

Beating fascism is the task ahead

<https://www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/2025/08/31/beating-fascism-is-the-task-ahead/>

Published: January 12, 2026, 8:07 pm

A US-based writer called Chris Armitage [has noted](#) in his Substack that:

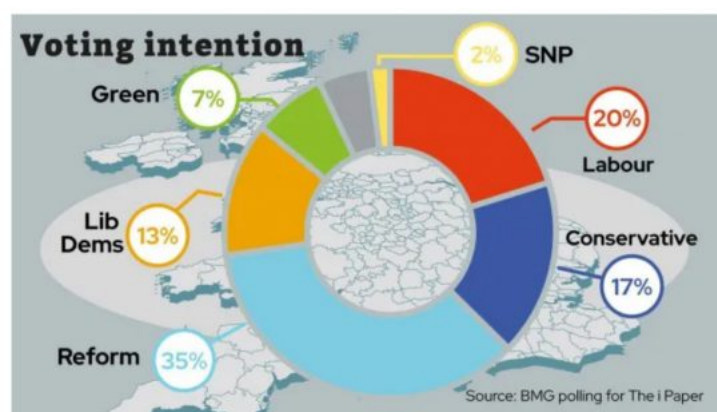
Once fascists win power democratically, they have never been removed democratically. Not once. Ever.

That is a statement that is hard to ignore, most especially since, as he notes, it takes, on average, 30 to 50 years to be rid of them.

Armitage's research is blunt: fascism does not leave office by the ballot box once it has captured it.

In Armitage's opinion, Trump has already won the ballot in the USA.

There is a real risk of that happening here in the UK. This [is the latest polling](#) in the iPaper:



Reform have surged to their biggest ever lead with BMG polling for The i Paper

However, as Chris Armitage suggests, there are ways to fight back. I have adapted his suggestions for use in the UK.

First, stop them before they take power.

Armitage suggests that this is the only safe path, and I agree.

Fascists use elections to end elections. Once in office, they change the rules, intimidate opponents and hollow out institutions.

In the UK, this requires that we address the issues that are breeding fascist reactions. We have inequality, insecurity, broken services and hopeless politics. These are the breeding grounds for the dissatisfaction Farage is exploiting.

What must we do? First, we must reform our voting system so a minority cannot take unchecked power.

Second, the issues surrounding inequality, insecurity and broken services must be addressed: balancing the books will be inconsequential when we have a fascist state as a result of trying to balance the books.

Third, we must end media complicity in authoritarian rhetoric. Telling the truth about fascism is vital.

And fourth, we need to build civic coalitions between trade unions, councils, churches, and local organisations to resist before the rot sets in. Prevention is democracy's front line.

Second, resist through coalitions.

Armitage points to the idea of a "Blue-State" coalition in the US, effectively excluding the East and West Coast Democratic states from the USA.

Here, that means devolved governments, mayors and major cities standing together to defend rights, maintain public services and refuse authoritarian demands.

Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and our big cities have real institutional weight. Acting together they could form a firewall if Westminster drifts into authoritarianism. This is constitutional, practical, and urgent.

Third, the Irish solution — selective non-compliance.

This may be the most powerful option we have.

Prior to independence in 1922, Irish "everyday democracy" meant quiet, mass refusal to obey illegitimate laws. The UK is peculiarly vulnerable to this tactic because so much of our system runs on consent, discretion and convention.

Teachers, doctors, councils, civil servants, regulators, and broadcasters could all choose to uphold rights and professional duties rather than carry out unlawful orders. A thousand lawful refusals, each small in itself, can make authoritarianism unworkable.

That is not a revolution; it is about integrity.

Fourth, secession and international oversight.

Scotland has an independence option.

Northern Ireland has the Good Friday framework for creating a new unity.

Wales is debating new constitutional arrangements.

The existence of real alternatives acts as a deterrent to abuse at the centre.

At the same time, international alliances, whether through the EU, ECHR, the UN, and with European and other democratic partners, including in the Commonwealth, can be called upon to assist scrutiny and resistance to what is happening. Authoritarianism hates external scrutiny. We must welcome it and call for it now.

The other options, whether they be war or waiting for authoritarians to die of old age, Armitage mentions, are not strategies. They are admissions of defeat. I am not embracing them here.

What I am suggesting is that.

*

Democracy is not self-sustaining. It requires active defence.

*

Economic justice is a form of democratic defence. Fascism feeds on despair. Reduce inequality and you reduce its fuel. This is the most urgent task of the Labour government. If it fails at this, we become a fascist state.

*

Political reform is not optional. Voting systems, media ownership, and civic education all determine whether democracy can withstand attack.

*

Civil society must be prepared for non-cooperation. Quiet refusal is often more powerful than noisy protest.

The conclusion is simple. If we let fascists into power in Britain, history says they will not leave by election. We cannot afford that complacency. The task, in that case, is prevention through tackling inequality, reforming politics, and defending our institutions before they are captured. And if prevention fails, then we must be ready to resist

through devolved coalitions, Irish-style non-compliance, credible constitutional alternatives, and international solidarity.

Democracy is not defended by hoping for the best. It is defended by acting, here and now, to make sure fascism never gets the chance to destroy it.

We have a task on our hands.