

Britons May Hate Trump, but They Like Trumpism

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ORAL EXAM: EXAMPLE OF COMMENTARY

THIS IS ONLY AN EXAMPLE: other approaches can be chosen.

DON'T FORGET: it is better to **choose a few elements** and to **really exploit them** than **trying to comment everything** in the document: this example gives you **many possibilities**, but you wouldn't have time to present all of them in the exam. Choose wisely.

Transition: *[Choose **an element of the text that you found striking**, and that you can use to introduce the key question of your commentary.]*

The **deferential attitude** of the British government towards Donald Trump => a bigger and bigger **influence of far-right ideas** on the international stage.

Key question: To what extent is the **rise in popularity of far-right ideas** influencing **Western democracies politics**?

I. **Populism on the rise, embodied by a diversity of (would-be) authoritarian figures.**

Example of the text: Donald Trump and Trumpism: *here you can develop (from the definition of Trumpism) and find examples:*

- **Right-wing populism:** supported the left-behind thesis (comes from the UK and the arguments given to support Brexit): a set of arguments, ideas, used by right-wing populists to rally people from **places presented as the “losers” of globalisation** => **blame** is put on **free trade** (to support protectionism) and **immigration** as the basis of all evils that befall the people whose industries have suffered from relocations for example (the Northern regions of the UK, around Manchester and Leeds for example, or the Midwest in the US).

- **National conservatism**: this populism that is turned into a **culture war**: support of **prominence** of the **national and cultural identity** around moral (sometimes religious) criteria => putting the blame on minorities, be they racial, sexual,...
- **Illiberal** and even **authoritarian** tendencies, with a call to gather around a “strong” figure:
 - Other examples: Victor Orban in Hungary, Jair Bolsonaro in Brasil, Javier Milei in Argentina, Alexander Loukachenko in Belarus...

⇒ **Difficulties to maintain traditional diplomatic relations with such characters:**

- “a desperate diplomatic trip to the White House”: caution and unease in dealing with the **unpredictable American president**.
 - Goal of the meeting was to **persuade the US to give more aid to Ukraine** and to negotiate **a not so terrible deal about the tariffs** on the UK [*Here you can say more about Trump’s protectionist policy and tariffs*]
 - => a move despised by some, but that shows **how powerful and influential the US are**, when even as a political opponent the British Prime Minister must remain subservient to the American president.
 - Tone of the article: “obsequious approach”
- ⇒ An **influence of Trump and his ideas** on the political landscape elsewhere, especially the Western world.

II. **A populist far-right movement weaponizing immigration for its own interests.**

- The text mentions “hard-right nativism”: *here you can develop on how things are going in the US*
 - Rise and expansion of the activities of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), in charge of arresting and deporting illegal immigrants.
 - Objectives in **deportations**: millions. More “realistic” ones for this year: around 350000 for the end of the fiscal year (September / October).

- **This policy is not new:** the famous story of the wall between Mexico and the US, that Trump is still having built. Reinforcement of border controls in general...
 - An ideology and policies that can be **inspiring**, and are expressed through **anti-immigration movements** elsewhere.
- “The story of how Britain arrived at this juncture”: *this can be developed if you know anything about it*: an **anti-immigration sentiment** that comes back as far as **the 70’s / 80’s** with the first big economic crises: with its **colonial history**, the UK has a long history of immigration coming from its former occupied territories. But with growing anti-immigration sentiment, more and more restrictions.
- 2016: immigration and the rather open borders with the EU **fuelled the pro-Brexit sentiments** => Link with Nigel Farage: his first political party was **UKIP**, which core idea was to **promote Brexit**. Farage has been a major figure of the far right for a long time now.
- The small boats crisis: something that started at the end of the 2010’s with **the advent of some international crises** such as the war in Syria => thousands of migrants / asylum seekers / refugees journeyed through Europe and tried to reach the UK (economic situation perceived as easier to integrate / family and community ties...) using **small boats / dinghies** to cross the dangerous Channel => several tragedies and shipwrecks.
- Numbers: around **180000 people have attempted the crossing since numbers have started to be recorded in 2018**, but compared to the overall number of migrants coming to the UK just for 2024 (legally) = 948000 => a number and a crisis that are largely **amplified by the far right** to present it as a sort of invasion of the country, when in fact it remains not that big of a deal. => right-wing populism.
 - => “a British form of Trumpism” => far right ideas tainted with anti-immigration sentiments that are becoming **more and more entrenched in different political landscapes**.
 - *Here a comparison with other European countries, even France, is relevant.*
 - => question: are we looking at an unstoppable wave? How do we explain that growing sentiment?
 - “an atmosphere of scarcity”: **a country that has suffered more than other European countries from inflation** (as a consequence of the Ukraine war for

example), because of Brexit which has shut down the European Single Market to the British. *Here you can develop on the cost-of-living crisis, by adding to the information of the text.*

III. A weakening opposition and countermovement that must adapt to this re-alignment of the political landscape.

- As Trump and Trumpism are epitomizing this **bigger and bigger uninhibition in the expression of far-right ideas**, the opposition has **a hard time organising** and resisting what can sometimes look like a wave.

Again, comparison between Great Britain and other countries is relevant here.

- In the UK: the Labour party has difficulties with tackling those issues: here you can highlight the **paradox** presented in the text: Labour made **promises of change** from the 14 years of Conservative government, but **many measures they propose actually look conservative**: lower taxes (or at least no increase), policies to reduce immigration... A left that has difficulties finding its place in a new and polarized political landscape.
- In the US: **the Democrats still look in disarray**, with difficulties to really organise and speak in one voice since the re-election of Donald Trump. Some leaders, like California governor Gavin Newsom, seem to be rising, by **the movement has remained weak so far**.
- In France: **the left is divided**, the alliance made for the last general election broke quickly, and the future is more than uncertain.

Conclusion: *don't forget to give your opinion at that point, if appropriate: what do you think of this re-alignment? How do you see the future? ...*