'I'm going to f*** you up, I'm going to kill you.'" "I felt like he was going to use my kirpan on me." The court however concluded that Digwa’s account was completely false, including the racism allegations he made. This is a strange verdict to take as verbal conversation is impossible to disprove unless recorded in some form. The Judge made the claim in his final sentencing remarks that “I am sure that Henry had said nothing racist. You are the only person to make that claim and it is completely at odds with his previous character.”

A very bold claim seeing that the only report about Henry’s character is from his close family, debatably a very weak source. They said Henry, studying Accounting and Finance at Southampton University, was "kind, hard-working and ambitious.” A very generic statement that doesn’t reveal much at all about his personality. To base a conclusion that there is no possibility that Henry used racist slurs against Digwa during the altercation on a description given by Henry’s friends and family is unwarranted. Again it is incredibly important to state that even if someone is drunk, annoying, rude, filming you, mocking you, or trying to provoke you, the law does not generally allow you to stab them multiple times with a knife. It is also extremely shocking how Digwa then lied multiple times to his brother and most importantly the police about what had happened. The jury rightly rejected Digwa’s self-defence claim and convicted him of murder. It is just important to understand exactly how this whole situation unfolded.

The media rightly so has to summarise stories that they report on, but whenever something is cut down to the main events, bias arises. Many headline stories have fully gone with the final sentencing remarks by the Judge instead of reporting on the evidence that the Judge and Jury were working with. There is a difference: subtle, but can still really alter a perception of a story, especially such an emotionally charged case as is the Henry Nowak one. Another important factor to consider is that the pathologist on the case, Amanda Jeffrey, stated that in simple terms, he would not have survived, however quickly the response was due to the shocking amount of blood he had lost and the position of the chest wound. This reveals that the police weren’t responsible for not preventing his death. Apart from not proceeding to arrest him, there wasn’t anything they could have done to save him, no one could.

“Pure cold Rage”: The people of Southampton did not respond quietly. Far-right riots kicked off soon afterwards with hundreds gathered outside Southampton police station shouting chants such as 'Racist police, off our streets' and 'Shame on you'. They held union flags and homemade signs with slogans such as 'Henry’s blood is on your hands', 'Save our kids' and 'Prison 4 police on scene'. According to an account, from the prosecutor of two men arrested at the scene, it seemed like a quarter of the around 1,000 total attendees were drinking alcohol. In total 21 people were arrested after footage of the riot was reviewed. A few hundred then marched to the area where the murder took place. Police held them back as they tried to get into the street where Digwa’s family lives. During the demonstration eleven police officers and a police dog were injured as the rioters hurled bins, bricks and anything they could get their hands on. Many properties were damaged and car windows were smashed, definitely doesn’t classify as a peaceful protest. The racist march clearly wasn’t just about changing police protocol. If Digwa had been a white man the whole response would be immeasurable. People rioted in Southampton as they followed the false, divisive narrative pushed by figures like Tommy Robinson and the Reform party that migrants are the enemy - your enemy.

Just hours before the riot took place, the leader of the reform party, Nigel Farage, made a public address suggesting that we should be responding to the killing with - quote - “pure cold rage.” There is no other way to analyse this than it being an attempt to further divide the country and incite a violent response using populist deceptive lies. In the Commons, Farage stated that the UK has a systematic two tier-policing system, meaning that police treat ethnic minorities differently to white people and now have anti-white bias. After an eruption of dissent by other MPs, Keir Starmer responded to Farage by saying that "Exploiting this tragedy to create grievance and division would be wrong in any circumstances. But to do it when the family are expressly saying 'please don't' is unforgivable. It shows exactly who he is." Adding that politicians needed to respond to the case with "serious work, not rage". **article continued on the next page.**

The US State Department however attempted to join Farage in using this murder as a way to push their anti-immigration agenda. “Ideological conditioning and two-tiered policing are glaring symptoms of civilizational decline,” the department’s official account posted on Thursday. “They must be rejected across the West.” The use of the term ‘west’ is very significant as it really exemplifies the isolationist views of the western far-right and that we should be separate from the rest of the world. Undeniably this also integrates ethnic undertones that the west is fundamentally white, and should stay that way. ‘White-western supremacy’ in other words.

“Henry Nowak died the same way a civilization dies,” The American Vice President, JD Vance, wrote on X. “He should still be alive today, and he would be if the last few generations of European elites had stood their ground against the politics of self-hatred and the mass invasion of migrants, many of whom despise the West and the people who love it.” He added: “It is because we love the West that we want to preserve it. We love our civilization. We love our country. We love our children.” **article continued on the next page.**

This terrifying remark completely proves the point that the whole movement is an attempt at a discreet but large scale ethnical cleanse of the West by spreading misinformation and sowing hatred against migrants into our societies. The figurehead of the Unite The Kingdom movement, Tommy Robinson, said at the marches in Southampton “I heard someone say this wasn’t about race, this is about race. Even after they found out he [Digwa] had stabbed him five times, they still didn’t handcuff him. A white boy who done nothing was handcuffed, a murderer in possession of a knife who stabbed someone five times isn’t.” He continued: “As white people we are treated like second-rate citizens by our own government. White privilege? Does Henry look like he has white privilege when he was on the floor?”

This is pure horrific racism, unless he is right about a two tier society: but he isn’t. The same police being accused of anti white bias are 5 times more likely to stop black people; it is also vastly unequal for other minorities. In fact the Hampshire force whose officers responded to the murder of the 18-year-old has a higher than average racial disparity. To quickly discard any refute, these figures come from Hampshire police themselves (Latest Hampshire Police Figures). The average disparity from black compared to white in the whole of the uk is around 4 times more likely to be stopped and searched, due to the colour of your skin. If you want to talk about systematic racist bias, then these are the numbers.

It is also proven that immigrants are no more likely to commit crimes than British Nationals. You may see some claims such as that by the Telegraph, highlighting, for all crimes, “foreign nationals were arrested at twice the rate of British natives, accounting for 131,000 of the arrests from January to October 2024.” This is a true statistic, however it requires proper context. This statistic compares immigrants to the whole of the British population. It compares one specific demographic, migrants, who are nearly entirely young men living in poorer areas, to demographics across a whole nation, from a two year old baby to my grandma. In any country of any ethnicity, the first mentioned demographic is, unsurprisingly, the most likely to commit. Does that sound like an equal comparison?

If we want to look at the true cause of the vast majority of crime in the UK, while considering comparable ethnicity and age range, we see that men make up 78% of all prosecutions (2023) and 96% of the prison population. So should we deport all men to Rwanda? I think not. Many claims by Farage and other far-right figures describe anti-racism police policies to be a prime cause of what happened to Henry. Criticisms have focused in particular on a document published by the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) last year, the police anti-racism commitment. The document summarises what police chiefs will do to end racial bias. The part that has become controversial this week says (referring to how to approach a situation): “It does not mean treating everyone ‘the same’ or being ‘colour blind’ (racial equality).” The home secretary has said she believes the phrasing is “clumsy”. What it is supposed to mean is that officers should take into account the context and historic experience of different groups with policing. The document wasn’t actually sent out to officers and made it clear that it isn’t formal policy to act upon however many ministers believe it gives the wrong impression, despite its insignificance.

Police are also supposed to treat claims of a racial motivation seriously. But that was different to automatically accepting any claim that an alleged crime was motivated by hate. The policy relating to this came out of the 1999 Macpherson report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence and was supposed to guide the recording of hate crimes and force better investigation of them.

As well as this the police race action plan, launched after the murder of George Floyd in the US, was meant to tackle the enduring problems police have with race. But there has been little improvement. An independent assessment of the multimillion pound plan concluded it had had no “meaningful impact”, with police chiefs lukewarm in their commitment. Every report since the 1980s has found police failing on race, but never against white people. In reference to on scene practice, the College of Policing says: “Police decision making is often complex. Decisions are required in difficult circumstances and are often made based on incomplete or contradictory information.” In the case of Henry and Digwa, there certainly was a lot of contradictory information. As well as this, as the Judge wrote in his final sentencing remarks, the dark clothing made it difficult for officers to confirm if Henry had been stabbed or not as it was hard to see any blood marks consistent with a stab wound.

A frontline officer with 25 years experience wrote to the Guardian saying that “On watching the body-worn video, I saw the terrible consequences of a lack of professionalism and compassion meeting difficult and confusing circumstances, rather than the legacy of diversity training or wokeness.” He added “...if the ethnicities of those involved had been reversed. I have no doubt this too would have been seized on as clear evidence of police racism by different voices with their own agenda.” This really highlights how much of this incident was due to individual failures instead of a larger picture of anti-white racism.

This whole eruption of public rage isn’t a one off event at all. It is one of many cynical responses to progressive movements seen throughout modern history. We have seen it in very recent hashtagged movements and marches of solidarity that call for less drastic redirections than widespread cultural change: #MeToo, women’s marches, Black Lives Matter protests. These resulted in their own backlashes, formulated in the same language, “not all men”, “white lives matter” – a competing identitarian politics, grounded in victimhood.

The specific question of anti-white racism isn’t new either. The Race Relations Act of 1965 and 68 sparked the infamous speech by Enoch Powell who claimed that instead of protecting immigrants, such laws would make the established white population feel like second-class citizens. The speech was a direct attack on anti-discrimination legislation and a call to halt Commonwealth immigration; the latter a statement of astounding hypocrisy. He finished his speech by quoting a constituent as saying: "In this country in 15 or 20 years time, the black man will have the whip hand over the white man." **article continued on the next page.**

Victimhood is what it boils down to. Insecurity that the people you fear due to their differences are now finally being able to live their lives as free as you have so absent mindedly done your whole life. Otherwise sensible people who have never had a single experience of tangible discrimination, nevertheless will believe they are living under a state of systemic codified racism towards them. Since the matters of race have been more prominent in the public eye with protests, taking the knee and statues being torn down, it can be somewhat understandable that it may seem too much and is going too far. Though it is those exact thoughts that prove you aren't experiencing the very genuine reality of everyday subtle and violent discrimination for many people of ethnic, sexual and other cultural minorities. It drills down to human yearning for a sense of social identity, another binding story for those who would not swap places with an ethnic minority for a single day, and yet crave that sense of group distinction. **article continued on the next page.**

This is a legacy of a much wider erosion of the ways in which we can come together as a collective around things that aren't just about competitions with other races for the prize of most subjugated. Social media and the separation of individual and community has had a large part to play in this creation of race hallucinations. People now go off 'vibe politics' where if they feel something is wrong, then it is, no matter what the facts are, rather than being able to gather and analytically discuss material concerns. The government, present and past, has indisputably caused this drive towards division down imaginary lines. Endless austerity, increased cost of living, weakening of unions, privatisation and deindustrialisation, and destruction of the state education has removed the halo of security around working-class systems. The social and economic dynamic inevitably will shift, there is no getting away from that, however, new governments aiming towards modernity fail to articulate and communicate to the public who no longer array themselves as people of work and industry but at the sharp end of a system of indescribable wealth inequality who they are exploited and belittled by.

This chasm in an explanation behind people's problems leads to individuals like Farage coming in with quick fix populist solutions, specifically manufactured to exploit the natural urge to blame others. In this case, it is the most marginalised, and desperate members of our society, just because they are simply not like us. The story of fault and hate breeds both division and unity as people cluster to the figure of remedy who has no plans to actually complete the hard work of government. After all, anger works better to unify than hope. The Henry Nowak murder is a golden catalyst for these exploitative opportunists to gain more ground towards a goal of mass public resonance and relatability. This racial victimhood is just another fabricated identity umbrella that the masses can gather under as no other material shelter can shield them from the ceaseless downpour of economic and social dereliction. The depressing part of this whole swarm of culture wars and societal rage towards immaterial issues is that it is becoming more and more inevitable in a world of increased distrust in the information we consume. Partially rightly so due to increased fake news disseminating through social media. However this unjustifiable skepticism of facts leads to a person retreating to a more comfortable bubble of ignorance. Why become aware of the distressing truth when the alternative exists? Nevertheless, just as the movement is baseless, so is the proposed solution. Material change will never arise from immaterial fixes.

Is cultural cynicism now a hard-baked feature of western politics or is there still space for the progressive movement to grow freely, unbound by the barrage of hallucinated arguments of antithesis? It is now clear that this is the modern battle tactic of populism. Redirection becomes increasingly challenging as the Overton Window stealthily shifts towards the right. Now is the time to brush away the haze of culture wars that distract from the real issues and explanations for the very real destruction of economic and social stability. It isn't going to be easy, but is there any other option? **STAN LAWRENCE**

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SWBGS QUESTION TIME - 10th November 2026!
