

Trump's actions do not sell Farage's narratives

Published: January 28, 2026, 7:46 am

We have suffered the curse of racist politics in this country for too long. Racism is bad enough, and too common. Racist politics is worse. It systemically embeds discrimination in our society, giving it the appearance of acceptability and, simultaneously, over time, making prejudice appear acceptable, state-backed, and even to be enforced by action. All of that is anathema to what I will call the politics of care.

I should point out, though, that racist politics did not arrive in this country with Nigel Farage. I can recall people's horror at Enoch Powell's speeches in the 60s and 70s, and the unified revulsion amongst political leaders at what he had to say, which sent him into effective political exile in Northern Ireland, where he was embraced by Unionists when no one else would.

I do also, of course, recall the National Front and the BNP, and the toxicity of all that they had to say, plus the thuggery with which they were associated.

I also well recall the power of music and other media in rejecting their racism. So many bands, from The Specials onwards, did so much to highlight the importance of community and integration. I was a fan then, and now, not just of the music, which was really good, but also of what they were saying. It mattered, and they changed the shape of our society and empowered, in the process, those who opposed the violence of racism and racists.

For a while, we could have thought that racism played no part in British politics, any more than other forms of discrimination appeared to do for a while. But we were lulled into a sense of false security, and maybe we let our guard down, because there always have been, and I suspect there always will be, those who base their political preferences on exclusion rather than inclusion, and on discrimination rather than shared humanity. For them, politics based on a totally false form of patriotism has always seemed to matter despite the fact that in a country based upon its capacity to manage open borders, the free flow of people, and the embrace of difference, to claim that patriotism is about a culture that has no singular origin, but which actually reflects

a multiplicity of identities, is straightforwardly fake, manufactured, and toxic.

The sad fact is that no one has done more to promote this fakery than Nigel Farage. I know he claims he is not racist. He often refers to the inclusion in his team of people who are not white, Christian, male, or who are of what the vast majority of his supporters would believe to be of an English background, as evidence of this. But it is notable that these exceptions appear to share other characteristics, of which the most commonplace are hypocrisy, an ability to climb greasy poles, and being in possession of a lust for both wealth and power, in which quest they have succeeded, letting Farage overlook those characteristics that are otherwise his basis for discrimination.

It was Farage who created the narratives that rejected our shared European heritage.

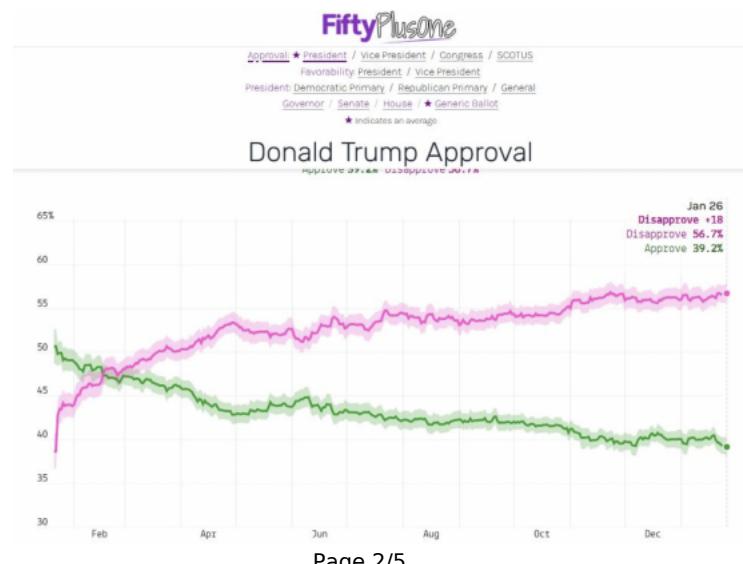
It was Farage who rejected the idea that we had obligations to refugees, from wherever they came.

It was Farage who created the idea that there was a uniformity to Englishness, when no such thing exists.

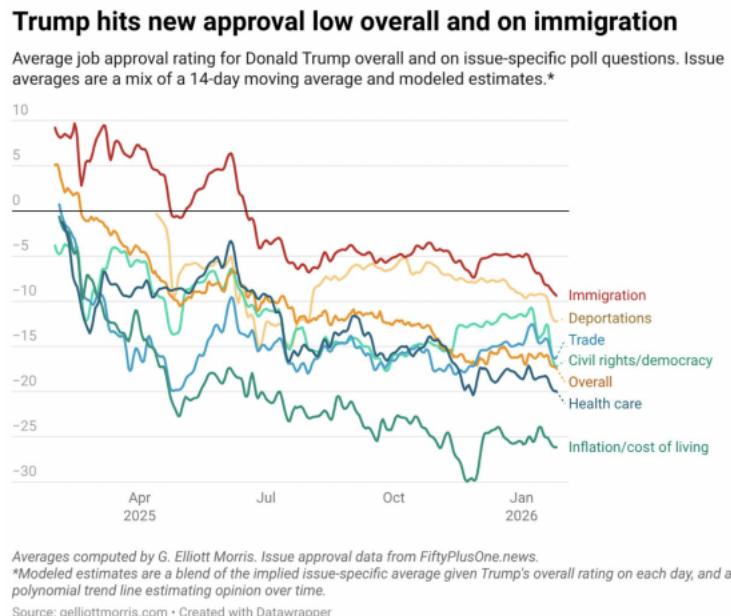
It was Farage who turned this into a political mantra based on hate of others - who he clearly identifies as migrants - when he has no other political philosophy to offer. Let's not pretend otherwise.

But of course, Farage has not been the only exponent of this type of politics. This sentiment has always been alive and well on the right wing of US politics, more so than it ever has been here, and whilst he did not create this sentiment there any more than Farage did here, Trump has become the perfect example of an exponent of this art, with his tireless attacks on migrants. In power, he has also turned it into a vicious form of politics from which millions have suffered, directly or through fear. Nowhere has this been seen more obviously than in Minneapolis.

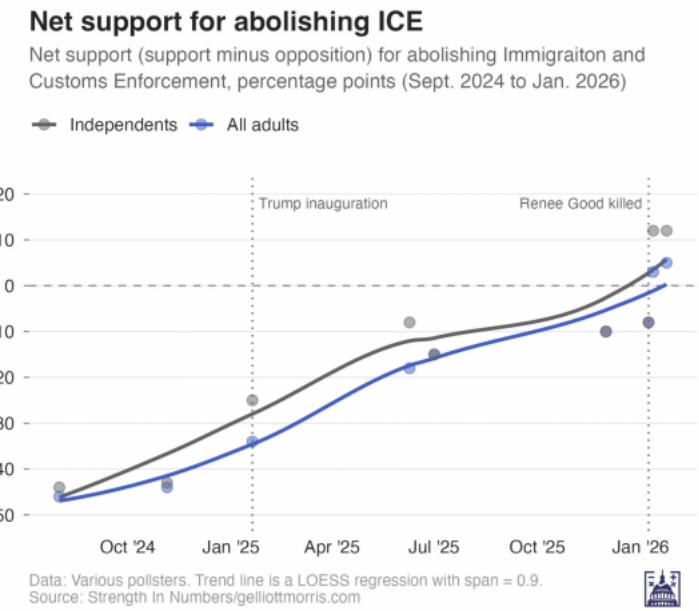
Now there is a backlash. There is no better source of data on this in the USA than G. Elliot Morris in his Strength in Numbers blog, which I recommend. [As he noted this week](#), Trump's popularity is collapsing:



This, though, is not the most important piece of data he notes. Instead, this chart helps reveal that:



Support for Trump on immigration is declining rapidly. But it is support for ICE (the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency) where the change in sentiment is most telling:



When Trump was elected in the autumn of 2024, there was strong support for ICE. The question was about support for its abolition, so a negative count indicates support. That support has now collapsed. Overall support for the abolition of ICE now exists. The shift in sentiment is near enough 50%, and as G. Elliott Morris notes, you have to go back to the Vietnam War era to find another shift in sentiment on government policy of this

scale, and that took longer than this change in support for CE has.

Why is this relevant? Because I think what it shows is that support for politics based on anti-migration rhetoric works when there is no serious action to back it up, but when faced with the reality that real people suffer badly as a result of that policy, three things happen.

First, the opponents of the policy are emboldened to challenge it.

Second, they actually take action to defend civil and human rights, putting themselves in harm's way to achieve that goal if need be.

Third, faced with the reality of violence by the state, even the support of those who think they have a problem with migrants withers: they become disoriented and confused by what they witness, and see the conflict between what they have been told is acceptable to think and the reality of the violence required to deliver the policy they have supported.

I am not, of course, suggesting that all those who are racist or who support violent action to remove migrants change their minds on that issue: to do so would be absurd, because clearly that is not the case. What I am instead saying is that there are sufficient grounds to suggest that there is a substantial change in overall public sentiment on this issue, which, in turn, is reflected in considerable swings in political support for those proposing such policies.

The impact of this is real.

It shows that citizens' power to protest matters.

It shows that convictions around social justice can sway opinion.

It shows that compassion works.

But more than that, it exposes the flakiness of the narrative that those who seek power on the basis of racist rhetoric, and little else. When it becomes clear that a person's migrant status is not the issue, and that the reality is that the rhetoric is all about hate, and not about the reality of lives, contributions made, communities and care, then that hate can fall away.

What does that leave, in that case? The obvious question is: now that this has been exposed in the States and the reality that Trump is being forced to back down is clear, what now for Farage? What has he got to say on this issue now? And how will he seek to differentiate himself from what Trump is doing when all that he has promoted has come from the same policy, of creating race-based divisions to provide the pathway to power?

The answer is, of course, I cannot know. But to presume that there will be no consequence would be wrong. People will notice. The only questions are when, how, and with what consequence. But there is one thing we can be sure of, which is that Trump's actions do not sell Farage's narratives. And that means there might just be a silver lining from the violence and deaths that have needlessly happened. Others might just be saved as a result.