

REVOLT ON THE RIGHT

Explaining support for
the radical right in Britain

Robert Ford and Matthew Goodwin

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A SINGLE-ISSUE PRESSURE GROUP

If only one day could lay claim as the bleakest in the history of the British Conservative Party, then 2 May 1997 would be a strong contender. As Conservatives awoke that morning to digest the results of the general election, they found they had been shunned by voters and battered by Tony Blair and New Labour. They had been thrown out of office after eighteen years and won barely 30 per cent of the national vote. It was their lowest level of support since the birth of British party politics in 1832. In the House of Commons, they now had only 165 MPs, who sat opposite the largest gathering of Labour MPs in British political history.¹ Some naïve Tories talked about a quick recovery but the reality would be quite different. They would not return to government for thirteen years, and even then they would be forced to share power with the Liberal Democrats.

Though few Conservatives would have noticed, the general election in 1997 also saw the debut of a new challenger in British politics. The UK Independence Party were a largely unknown and disorganised fringe group of Eurosceptics fighting their first parliamentary election. They had gone into the battle with high hopes. United by their defining goal of pulling Britain out of the European Union, UKIP wanted to place a ‘hard’ rather than ‘soft’ form of Euroscepticism at the heart of British politics. As hard Eurosceptics, they were opposed to the very principle of European political integration and demanded that Britain withdraw from the ‘Europe project’. This stood them apart from ‘soft’ Eurosceptics who do not oppose the EU *tout court*: they want EU institutions and policy reformed, rather than junked; and European integration slowed or reversed, rather than ended altogether.² UKIP’s message was total opposition

to Europe: 'The UK Independence Party's policy of withdrawal is the only viable option. THE ONLY WAY IS OUT.'³

Beginning the revolt: the formation of a new party

The story of UKIP had begun six years earlier, in 1991, with the foundation of a small pressure group called the Anti-Federalist League. The League wanted to rally opposition to the Maastricht Treaty that had been signed earlier in the year, and which paved the way for the EU and a single European currency. The Anti-Federalists attracted little attention but when they did they talked of wanting to stop the UK 'becoming a province of a united European superstate'.⁴ While some suggested the League's name had fascist connotations, their founder, Dr Alan Sked, was a former candidate for the Liberals and a historian at the London School of Economics who had chosen the name for its historical resonances: 'I thought it would be the equivalent of the anti-Corn Law League. Just as the anti-Corn Law League converted [Robert] Peel to free trade, the anti-Federalist League would convert the Tory Party to Euroscepticism and to British Independence.'⁵

Sked's Euroscepticism had developed in the 1980s, while convening the European Studies programme at the LSE: 'I just kept meeting all these bureaucrats and other Euro-fanatical academics who came to give papers, politicians from different parts of Europe, and reading endless MA theses on the EU. I just came to the conclusion that the whole thing was mad.' Influenced by Margaret Thatcher's famous 'Bruges speech' in 1988, in which the Conservative Prime Minister warned against efforts at the European level to 'suppress nationhood', 'concentrate power at the centre of a European conglomerate' and fit nations 'into some sort of identikit European personality', he joined other influential Eurosceptics in the Bruges Group, a right-wing think-tank that received financial backing from Sir James Goldsmith, who would soon play a more central role in the Eurosceptic movement.⁶ But writing pamphlets was not enough for Sked, who wanted to take his message to voters. After launching the Anti-Federalist League and making clear his plans to stand

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against Conservatives at the 1992 general election, he was dismissed by the Bruges Group as an ‘embarrassment’.⁷ Sked and the Anti-Federalists were on their own.

Their early ambitions, however, were soon disappointed. At the 1992 general election the Anti-Federalists talked of making such an impact that Conservatives would be forced to adopt their harder brand of Euroscepticism. But with only seventeen candidates and no real resources they were barely visible. There was only one target seat, Bath in the South-West of England, a region that over the next twenty years would become an important source of support for Eurosceptics. But while Sked talked about inflicting serious damage on the incumbent Conservative MP, Chris Patten, who was known for his pro-Europe views, in his own words the campaign was run ‘on a wing and a prayer’. Still he battled on, hoping to attract publicity by describing the Conservative Prime Minister, John Major, as the most incompetent leader in postwar Britain and declaring that after the Maastricht Treaty British sovereignty faced ‘its greatest threat since Adolf Hitler’.⁸ Patten did lose his seat, to a Liberal Democrat, but Sked won only 0.2 per cent of the vote in Bath while his fellow Anti-Federalists also failed to have an impact. Where they did put their heads above the parapet they averaged a paltry 0.5 per cent. Combined, they attracted fewer votes than the Monster Raving Loony Party.⁹

In the aftermath, Sked attempted to get back on track by contesting two parliamentary by-elections, one of which saw him enlist help from the famous former Conservative arch-Eurosceptic and serial rebel Enoch Powell, but at both contests he won less than 2 per cent.¹⁰ With the League failing to capture the public imagination, the small band of activists who had coalesced around Sked now began calling for a change of direction. They wanted a political party with a new name and a serious electoral strategy, as one recalled: ‘In 1846 the word “anti” may have sounded good. But it took a long, long time for a group of us to convince him that it would never work.’ These discussions led to a meeting at the LSE on 3 September 1993, at which a new party would be born.

While those who gathered in Sked’s office were eager to begin their revolt against the established parties, they were also aware of the need

to distance their embryonic movement from a more toxic element—that had resurfaced in British politics. As most would have known, in the 1970s Britain had seen a minor insurgency by an extreme right-wing party named the National Front (NF), which was openly racist and less than keen on liberal democracy. Despite the NF's reputation for fascist ideas and violence, for a brief moment they attracted significant support, winning over 100,000 voters at the general election in October 1974, almost 200,000 at the general election in 1979, and a couple of impressive results at by-elections.¹¹ But the NF fell as quickly as they had risen. By the end of the 1970s the party were rapidly leaking support to Margaret Thatcher and the Conservatives, who had reached out to NF voters by openly sympathising with their concerns over immigration. The NF was also torn apart by infighting and split into several tiny, warring factions. One of these successor movements was the British National Party, who formed in 1982 and would later come to dominate the extreme right.¹²

Unlike the Anti-Federalists, some of whom had strong links to established politicians, the BNP were firmly rooted in the NF's extremist tradition of racial nationalism and were treated as a pariah by other parties and the media. Much of this reaction stemmed from the BNP's purely 'ethnic' conception of British nationalism, which defined whether somebody could become a citizen of the nation based on their race and ancestry. The BNP argued that ethnic identity is fixed from birth, and that people from other ethnic and racial groups could therefore never be British. The party were deeply hostile towards non-whites and immigrants who were seen as a threat to the survival of the British race, and Jews whom they argued had orchestrated multiculturalism to encourage race mixing and the dilution of the purity of the British race. This worldview contrasted sharply with the mainstream 'civic' conception of nationalism in Britain, which defines national identity by voluntary affiliation and acceptance of the laws and traditions of a country. By this account, anyone who regards themselves as 'British' and respects the laws, values and institutions of the country can rightly call themselves British, regardless of their race, culture or birthplace.

But despite being ostracised, the BNP did manage to put the extreme right back on the map of British politics.

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In the same month that the Anti-Federalists met to launch their new party, the BNP made national headlines after capturing their first ever local council seat, in London's East End.¹³ The party's growing profile and poisonous reputation had clear implications for the Anti-Federalists, as Sked recalls: 'We didn't want British [in the party name] as that was supposed to be too racist and associated with the British National Party. So we called it UK Independence Party. It was all done very quickly. It was obvious to all of us that if we rule out British then it had to be UK. What we stood for basically was independence.' But despite these early efforts to distance themselves from the BNP, UKIP's relationship with the extreme right would continue to generate interest for years to come.

UKIP had not even marked their first birthday when the first battle arrived. In June 1994, voters went to the polls to choose their representatives in the European Parliament, a distant institution that many knew little about.¹⁴ Hoping for their first success, UKIP took their message to the electorate in a television broadcast but lacked the money and manpower needed for a ground campaign. 'You just didn't have the luxury of campaign strategy', noted Sked. 'We had very little in the way of money. We all paid our own deposits. Whatever funds we had were scraped together by the candidate, their family, friends and the old man and his dog who might contribute 50p. It was all done on a shoestring.' The results were uninspiring. UKIP won only 1 per cent of the vote and finished fifth, well behind the three main parties and beaten easily by the Greens. The message and the new name had failed to resonate.

Nor were these early problems confined to elections. Like most new parties that cannot afford full-time and experienced staff, UKIP relied heavily on a handful of ideological true believers and novice volunteers. Most of those who took control of high command lacked political and organisational experience, and had strong and conflicting opinions about how to run a party. The result was continual infighting. Rare moments of opportunity were frequently lost through an absence of basic party discipline and, at several points, full-blown chaos where UKIP seemed unable to unify activists

around a leader or strategy. As one journalist would later remark, while the three main parties in British politics have each had their share of internal warfare, none have come close to rivalling the self-destructive tendencies of UKIP.¹⁵

One early point of tension was Sked, whose personality and intellectual preoccupations drew criticism from activists who had little time for theory and abstract debate. Many also disagreed with his argument that they should refuse to accept any seats they might win in the European Parliament, a move that Sked saw as 'a rebuke to Euro-federalist pretensions to represent the British people'.¹⁶ But, from the start, deeper tensions were also inherent within the party.

One of the most important centred on UKIP's overriding goal. Were they setting out to convert their Conservative rivals to hard Euroscepticism? By extension, were they simply a single-issue pressure group, focused on poaching disaffected Tories, who would fold once their goal was accomplished? Or were UKIP destined for greater things, to lead a broader revolt against the established political class and realign British party politics, by appealing to voters across the spectrum? This unresolved tension about the nature of the party would spark regular disagreements over strategy, particularly over relations with the Conservatives. For some Ukippers the centre-right encompassed a faction of vocal Eurosceptics who were their natural allies. Aware that their efforts might draw support away from Eurosceptics who were already elected to Westminster, and in seats UKIP were unlikely to win, some thought Eurosceptic Tories who had revolted over issues like Maastricht should be given a free run. UKIP, they argued, should stand down against these candidates or run 'paper candidates' who would be named on the ballot but not backed by an active campaign. In this way, and while not elected themselves, UKIP would help to ensure that Eurosceptics had the strongest possible presence in Westminster, which kept open the possibility of a more formal alliance between the two parties in the future. But others in the party held a different view.

Seen from an alternative perspective, a UKIP-Conservative alliance at elections would merely fuel a public image of UKIP as an awkward Conservative offshoot with no real identity of their own. It

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would also send an awkward message to voters who would be asked to vote UKIP except if they were based in certain seats, where they would be urged to support a Eurosceptic Tory. An alliance risked undermining UKIP's credibility as an independent force, and blurred points of ideological difference that separated the two parties. Instead, went the argument, UKIP should go it alone by standing candidates across the board and appealing to all voters. This underlying tension would create constant difficulties for the party in years to come. As activists dusted themselves off after their first, bitter taste of election defeat, a far more pressing problem had arrived.

Competition on the Eurosceptic fringe

On 27 November 1994, Sir James Goldsmith announced his intention to launch a new political party dedicated to securing a referendum on Britain's relationship with Europe. 'Let me make just one promise, just one vow', proclaimed Goldsmith at a meeting of his supporters. 'We the rabble army, we in the Referendum Party, we will strive with all our strength to obtain for the people of these islands the right to decide whether or not Britain should remain a nation.'¹⁷ Goldsmith was far from a political novice. On the contrary he posed a formidable threat. His personal wealth was estimated at around £800 million (well over £1 billion in 2013 terms), and he had already been elected to the European Parliament in France as part of a list of candidates who won 12 per cent of the national vote. Now with his eye on British politics, Goldsmith pledged to spend at least £10 million at the next general election to ensure that his party was funded to the same extent as the main parties. In the end he would spend almost three times as much as the Conservatives and five times as much as Labour on advertisements in the press.¹⁸

Goldsmith's was a classic single-issue party that had a simple message for voters. Unlike normal parties that address a range of issues, recruit support from particular sections of society and play a long game, the single-issue party is defined as one that galvanises support 'from different political camps on the basis of a single, all-encompassing issue, and, predictably, disappears once the issue has been articulated into

the political agenda'.¹⁹ Goldsmith's core issue was to secure a national referendum that would ask the British people whether they wanted their country to be part of a federal Europe or return to an association of sovereign nations in a common trading market. With nothing to say on other issues it was not long until some journalists described the new arrival as the 'Referendum Only Party'.²⁰

The message was also backed by a serious machine. Goldsmith's resources and contacts were used to quickly register 230,000 supporters, hire sixty paid staff, rent a headquarters in London and ten regional offices, and secure celebrity endorsements, all of which generated more media interest. He also spent a princely sum to send a video to millions of homes across the country, which explained: 'We in the Referendum Party are not politicians. We don't want to be politicians. What unites us is the belief that in the true spirit of democracy we must let the people of Britain decide the future of Britain. As soon as a full and fair referendum has been held, we'll resign. That's written into our constitution.'²¹

All of this contrasted sharply with UKIP, whose campaign coffers were almost empty and lacked the experience and foot soldiers to offset Goldsmith's gathering momentum. Between UKIP's birth and the general election in 1997, the daunting task of building an organisation from the ground up had fallen to David Lott, a former squadron leader in the Royal Air Force whose sceptical views on Europe had led him out of retirement and into UKIP. Single-handedly, Lott began building UKIP a skeleton organisation. 'After a while, I'd got hold of an old horsebox, painted it all up with UKIP. I'd drive around towns, and have a contact or something. We'd meet, set up a table in a square somewhere, and hand out bits of paper. I was trying to form little groups all over the country.' Lott and his horsebox trundled across the country, from Scotland to Land's End. But while he managed to put in place an initial membership, an office in Regent Street and a newsletter, he did not have time to build serious foundations before UKIP's first general election campaign. The contrast between the two Eurosceptic parties could not have been sharper.

The 1997 general election was a watershed moment in British politics, ousting the Conservatives after eighteen years in government

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and ushering in New Labour for the next thirteen. But outside of major party politics the election also offered opportunities to fringe Eurosceptics. When the Anti-Federalists had campaigned in 1992 few voters told pollsters that Europe was a pressing concern. Only 14 per cent of the electorate placed Europe among the three most important issues facing Britain. This left the issue in a distant sixth place on the list of priorities for voters who were preoccupied by other concerns. But by 1997, and after the Maastricht Treaty and the prospect of a single currency had turned up the political heat over Europe, the climate had changed. The share of voters ranking Europe among the three most important issues had tripled, to 43 per cent, making it the third most important behind the National Health Service and education. British public opinion had shifted in a more Eurosceptic direction across the board. Support for European integration and a single currency had fallen, while survey evidence suggested that two-thirds of the electorate either wanted to leave the EU or reduce its powers and less than one in five thought Britain should replace the pound.²²

UKIP were aware of these trends and pointed to opinion polls as evidence for their optimistic assertion 'that, potentially, 80% of the electorate could be converted to vote for the UKIP'.²³ But they were no longer the only Eurosceptics in town. Goldsmith was now outspending them by a crushing margin in the air-war of national advertising. The markedly different media profile of the two parties was reflected in the number of times they appeared in domestic newspaper articles during 1997: the Referendum Party were mentioned in more than 1,000 while UKIP featured in less than 200; Goldsmith was mentioned in almost 1,000 while Sked appeared in just 58.²⁴ Despite their common ground the two parties also failed to reach some sort of deal. While some in UKIP claim their founder was never open to the idea of a pact, Sked claims his letters to Goldsmith were never delivered. Either way, UKIP wandered into the election with only vague hopes of catching the scraps from Sir James' table.

Nor was UKIP's attempt to attract these voters helped by their narrow message. Their fanatical obsession with Europe and lack of

interest in other domestic issues immediately reduced their potential to carve out a separate niche, and was obvious to those who went to some of their earliest meetings, as one recruit recalled: 'What a shambles they were. Everybody wanted to speak. Everybody went over their time. Everybody just ranted into the microphone about how terrible the EU was.' The fact that UKIP were interested in little else was reflected in their general election manifesto that contained only a few speculative ideas, built on the prospect of Britain's withdrawal from the EU. While the document hinted at issues that would become more prominent in later years, policies were woefully underdeveloped. Education would be geared towards ensuring the preservation of Britain's national cultural identity. The number of immigrants would be limited. Borders would be tightened. A tougher approach to illegal migrants would be adopted. Politically correct policies would be opposed. While advocating these hard right ideas Sked continued with efforts to distance UKIP from the extreme right. The party, he explained to voters, was 'a democratic, non-racist, non-sectarian party', which 'cannot repeat too often that it totally rejects racist views and behaviour'.²⁵

UKIP were also beginning to understand the constraints imposed by British general elections. To launch a campaign the party would need candidates who would each need a deposit of £500, which would only be returned if they polled more than 5 per cent in their seat. This meant that a bad set of results could inflict large financial losses on a small party. Initial plans to fly the flag in every constituency were quashed as Sked conceded that electoral growth would not be immediately forthcoming: 'We are not a here today and gone tomorrow party', he explained, now seeking to reassure nervous Ukipers. 'We are at the beginning of an epic struggle which may take 10 years before we are out of Europe.'²⁶

UKIP focused their efforts on Conservative held seats in the South of England, a strategy that reflected the activists' view that they should mainly compete with and put pressure on the centre-right, as Sked explained: 'The majority of seats were Tory and certainly in the areas where most of our local associations sprung up were Tory. We did have a lot of dissident Tories, as the aim of the

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party was to convert the Tory party to Euroscepticism.' Areas such as Hampshire, Sussex and the South-West were identified as particularly promising.²⁷ But with Goldsmith on the scene and low public awareness of UKIP, the talk of influencing the major parties was premature. As voters headed to the ballot box, Ukipers knew they could not match the targeted campaigns and electoral professionalism of the main parties.

Shortly before the 1997 general election, a journalist remarked that most new parties in British politics tend to wither and die in the face of voter indifference.²⁸ Confronted with the formidable barriers to entering Westminster, attracting and sustaining interest simply proves too much for them. When the results arrived, UKIP might also have concluded that most voters were not interested in what they had to say. They faced some uncomfortable facts. Overall, their 194 candidates won only 0.3 per cent of the total vote. In seats they actually contested they averaged just 1 per cent, although almost two-thirds of their candidates failed even to reach this low threshold, and more than one-third finished in last place. These were hardly the signs of a coming political insurgency. Only one candidate, a young activist named Nigel Farage, managed to save his deposit after polling 5.7 per cent in Salisbury, where he did not face a Referendum candidate: 'I was the only one who tried', he recalled. 'The rest were all intellectuals. They thought it all happens in coffee houses.'

UKIP were also thoroughly beaten by their Eurosceptic rivals. Goldsmith had led 547 candidates into the election and had been impossible to avoid: the two parties stood against each other in a staggering 165 seats. UKIP were bulldozed aside, finishing behind their competitor in all but two.²⁹ Sked's party also clearly suffered in seats where they were forced to compete with Goldsmith: in seats where both parties stood candidates, UKIP's average share of the vote sunk to a dismal 0.9 per cent, as compared to 1.9 per cent in seats where UKIP stood alone. The Referendum Party's performance, meanwhile, was impressive for a single-issue party competing in its first election: they took an appreciable 2.6 per cent share of the total vote, averaging 3.1 per cent in seats they

contested. It might not sound like much but, as two academics noted at the time, it was the strongest performance by a minor party in recent British history, suggesting Euroscepticism could be a potent force in British politics when mobilised by a well-resourced organisation.³⁰

UKIP, however, had failed to ignite popular interest and the outlook was bleak. Nonetheless, the presence of the two Eurosceptic parties on the ballot did give analysts their first chance to explore the distribution of support for politically organised Euroscepticism in Britain. The Referendum Party had been strongest in the South and East of England where they averaged almost 4 per cent of the vote. In these regions they tended to score highest in seats with large numbers of elderly voters and high levels of agricultural employment, which some traced to anxieties about the impact of EU policy on this industry and the 1996 EU ban on the export of British beef following the 'mad cow disease' crisis. Support was noticeably weaker in Northern England and London, where the average vote for Referendum candidates dropped to 2.1 per cent, and in Scotland to 1.1 per cent, suggesting Euroscepticism was an English rather than a British phenomenon.³¹

UKIP also focused on the South of England, where they stood almost three-quarters of their candidates (one-third of all candidates were fielded in the South-East). The South-East and South-West gave UKIP their strongest results: only one of their 'top ten' performances came outside these regions (the North-East seat of Hexham fought by the party's main organiser, David Lott). UKIP fought only a handful of seats in the North and less than a dozen across Scotland and Wales. This pattern of support mirrored that for the Referendum Party, again suggesting Euroscepticism was mainly a Southern English phenomenon, although some activists like Nigel Farage suggested organisation might also have been a factor: 'The early people in UKIP that were worth a light happened to live south of the M4. Had some of them lived in Nottingham then it might have looked different. But very often a lot of this is more accidental than it is by design. It was as much a function of where we had good people.'

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Support for the Eurosceptic parties was also consistently higher in Conservative-controlled seats, although this does not mean their supporters were exclusively disillusioned Conservatives. Research on Referendum Party voters suggested 60 per cent of them had previously supported the Conservatives at the 1992 general election, but 20 per cent had voted Liberal Democrat, 10 per cent had voted Labour and the remainder had supported another party or stayed at home. There was a clear blue tinge, but the Eurosceptics had drawn in many former backers of other political parties as well. Moreover, while Referendum voters were united by their extreme Euroscepticism, an outlook they shared even *before* the emergence of Goldsmith's party, there was actually little evidence that they were consistently right wing: Europe was the only issue on which they placed themselves to the right of the Conservatives and they did not express strong free market beliefs. 'They were not right-wing ideologues', concluded one research team. 'Their vote does not therefore appear to have been either part of a specifically right-wing revolt against the Conservatives or a general diffuse protest vote.'³² Analysis by John Curtice and Michael Steed also suggested support for the Eurosceptics changed as they became more popular. Where Goldsmith's party or UKIP polled up to 3 per cent, around two-thirds of their support came at the expense of the Conservatives. But when support moved above this level they began to eat into the Labour and Liberal Democrat votes.³³

Staying in business: a breakthrough for a divided party

The Referendum Party had easily triumphed in the clash of the Eurosceptics, but within three months of the election their founder, Sir James Goldsmith, was dead, and his party soon disbanded. Goldsmith's rebels had soundly beaten UKIP in the rough and tumble of electoral politics, yet had also underscored the potential for a Eurosceptic revolt. With Goldsmith gone, the way was clear for UKIP to try and unify the fragmented Eurosceptic movement ahead of the European Parliament elections in 1999. In a cycle that would become characteristic of UKIP, however, they spurned this opportunity and instead indulged in a bout of infighting. Resentment towards their founder Alan Sked had been

growing, with activists complaining about his dictatorial leadership style, intellectual persona, his failure to strike a deal with Goldsmith and rumours of infiltration by right-wing extremists, as we discuss below. With Sked now reiterating his belief that UKIP should not take up any seats they won at the 1999 European Parliament elections, tensions soon escalated into open war, as a faction led by the young Nigel Farage, seasoned organiser David Lott and a new recruit, Michael Holmes, moved to oust their founding leader.

With Sked gone, the leadership of the party passed to Holmes, a millionaire new recruit who talked about using his resources to take the party onto the next level. Farage, though only in his mid-thirties, was made Chairman and given the task of consolidating the divided Eurosceptic scene, which he had begun to do by gathering together the most successful UKIP and Referendum candidates at a meeting. ‘Holmes said to me: “Your mission is to recruit the Referendum Party into UKIP.” About 160 Referendum candidates joined.’ The rival party, which once threatened to destroy UKIP, now became an important source of experienced new recruits, several of whom would rise quickly through the ranks, like Jeffrey Titford, a future leader, and others who would become UKIP MEPs and organise the party in London.

With the leadership crisis out of the way, UKIP began to focus on the 1999 European elections, which offered a fresh opportunity to connect with voters. Importantly for smaller parties like UKIP, these were the first ever British national elections fought using a proportional representation electoral system, allocating seats in proportion to the number of votes received. Smaller parties had a better chance of winning representation under this system than under the first-past-the-post system traditionally used in Britain (see Chapter 6). Morale was also boosted by a European by-election in Yorkshire in 1998 where even under the first-past-the-post system UKIP had won 11.6 per cent, hinting at potential further north. Encouraged, UKIP ran a full slate of candidates and campaigned hard. The overall climate was favourable – around 40 per cent of voters ranked Europe as one of the key issues facing the nation. The party hoped to mobilise these concerns with a typical single-issue campaign focused on withdrawal

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from the EU, though with some efforts to link Euroscepticism to other populist policy promises, such as using money saved by anti-fraud measures at the European level to build a 'fighting fund' for British people and workers who had been 'persecuted' by Brussels.³⁴

Farage instantly realised the significance of proportional representation, and once again dragged David Lott out of retirement to help his campaign in the South-East, as he recalled: 'I put a whole load of phone-lines in, bought a free phone number, advertised it in the odd newspaper advert that we could afford, and the phones started ringing.' During the two months before the election he claims that his campaign was generating at least £1,000 every day. There was, however, a new problem. UKIP now faced strong competition for Eurosceptic voters from the Conservative Party under William Hague. The new Conservative leader opposed Britain's entry into the single currency, opposed a common European immigration policy, pledged to reduce Britain's contribution to the EU budget, and promised to stamp down on corruption within European institutions. The Conservatives did not favour withdrawal, but talked of the need for Britain 'to be in Europe, but not run by Europe'. This shift was an important one, and reduced the amount of space available to UKIP. Despite this, when the results arrived, the benefits of proportional representation to small parties, including UKIP, were immediately apparent.

Only two years before the 1999 European elections, UKIP had floundered at a general election, attracting barely 100,000 voters and not even 1 per cent of the total vote. Now, under a proportional system, they had support from almost 700,000 voters, or 7 per cent of the vote in a very low turnout election. It was enough to put them in fourth place, well ahead of the other minor parties, and to give three of their candidates their first taste of elected office as Members of the European Parliament. Jeffrey Titford was elected in the East, Michael Holmes in the South-West and Farage in the South-East: 'It was a delicious double irony', noted Farage. 'For a parliament I want no part of, under a system I despise, I found myself blinking into the cameras at one in the morning saying how proud I was.'³⁵

The location of the seats reflected UKIP's main areas of organisational and electoral strength, who continued to draw most of their

activists and votes from Southern England but remained weaker in London and the North, and weakest of all in Scotland and Wales.³⁶ But, once again, the party could not remain unified for long enough to capitalise on their success. By the autumn of 1999 activists were again fighting with their leader. Holmes' authoritarian style, his paranoia about potential rivals and positive statements about the EU had eroded confidence in his leadership. 'It was Holmes himself', explained one activist. 'He had this feeling that everybody was after him. He didn't like particular people and he wanted to get rid of them.' Tensions again escalated, and soon UKIP's governing body, the National Executive Committee (NEC), was split down the middle. 'Nigel was at war with Holmes', recalled Lott. 'It looked absolutely hopeless, and again as though the party was going to collapse.' Accusations about stolen databases, frozen bank accounts and legal fees were thrown back and forth, until Lott, the veteran organiser, moved to end the dispute and Holmes' leadership by gathering 900 activists together at a now famous extraordinary general meeting, in Westminster in January 2000. But as underlying tensions surfaced, the meeting quickly descended into pandemonium. The atmosphere became so heated that one activist suffered a heart attack. One of those present was Stuart Agnew, in one of his first encounters with the party who, in later years, he would represent in Brussels. 'They very nearly seemed to fall apart. This major row I realised is why my membership application hadn't been processed for five months. Someone had stolen the data. People were getting very restive. Some were leaving, saying, "Well, what is this we've joined? What a mess!"'

Watching the chaos unfold was Farage, who realised his young party had reached a watershed moment. After some delay he took the microphone, rallied the troops and restored calm: 'There were a thousand people in the room. They were walking out by the score, most never to be seen again. If I hadn't walked up to the stage, well that was it. It was over. For UKIP, it was the single most important thing I ever did.' Holmes was ordered to stand down, and again the party narrowly escaped a total implosion, or as one activist recalled: 'We had survived the crisis which most new parties often don't. The

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personalities tear them apart. We nearly did that. But we stayed in business.'

'Get people standing': the 2001 campaign and glimmers of hope

UKIP had managed to stay afloat but they remained extremely fragile and were soon rocked by a new crisis. From their very beginning the party had anxiously warded off accusations of being linked to the extreme right. In June 1997, at the time of the general election, they had already become familiar with the damage that these claims could cause when a popular television programme, *The Cook Report*, produced evidence that one of Alan Sked's students, Mark Deavin, had infiltrated UKIP to gather information for the extreme right-wing BNP, and their soon-to-be installed new leader, Nick Griffin. The discovery was one of several factors that had led to Sked's demise. But between the European Parliament elections in 1999 and the general election in 2001, these allegations resurfaced very publicly.

Typical of this coverage was an article in *The Times*, in 1999, which reported that UKIP were 'dangerously split over allegations of far-right infiltration'. Other reports featured pictures of Farage attending a meeting with two BNP activists, one of whom was a convicted bomber, although Farage claims this was a deliberate trap. Whatever the truth of the matter, the idea of a link between these two small, right-wing parties took hold in the minds of voters and journalists. It was reinforced by other newspapers like *The Daily Mail*, who told their readers that UKIP 'could be dismissed as the extremist fringe'.³⁷ Similar arguments were then made by a bitter Alan Sked, who in the national media claimed that his former party had removed an affirmation of non-racism from membership application forms, that Farage had lobbied the party to accept former members of the National Front and that many of those who had left UKIP had done so because of fears over the extent of extremist infiltration.³⁸ These themes would be recycled as voters headed into the 2001 general election, in articles that variously alleged UKIP members had endorsed the BNP online, made racist comments, indulged in Holocaust revisionism and that

senior activists had once enrolled in an extremist party.³⁹ The party would always vigorously deny these charges, although senior figures like Farage conceded that they often hurt UKIP's reputation: 'There were little bits and bobs of BNP infiltration. They were never numerically very significant but politically always very damaging.'

Despite these ongoing challenges, after Holmes' departure UKIP were at least enjoying a period of relative internal peace. Their new leader was Jeffrey Titford, a former undertaker, Conservative Party supporter and Referendum candidate, who between 2000 and 2002 steered a cautious course, avoiding the bitter internal conflicts that had cost his two predecessors their jobs. Titford's term in charge was one of recovery and consolidation, and he spent much of his time resolving the grievances that had divided the activist base. 'I knew that a lot of plasters had to be stuck on the wounds', he would later recall. He toured the country, giving members an opportunity to vent their disquiet and worked closely with Farage, who had ruled out becoming leader before he was forty. 'I was doing over seventy speeches each year. I sucked up all of this hostility, this poison and everything that was being thrown. I held it together. I thought there was a future for us.' His calm and reassuring manner helped nurse the party back to health after the damage caused by a series of clashes between big egos. But Titford also sought to ready UKIP for the next battle, the general election in 2001, which for three reasons looked to be a tough campaign for the party.

First, the issue agenda was not as favourable as it had been at previous elections. For the average voter, the importance of Europe had fallen sharply. At the time of the 1999 European elections around 37 per cent of voters had ranked Europe as a core concern, but this had now fallen to 24 per cent. The single-issue UKIP had little to say on the two issues that dominated the election, the National Health Service and education. Some activists were certainly interested in widening the message but their party remained seriously hampered by EU tunnel vision. Their manifesto – *Better Off Out* – remained obsessed with the 'threat' from the EU. 'Not only is our country under threat but our entire legal system, our British nationality, our right to free speech and freedom of association, our policy, our armed forces, our own agricultural policy, our right to trade freely and the

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parliamentary system that underpins British liberty.' Rather than develop a broader set of policies the party doubled down on their hard Euroscepticism, offering voters a speculative 'Independence Dividend' that would arrive following withdrawal from the EU and be spent on agriculture, the NHS, raising the state pension and tax cuts.⁴⁰ As at previous elections UKIP appeared to be a narrow pressure group interested in only one issue, as even veteran activists conceded: 'I think the arguments that it was a pressure group rather than a political party held water. There was no doubt about that. It was possibly the most successful pressure group that the country had seen since the Chartists. However, it was a pressure group.'

Second, as at the European elections UKIP faced a Conservative leader who was also willing to campaign hard on Europe. William Hague framed the general election as the last chance for voters to save the pound and promised that he would veto the transfer of further power from Westminster to Brussels, oppose a European army and end EU fraud. While most Conservatives were not advocating withdrawal from the EU, to the average voter their arguments sounded very similar to UKIP's: stop giving power to the Eurocrats in Brussels; oppose the single currency; and protect the national interest. Hague also went further, wrapping his campaign in a populist cloak, demanding the country return to common sense, reduce immigration and warning that Labour was turning Britain into a 'foreign land'.⁴¹ The strategy was not a major success, but it did reduce the amount of space available to UKIP, as Nigel Farage recalled: 'It was not an easy place to be at all. It was very difficult. Blair's political honeymoon was very long and extensive. The Conservative Party appeared to be very Eurosceptic and adopted the pound. They were very, very difficult days.'

A third problem was that UKIP's campaign in 2001 was an organisational shambles. At the beginning of the year Farage had been startled to discover that the NEC had given little consideration to the election, and now spent much of his spare time persuading supporters to stand as candidates. David Lott, who was now national organiser, painted a similar picture of a campaign that was 'a hand-to-mouth effort, with few resources but much enthusiasm'. What money was available came mainly from Paul Sykes, a new donor

whose discontent with the soft Euroscepticism of the centre-right led him to finance around twenty million leaflets and advertisements for UKIP, enabling them to spend upwards of £700,000 on the campaign.⁴² But little of this was devoted to the kind of campaigning that could deliver decent results at a parliamentary election, as Jeffrey Titford recalled: 'It was really just about being able to put up the badge and say, "yes we are here".'

Despite their poor prospects, however, UKIP did attract interest from some Conservatives who shared their hostility towards the EU and were anxious not to split the anti-Europe vote. Only three months before the election, it was reported that a Conservative peer in the House of Lords, Lord (Malcolm) Pearson of Rannoch, who had known Farage since the mid-1990s, had offered to raise around £2 million for UKIP in exchange for them not standing candidates against Eurosceptic Tories. Pearson's stance that the two parties should combine forces at general elections so as to ensure that the largest possible number of Eurosceptics were in Westminster was a view shared by many within UKIP. Pearson's deal, however, had not been sanctioned by Conservative central office and was quickly taken off the table. Tory ties with UKIP were severed, for now. Conservative insiders claimed such a pact would exaggerate the electoral significance of UKIP, and could damage their own party 'by being associated with an organisation viewed as extremist by many observers'.⁴³

As the election neared, UKIP ignored the bleak outlook and talked enthusiastically about poaching votes not only from disaffected Tories but also blue-collar 'Old Labour' voters who were disenchanted with Tony Blair's New Labour rule, as well as protest voters who had previously backed the Liberal Democrats. Some in the party saw little point fighting Conservatives in marginal seats, because of the likely increase in their support as voters turned against the Labour incumbent. Instead, they hoped to broaden their coalition of voters by pitching across the divide. 'At the last election', declared Farage, 'we were out to kick the Tories. This time around we want to put the fear of God into Labour and the Liberal Democrats.'⁴⁴ But as one journalist would retort after the results

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were announced, in the cold light of day these claims looked like little more than hubris.⁴⁵

Overall, UKIP attracted just 1.5 per cent of the total vote in 2001 and averaged 2.1 per cent in seats they contested, both figures below those achieved by the Referendum Party in 1997. UKIP won less than half as many voters as Goldsmith had attracted four years previously, with much of the former Referendum Party vote switching to Hague's Conservatives.⁴⁶ Even more worrying than the national picture was the view in some local constituencies.

The general wisdom at elections is that parties should try to increase support incrementally, by targeting key areas where they build bastions of local support over multiple elections. But in 2001, the opposite happened to UKIP – they went backwards where the Eurosceptic vote had been strongest four years previously. On average, support in seats where UKIP or the Referendum Party had stood in 1997 was 1.6 per cent *lower* in 2001, with the sharpest falls coming in seats where the anti-EU vote had been strongest in 1997. Examples included seats like Folkestone and Hythe, where support slumped from 8 per cent in 1997 to 2.6 per cent in 2001, and Suffolk West where support fell from over 7 per cent to 3 per cent. That UKIP had failed to build on Goldsmith's legacy was starkly reflected in their results in the Referendum Party's ten best seats from 1997. Goldsmith's party had finished well above the 5 per cent mark needed to retain their deposits in all ten seats, but UKIP lost their 2001 deposits in eight of them.⁴⁷ Only one candidate, Nigel Farage, received a higher share of the vote than his anti-EU predecessors had polled in 1997.

UKIP had failed to consolidate the Referendum vote and not made the local advances they needed to be taken seriously. The party had seats in the European Parliament but had again not made any waves at a Westminster election, even in seats with a track record of Eurosceptic voting. Something was clearly wrong. While smaller parties always struggle in the British system (see Chapter 6), this failure to make an appreciable dent owed much to poor strategy. UKIP were spread far too thin, fielding huge numbers of candidates but failing to build the local concentrations of support they

needed to be viable as challengers in the first-past-the-post system. The party did not compete seriously for seats, instead regarding the election more as a marketing exercise, an opportunity to broadcast the UKIP message, rather than an intensive grassroots effort to win local seats, as Farage recalled: 'I viewed the '01 exercise as a very good dress rehearsal for whatever would come later. Get the party on the bloody ballot paper. Get people standing. Get stuff going through doors. Start to build, dare I say it, *the brand*.'

The lack of investment in pavement politics was reflected in the performance. While UKIP stood 428 candidates, almost three times as many as the Greens (the next largest minor party), only six of them retained their deposits. This not only cost the party over £200,000 in lost deposits but underlined how their activists were not interested in the grassroots campaigns needed to develop local strongholds, which could make the party competitive at future general elections. The lack of interest in this more labour intensive, locally focused form of campaigning owed much to the outlook of UKIP activists, who were much more interested in national and international policy debates than pounding the pavement for their candidate. This was a major strategic error, as in the British system new parties cannot hope to break through without intensive campaigns in local constituencies.

Yet there were a few glimmers of hope. For the first time in their history UKIP could now make a realistic claim to be the fourth national party in British politics. In almost two-thirds of the seats they had contested their candidates finished in fourth place, behind the three main parties, but ahead of all the other minnows. The sharp rise in their number of candidates also meant that more voters were encountering UKIP, including in regions where the party had little presence before. Though they continued to focus heavily on the South of England, they increased their presence in the North. In the North-West and Yorkshire the number of UKIP candidates increased more than six-fold on the previous election. There was also evidence the party were beginning to connect with particular sections of British society. As at earlier elections their support was concentrated in areas that tended to be more rural, had large numbers of elderly voters, low numbers

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of university graduates, in Southern England (excluding London) and in seats controlled by the Conservatives.⁴⁸ This suggested UKIP were mobilising a base of elderly, less well educated and Southern voters, though, as before, this may have reflected the location of their activists as much as the geography of potential support.

'It literally just took off': the 2004 campaign and a celebrity recruit

By 2002 the party were again ready for a change of leadership. Having worked hard to steady the ship and heal old divisions, a tired Jeffrey Titford made way for 58-year-old Roger Knapman, a former Conservative MP who had defected to UKIP two years earlier. Knapman was the first UKIP leader with serious mainstream political experience. He had been a Conservative MP for ten years and had served as a parliamentary private secretary and a government whip. He also held solid Eurosceptic credentials, having been among the top ten most rebellious MPs in the Conservative Party after the Maastricht Treaty, casting over forty votes against the party whip.⁴⁹ Now, he brought this wealth of experience to the still amateurish and poorly organised UKIP, a resource that was instantly recognised by senior Ukipers: 'He was not like Farage, but then you have to remember that as a party we had no political experience. Nearly all of us were people from out in the sticks, not from the political village. Knapman also didn't stir up trouble. He was a credible leader.'

The new leader wanted to move UKIP on from their general election disappointment, but he faced a tough set of challenges. The party would need to be pushed out of their English comfort zone and widen their reach by contesting elections in Scotland and Wales in 2003. They would need to prepare for the next set of European Parliament elections in 2004. And somehow they would need to replenish an activist base that had stagnated at around 10,000 for years. With a four-year term, Knapman had a lot to do. One of his first moves was to provide Farage and Lott with more of a free hand to address the party's weaknesses. Farage took control of the party's European election committee while Lott was installed as Chairman

and took control of attempts to build support in local elections and outside of England. Both men were keenly aware of the need to expand the grassroots base, build a greater awareness of the party and transform UKIP into a professional and modern political force.

UKIP, however, continued to lack a voice in political debate. They may have secured three MEPs in 1999, but by the end of 2003 they were barely registering in the polls, and even struggled to beat the extremist BNP.⁵⁰ The worry inside the party was that while many voters sympathised with UKIP's Eurosceptic arguments, most were not even aware of the party and what they stood for: 'Most of the country in January '04 had never bloody heard of us!' explained Farage. 'The fact that we put a few candidates up and a few leaflets out didn't mean they knew who we were. In those days, when out campaigning the general response was "Ukip? What's that?"' This was about to change radically.

In 2003, Roger Knapman happened to meet a former adviser to Bill Clinton on a cruise. A veteran political consultant, the American Dick Morris had orchestrated Clinton's successful bid to become Governor of Arkansas in 1978 before helping craft his strategy for re-election as President in 1996. Sympathetic towards UKIP's aims, Morris agreed to help shape their European election campaign and in early 2004 he summoned the most influential activists to a meeting in Devon. Morris gave UKIP two pieces of advice. First, he urged them to focus on communicating a simple message. In the absence of a referendum on Europe, argued Morris, the phrase 'Say No' could still be enormously powerful. 'I used to think "no" was like "anti"', reflected Farage, 'a bit too negative. But it evolved into *Say No* which was a positive negative; don't just think no, get up off your arse and *say no*.' The slogan would dominate UKIP's campaign, which urged voters to say no to the euro, the EU, a European Constitution, illegal asylum seekers and economic immigrants. 'At last', declared party leaflets, 'a non-racist party with a firm line on immigration'.⁵¹

Morris' second piece of advice was to launch a billboard offensive, which he argued would help UKIP raise their profile among voters and compensate for the absence of well-known politicians and supporters. 'Morris said an advert in a newspaper is tomorrow's

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paper for the fish and chips', recalled one activist. 'But with billboards people just keep driving past.' The party took the advice and quickly went about finding sites for the new billboards. 'They were very successful', noted Lott. 'They made us look big, professional and all over the country with these great, big billboards up.' In fact, during the election UKIP would spend almost 70 per cent of their funds on advertisements, dwarfing the amounts that were spent by the three main parties who spent more of their money sending material direct to voters.⁵² Dick Morris and the billboards were helping to generate interest in UKIP's campaign but the party were also about to deliver some news that would bring an unprecedented wave of media attention. One activist, who was spending much of his time putting up the billboards, recalled hearing the news as follows: 'We realised as we were putting them up none of the other parties were doing much, which was great. Then I had a call from Farage. "I want you to buy the Sunday papers tomorrow", he said. I asked him why. He said: "You'll see". So off I went to buy the papers. There was the headline: "Robert Kilroy-Silk is going to stand for UKIP".'

Robert Kilroy-Silk or simply 'Kilroy' was a former academic and Labour MP who had become a national celebrity after hosting his own daytime television chat show. 'I was very much in touch with popular opinion', he explained, 'because I had seventy people through my studio every morning. From all over the country; all classes, all colours, all races, all creeds, everything, so I had my finger on the pulse of what people were thinking and feeling.' Kilroy had long been a Eurosceptic, having never been convinced by the case for EU membership, and over the years he had also become frustrated with what he saw as a growing disconnect between the mainstream parties and public opinion. 'I used to say to my friends, Conservative cabinet ministers and Labour: "Look, you're not in touch, particularly on immigration and race".' Shortly before the 2004 European elections Kilroy had been dismissed from his job at the BBC after making derogatory remarks about Arabs in a newspaper column. The event attracted a storm of national publicity, forcing Kilroy to seek refuge at his

property in Spain where he planned to plot a comeback. It was at this point that Kilroy and his wife, who in earlier years had considered becoming a Referendum Party candidate, spent time with a supporter of UKIP, Lord Richard Bradford, who encouraged the exiled television presenter to consider standing for the party. 'I got talked into it', recalled Kilroy. 'Pressure from my friends and Jan [his wife] saying it would be fun. I didn't want to get elected. I didn't expect to get elected. I didn't intend to get elected. And then all hell broke loose. It just literally took off.'

Kilroy had needed some convincing and asked the party to fund a campaign that would help publicise his arrival. As Alan Bown, a major donor who has given around £1.4 million to UKIP, recalled: 'He said he would come to us if we had a big promotion, so I financed a big campaign where we put quarter-page adverts in 32 newspapers in the Midlands. We gave him a big campaign so he would throw his hat in the ring.' Though never an official party member, Kilroy was parachuted into the top slot on UKIP's list of candidates in the East Midlands, a region where the party had struggled to connect with voters. He made an immediate impact. The billboards had begun to generate enquiries but now a national celebrity with extensive media experience and contacts brought serious attention. As one journalist observed, with Kilroy on board UKIP had 'achieved a remarkable convergence between protest politics and the celebrity culture', a dynamic that was entrenched by further celebrity endorsements from Joan Collins, Edward Fox, Patrick Moore and the motor racing champion Stirling Moss.⁵³ 'Mayhem creates mayhem', explained Kilroy, recalling how he was now permanently surrounded by media and witnessing the growing revolt among voters first hand:

I walked around a market square in Northampton with a man from the local newspaper. I got mobbed. I like people. I can work a crowd. People are all coming around, crossing the street. They all said they felt sorry for me because I had been sacked, or they wanted to tell me they agreed with what I'd said about Arabs, Muslims, or whatever. Then the guy who has his

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notebook, says: 'Mr Kilroy-Silk, how would you describe your reception in Northampton?' I said: 'Well I don't need to, do I? You were there. You witnessed it. You can describe it yourself.' And he said: 'I would say it was presidential.' So I said: 'Well, I wouldn't dissent from that.' He said: 'You're going to walk it, aren't you?'

Kilroy began to dominate UKIP's media coverage and started to broaden their appeal. A natural TV performer, he pushed the party in a more populist direction, railing against the old parties for failing to listen to ordinary voters. 'They are fed up with being lied to', he declared. 'They are fed up with being patronised by the metropolitan political elite.'⁵⁴ He also fronted the party's television election broadcast where he laid out a broad, hard-hitting populist agenda: 73 million migrants from Central and Eastern Europe were about to descend into Britain; hospital waiting lists were too long; schools were overcrowded; pensioners were living in poverty; and national decisions were being made by unelected Eurocrats in Brussels. The broadcast finished with Kilroy hammering home the Dick Morris message: 'Say no to uncontrollable EU immigration. Say no to the European Union spending your money, and say no to this country being governed by Brussels.'⁵⁵

The message was clearly resonating with voters, though with polling sparse it was hard to quantify the effect. At the end of May, one poll caused a minor sensation when it suggested UKIP were now on 18 per cent, ahead of the Liberal Democrats among those who said they were certain to vote in the European election.⁵⁶ UKIP were also rapidly winning over new members attracted by their celebrity fuelled campaign; membership almost tripled from around 8,500 in 2001 to 26,000 in 2004. But it was not all good news. Kilroy was also beginning to have a negative impact on the small party that had agreed, nervously, to host his political ambitions. His intention to stand as a UKIP candidate in the European elections was reported in the first week of May, but within ten days Kilroy was already hinting to journalists about plans to take over his new party.⁵⁷ Aside from the intense media interest, Kilroy's

ambitions were being fuelled by the multi-millionaire donor Paul Sykes, who saw a Kilroy-led UKIP as a potent weapon that could, finally, force the centre-right to deliver a referendum on EU membership. With this goal in mind Sykes pledged another £100,000 to fund a further 2,000 billboards. According to Kilroy, a further injection of funds was also promised should he become leader: 'Sykes wanted to take over the party and establish a headquarters in London. He was going to spend a lot of money. He was talking *millions*. But only if I became leader.' In fact UKIP were already spending record amounts on their campaign, as Morris had urged them to do. When the election was over it would be revealed that around £10 million had been spent by all of the main parties on the European elections. Of this, UKIP spent £2.3 million, more than Labour or the Liberal Democrats and more than ten times as much as the extreme right BNP. Only the Conservative Party would spend more.⁵⁸

By the end of May, a few days before voters went to the polls, several opinion polls suggested a surge in support for UKIP, which was creating panic in Conservative central office. This anxiety about UKIP's challenge was not calmed when four Conservative peers in the House of Lords, including Lord Pearson, had the whip removed for publicly urging voters to support UKIP.⁵⁹ The Conservatives' response was reflected in a briefing sent to their candidates, which encouraged them to frame UKIP as a party that was 'full of cranks and political gadflies' and highlight their 'links with the Far Right'. As was becoming tradition as polling day neared, Alan Sked also resurfaced in the media to attack his former party for losing their way.⁶⁰ But these efforts did nothing to dent UKIP's new popularity; indeed attacks from the mainstream may have burnished their populist appeal. Reflecting the dilemma facing the main parties, one journalist remarked: 'They could point out that the party has more than its fair share of freaks and obsessives. They could dismiss it as a single-issue movement, with no prospect of forming a government. They could portray it as kooky, inept and hopelessly divided. There would be a measure of truth in all these charges. But the voters don't seem to care.'⁶¹

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TABLE 1.1 UKIP performance at European Parliament elections, 1999–2009

Region	1999		2004		2009	
	Vote %	Change %	Vote %	Change %	Vote %	Change %
Eastern	8.9	–	19.6	+10.7	19.6	0.0
East Midlands	7.6	–	26.1	+18.5	16.5	–9.6
London	5.4	–	12.2	+6.8	10.8	–1.4
North-East	8.8	–	12.2	+3.4	15.4	+3.2
North-West	6.6	–	12.1	+5.5	15.9	+3.8
South-East	9.7	–	19.5	+9.8	18.8	–0.7
South-West	10.7	–	22.6	+11.9	22.1	–0.5
West Midlands	5.9	–	17.5	+11.6	21.3	+3.8
Yorkshire	7.1	–	14.0	+6.9	17.4	+3.4
Scotland	1.3	–	6.7	+5.4	5.2	–1.5
Wales	3.2	–	10.5	+7.3	12.8	+2.3

When all votes were counted, the 2004 European elections delivered UKIP by far the best set of results in their brief history. The party attracted over 2.6 million voters and vaulted ahead of the Liberal Democrats into third place overall, only seven points behind the incumbent Labour Party. UKIP were far ahead of other fringe parties, polling more than twice as many votes as the Greens and three times as many as the BNP. Nationally, their share of the vote more than doubled to 16 per cent, enabling the party to quadruple their representation in the European Parliament from three to twelve seats. Kilroy was one of the new MEPs, having played a central role in their success, as even a wary Nigel Farage acknowledged: ‘Without any shadow of a doubt, because what it [Kilroy] proved was that UKIP could pack an electoral punch.’ In the East Midlands Kilroy helped increase UKIP’s share of the vote by a striking 19 per cent, enabling his new party to finish second and ahead of Labour. They also finished second in their three strongest regions of the South-West, South-East and Eastern England, and although they remained weaker in Northern England, London, Scotland and Wales they advanced strongly everywhere (see Table 1.1).

An opportunity squandered: Kilroy and the attempted coup

UKIP, however, had seemingly learned nothing from their past failure to capitalise on advances. The party once again squandered a golden opportunity, as a new bout of scandal and infighting broke out. Celebrations were first cut short by the revelation that one of the party's new MEPs, Ashley Mote, was on trial for housing benefit fraud. Mote had not made the party aware of the case, and they quickly withdrew the whip, but it produced a damaging wave of negative press, weeks after UKIP's electoral triumph. The party had also overstretched itself, spending unprecedented amounts of money on ensuring success, but leaving them with few resources to capitalise on these gains. 'We've thrown the kitchen sink at these elections', remarked Farage to one journalist. 'Financially and physically, we're spent.'⁶² There was little money or energy left over to invest in consolidating the growth, widening their appeal still further and preparing for a general election that was less than one year away. Some activists would later claim that the party simply 'went to sleep' over the summer of 2004.⁶³ But a far bigger problem was the conflict that had begun to erupt inside the party.

The European election success had further emboldened UKIP's celebrity recruit, who was now determined to take control of his new party. Kilroy had finally had a chance to spend time with his fellow UKIP MEPs in the European Parliament and was not impressed with his new colleagues: 'We went to Brussels and were appalled by the people we met. I might have moved to the Right but all my principles are still liberal socialist. I'm not homophobic. I'm not racist. I'm not xenophobic. I believe in a woman's right to choose, and in feminism. I'm against the death penalty, all those kinds of things.' Kilroy also talks of irregularities in party finances, which further convinced him of the need for new leadership: 'There were a lot of things about money, which I didn't want to know about and I didn't want to be a part of ... I thought I've got to lead it and change it, or I couldn't belong to it.' His quest to take control of UKIP would now dominate the party's agenda, and its media coverage, for months.

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Few voters were as yet aware of these internal tensions, as shown by UKIP's strong showing in a parliamentary by-election in Hartlepool three months after the European elections, where the party won 10.2 per cent of the vote, finishing third and ahead of the Conservatives. It was at that time their strongest ever constituency result. Kilroy, who was already beginning to exert pressure on Knapman to stand down, was further encouraged by the result and now pushed UKIP into a protracted civil war, a period that Nigel Farage would later describe as 'just a fucking nightmare'. One week after the Hartlepool result, Kilroy addressed UKIP's annual conference and urged members to force Knapman – who still had two years left in his term – to resign as leader. He also outlined his strategy for transforming UKIP into a major force, one aspect of which would involve standing candidates against Eurosceptic Conservatives. Kilroy had little time for those in UKIP who favoured an electoral alliance with Eurosceptic Conservative MPs. 'The Conservative party is dying', he declared. 'Why would you want to give it the kiss of life? What we have to do is to kill it and replace it.'⁶⁴

His argument touched directly on an unresolved tension within UKIP. But whereas in the past this tension had played out behind closed doors, encouraged by Kilroy some activists now wrote in to national newspapers to make their grievances public: 'Robert Kilroy-Silk represents the view that UKIP should develop into a mass movement capable of winning seats at Westminster and taking a major role at the heart of British politics', they explained. 'A small element of the Party, with disproportionate power, seem to prefer that UKIP should be just a vehicle for changing the Conservative Party's policy on the European Union.' The latter view, they continued, was contrary to UKIP's founding principles and the wishes of the majority of ordinary members.⁶⁵ In the end, Kilroy won the argument. Most delegates at the party conference voted to support his strategy, choosing to set out their own stall at British general elections regardless of the views of the local Conservative MP.

The problem for Kilroy, however, was that his speech instantly alienated more influential voices in the party, including their major funder Paul Sykes, who favoured putting pressure on the Conservatives, but certainly not 'killing' them.⁶⁶ Kilroy had also not

earned his stripes inside a party that put strong emphasis on long-term commitment. While some supported his ideas, activists who had weathered past factional storms were not about to hand their party over to an untested newcomer, as Titford explained: 'I think Kilroy thought UKIP were like the other political parties. But we were a new party, and there is something quite distinct about UKIP that is not in the other parties. It is very hard to define. I always used to say we had 20,000 members but 30,000 egos.' Kilroy had simply not proved himself in the eyes of members, and lacked the activist track record that might have reassured those anxious about his volatile nature and underlying motives, as one noted:

'Kilroy joined, got elected and demanded that everybody vow to support him. Er, no. Actually you've got to do stuff before the party votes for you. He did not understand how, because he was so famous, so wonderful and so tanned, that the party would not elect him without a claim. It's an organisation, with volunteers who work hard. You don't just turn up, shine your teeth and suddenly you are the leader.'

Aware of these views among stalwarts, and also aware that Kilroy did not yet have mass support inside the party, senior activists like Farage and Lott swore allegiance to Knapman and began working to thwart the attempted coup. Their determination to oppose Kilroy only strengthened when he turned down their offers to be installed as deputy leader and then campaign manager for the 2005 general election, and became increasingly critical of UKIP in public. The conflict was now playing itself out in the newspapers and beginning to undermine the progress that had been made. Income slumped by 70 per cent and morale plummeted, as one activist recalled:

We really didn't need the battle. All we were getting was negative publicity. We had absolutely no money. Sykes had walked away. What we needed was Kilroy-Silk to help raise our profile in the northern half of the country and Farage in the South. We could all move on together, but it was so disappointing. All people could talk about was whether you were

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going to side with Kilroy. We were completely self-absorbed. I was really quite depressed for the remainder of the year thinking, are we ever going to get over this?

In October 2004, Kilroy sought to usurp the old guard by writing to local branches and attempting to call an extraordinary meeting. Knapman, however, fired back by surveying local organisers and claiming to have support from more than 100 of them, compared to Kilroy's 25.⁶⁷ Kilroy's refusal to take advice had also quickly lost him any remaining sympathy from activists who might otherwise have brokered some kind of deal, like David Lott who moved to defuse the situation by approaching Kilroy and his wife directly, asking them to postpone the leadership bid until the end of Knapman's term as leader, which still had two years left to run: 'I said to them, "I don't think either of you understand what UKIP is made of. The activists won't have you."' Kilroy couldn't accept that. She thought I was just bullshitting. And so we all turned on him.'

Having only been involved with UKIP for barely four months, and talking to just a handful of activists, Kilroy had misread the party and his own level of support. As the attempted coup rapidly fell apart he had no option but to abandon UKIP, which he did in January 2005, less than one year after joining. Though some within the party celebrated his departure, others had mixed feelings, aware that Kilroy had helped to attract new groups of voters to UKIP who had shunned or ignored them before, as Titford recounts: 'We realised that many thousands of votes had come because of Kilroy, and they would have been the Labour vote because Kilroy was a true socialist in all his ways and thoughts and policies. These were people who had sympathised with him and we knew we were going to have trouble holding that vote.'

The question of UKIP's appeal among Labour voters is one that we will return to. But at the time, Kilroy's parting shot was yet another tirade against his former party for squandering 'a golden opportunity to reach out to those who have grown tired of the old parties with their lies, their deceit, their broken promises, their discredited pledge cards and their slanging matches'.⁶⁸ Though their parting was bitter, Kilroy's brief encounter with UKIP had helped bring the small party unparalleled levels of success and publicity, helping them reach new

groups of voters and transforming them into a household name. Few voters after the 2004 European elections and Kilroy's intervention were unaware of UKIP or what they stood for. He had also pushed some within the party to consider their wider potential among a disenfranchised mass of voters who felt let down by New Labour. Ultimately, however, all of this was short-lived, fading as Kilroy, in the words of one activist, 'disappeared in a puff of vanity'.

Notes

- 1 The 1997 general election produced a historic total of 418 Labour MPs. Meanwhile, political commentators would also need to open the history books to find a similarly small Conservative parliamentary group, which followed the famous Liberal landslide in 1906 when the Tories were left with only 156 seats.
- 2 Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (2002) *The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States*, Sussex European Institute Working Paper no. 51. Also Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (2000) *Opposing Europe: Party Systems and Opposition to the Union, the Euro and Europeanisation*, Sussex European Institute Working Paper no. 1.
- 3 UK Independence Party Manifesto 1997 (Preface by Dr Alan Sked).
- 4 Peter Osborne, 'Ministers facing Euro-rebel threat', *Evening Standard*, 7 February 1992.
- 5 Alan Sked stood for the Liberals in the constituency of Paisley at the 1970 general election, polling 6.2 per cent of the vote.
- 6 Margaret Thatcher, Speech to the College of Europe ('The Bruges Speech'). Available online via the Margaret Thatcher Foundation: <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332> (accessed 30 July 2013); 'The patriotic "pipsqueak" of Bruges', *The Sunday Times*, 16 June 1991; Alan Sked, 'Debate for Maastricht', *The Times*, 12 October 1991; Sheila Gunn, 'Anti-unionists to fight at election', *The Times*, 14 November 1991.
- 7 'Bruges bruises', *The Times*, 16 May 1992.
- 8 Peter Osborne, 'Ministers facing Euro-rebel threat', *Evening Standard*, 7 February 1992.
- 9 At the 1992 general election, Anti-Federalist candidates contested Bath (0.2 per cent), Bristol West (0.1), Chelsea (0.3), Cornwall South East (0.4), Hammersmith (0.1), Harrow East (0.1), Kensington (0.2), Kingston-upon-Thames (0.1), Leominster (1.1), Lewisham West (0.3), Oxford West and Abingdon (0.2), Pembroke (0.3), Pendle (0.5), Richmond and Barnes (0.1), Staffordshire Moorlands (3.4), Thurrock (0.2) and Westminster North (0.3).

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- 10 Alan Sked contested a by-election in Newbury in May 1993, where he polled 1 per cent of the vote, and a by-election in Christchurch in July 1993, where he polled 1.6 per cent of the vote.
- 11 The National Front polled 16 per cent in West Bromwich in 1973 and 11 per cent in Newham in 1974.
- 12 The BNP was formed and led for seventeen years by John Tyndall who previously led the NF and had been active in neo-Nazi groups like the National Socialist Movement, in which he praised Nazi Germany, white supremacism and demanded the overthrow of liberal democracy. See Matthew J. Goodwin (2011) *New British Fascism: Rise of the British National Party*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- 13 The BNP candidate was elected in the Millwall ward of Tower Hamlets on 16 September 1993, after polling 34 per cent of the vote. This isolated BNP victory followed a concerted effort by some activists to experiment seriously with an electoral strategy which fused their demand for 'rights for whites' with grievances in the local working-class community over a lack of social housing, and delivered the message through face-to-face contact with voters. This marked a departure from the extreme right's traditional strategy, which saw confrontational and often violent street demonstrations – rather than votes – as the route into power, an approach that was rooted in the experiences of inter-war Europe and, in Britain, Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. For some inside the BNP, like young activist Nick Griffin, these intensive local campaigns would prove highly influential in later years. See Goodwin, *New British Fascism*.
- 14 In June 1994 UKIP candidates also contested parliamentary by-elections in Barking (2.1 per cent), Dagenham (2.1 per cent), Eastleigh (1.7 per cent) and Newham North East (2.6 per cent).
- 15 Daniel Foggo, 'Chairman resigns (twice) in furious UKIP row', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 9 October 2005.
- 16 'Party to be re-launched', *Press Association*, 13 September 1993.
- 17 Sir James Goldsmith speech to Referendum Party supporters, as featured on a VHS video sent to British voters. Available on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GWkNVjvQLU> (accessed 19 August 2013). See also Nicholas Wood, 'Goldsmith forms a Euro referendum party', *The Times*, 28 November 1994.
- 18 Overall the Referendum Party spent £7,208,000 on advertising during the campaign, although £6,768,000 of this was devoted to press advertising. David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (1997) *The British General Election of 1997*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp. 72, 242.

- 19 Subrata Mitra (1988) 'The National Front: A single-issue movement?' *West European Politics*, 11(2): 47–64 (p. 47). See also Cas Mudde (1999) 'The single-issue party thesis: Extreme right parties and the immigration issue', *West European Politics*, 22(3): 182–97.
- 20 Nicholas Wood, 'Goldsmith forms a Euro referendum party', *The Times*, 28 November 1994.
- 21 Or, in the words of Goldsmith: 'The purpose of its existence is simply to ensure that, should the politicians refuse, the citizens of the United Kingdom will nonetheless have an opportunity to decide for themselves their future in Europe.' J. Goldsmith, 'Why we need a referendum', *The Times*, 27 January 1995. On the single-issue biodegradable party see *The Times*, 25 October 1995; on the latter quote see Referendum Party video. Available on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GWkNVjvQLU> (accessed 19 August 2013).
- 22 Figures on the importance of issues (or their salience) taken from the Ipsos MORI Social and Political Trends archive. Available online: <http://ipsos-mori.com> (accessed 9 July 2013). On rising Euroscepticism see Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell, Bridget Taylor and Katarina Thomson (1998) 'Euroscepticism and the Referendum Party', in David Denver, Justin Fisher, Philip Cowley and Charles Pattie (eds.) *British Elections and Parties Review, Volume 8*, London: Frank Cass, pp. 95–110.
- 23 'According to opinion poll findings', explained UKIP in their 1997 manifesto, '40% of the British people want to quit the EU forthwith and another 40% want merely to trade with it. This means that, potentially, 80% of the electorate could be converted to vote for the UKIP, if its credibility continues to grow. Fortunately for Britain, it is continuing to grow.' UK Independence Party General Election Manifesto 1997.
- 24 Calculated through search tools on Nexis, using the terms 'Referendum Party' and 'UK Independence Party' in UK-based newspapers in 1997.
- 25 UK Independence Party Manifesto 1997 (Preface by Dr Alan Sked).
- 26 Rebecca Smithers, 'Quit Europe party claims it will save £19bn a year', *The Guardian*, 8 April 1997.
- 27 At the UKIP annual conference in 1996 Sked identified the following as target seats at the 1997 general election, all of which were held by the Conservatives: Salisbury, Hexham, Romsey and Waterside, Hastings and Rye, Totnes and Teignmouth. The party also noted its interest in Northumbria, where David Lott stood in Hexham. David Cracknell, 'I won't defect – Gorman', *Press Association*, 12 October 1996; also Rebecca Smithers, 'Quit Europe party claims it will save £19bn a year', *The Guardian*, 8 April 1997.

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- 28 Peter Clarke, 'Goldsmith's kamikaze raid', *The Sunday Times*, 13 August 1995.
- 29 UKIP candidates finished above Referendum Party candidates in Romsey and Glasgow Anniesland (in the latter by only two votes).
- 30 John Curtice and Michael Steed (1997) 'Appendix 2: The results analyzed', in Butler and Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1997*, p. 305.
- 31 Anthony F. Heath, Roger M. Jowell and John K. Curtice (2002) *The Rise of New Labour: Party Politics and Voter Choices*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 73; Curtice and Steed, 'Appendix 2: The results analyzed', p. 306.
- 32 Curtice and Steed calculate that, on average, Referendum Party candidates polled 3.6 per cent in seats that were being defended by Conservatives, and 2.5 per cent in seats that were being defended by Labour. Meanwhile, we calculate that over four-fifths of all seats contested by UKIP in 1997 were held by the Tories, and in these seats the party averaged 0.9 per cent, compared to 0.6 per cent in Labour held seats. Curtice and Steed, 'Appendix 2: The results analyzed'. Heath, Jowell and Curtice, *The Rise of New Labour*, p. 74.
- 33 Curtice and Steed, 'Appendix 2: The results analyzed'. Heath, Jowell and Curtice, *The Rise of New Labour*. See also Ian McAllister and Donald T. Studlar (2000) 'Conservative Euroscepticism and the Referendum Party in the 1997 British general election', *Party Politics*, 6(3): 359–71.
- 34 Michael White, 'Hague tries to pacify party', *The Guardian*, 19 May 1999. According to the Ipsos MORI Issued Index, in June 1999 37 per cent of voters ranked Europe/the Common Market/Single Currency as one of the most important issues facing the country, followed by the National Health Service (35 per cent) and Education (29 per cent). Available online: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive> (accessed 18 June 2013).
- 35 Matthew Engel, 'The outsiders', *The Guardian*, Features pages, p. 2.
- 36 UKIP polled 8.9 per cent in Eastern, 7.6 per cent in East Midlands, 5.4 per cent in London, 8.8 per cent in the North East, 6.6 per cent in the North West, 9.7 per cent in the South East, 10.7 per cent in South West, 5.9 per cent in West Midlands, 7.1 per cent in Yorkshire, 1.3 per cent in Scotland and 3.2 per cent in Wales. Figures obtained from the UK Office of the European Parliament.
- 37 On 'dangerously split' see Andrew Pierce, 'BNP link allegation hits Euro party', *The Times*, 5 June 1999; on right-wing newspapers see Edward Amory, 'Your chance to save the pound', *The Daily Mail*, 8 June 1999.
- 38 Alan Sked, 'I would advise people on Thursday to help the Tory revival', *The Times*, 8 June 1999.

- 39 Roland Watson, 'Far right fear splits UKIP as 200 leave party', *The Times*, 29 April 2000; Jay Rayner, 'Far right invades anti-Europe party', *The Observer*, 21 May 2000; David Hencke, 'UKIP hit by new row over Holocaust denial', *The Guardian*, 27 February 2001.
- 40 UK Independence Party Manifesto 2001.
- 41 Sarah Womack, 'Hague in retreat over talk of "foreign land"', *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 March 2001; see also Conservative Party (2001) *2001 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto: Time for Common Sense*.
- 42 According to data collected by the Electoral Commission, UKIP spent a total of £743,904 on the campaign across the UK. Electoral Commission (2002) *Election 2001: Campaign Spending*. Nicholas Watt and David Hencke, '£10 million Sykes gift boosts UKIP', *The Guardian*, 18 May 2001; Ben Russell, 'Europe Independence Party claims it will have 400 candidates', *The Independent*, 15 May 2001; Patrick Wintour, 'Football club owner funds anti-EU party', *The Guardian*, 30 April 2001; UKIP Statement of Accounts 2002, obtained from the Electoral Commission.
- 43 On the proposed pact see Patrick Wintour and Michael White, '£2 million pound deal to shield Tory marginals', *The Guardian*, 3 March 2001; Andrew Pierce, 'Tory peer offered anti-EU party £2 million to drop candidates', *The Times*, 2 March 2001; Marie Woolf, 'Tories deny talks with anti-EU party', *The Independent*, 2 March 2001; Andrew Sparrow, 'Tory peer offered £2 million election deal', *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 March 2001. On the views of Conservative insiders see Andrew Pierce 'How Euro-plot was born among the heather', *The Times*, 2 March 2001.
- 44 UKIP strategists pointed to seats like the Liberal Democrat-controlled Devon North, and Devon West and Torridge, alongside the Labour-controlled seats of Falmouth and Camborne, and Stafford. Andrew Sparrow, 'Anti-EU party targets Labour and Lib Dems', *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 December 2000; on UKIP strategy in 2001 see also David Lott, 'UKIP strategy to effect change', *The Times*, 19 March 2001.
- 45 Lucy Ward and Paul Kelso, 'UKIP: anti-euro campaign falls flat in "disappointing night"', *The Guardian*, 8 June 2001.
- 46 John Curtice and Michael Steed (2002) 'Appendix 2: An analysis of the results', in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh *The British General Election of 2001*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- 47 These ten seats were Harwich (9.2 per cent in 1997 to 5.1 per cent in 2001), Folkestone and Hythe (8 per cent to 2.6 per cent), Suffolk West (7.6 to 3.1 per cent), Reigate (7 to 2.7 per cent), St Ives (6.7 to 3.9 per cent), Cotswold (6.6 to 2.9 per cent), Yeovil (6.6 to 2.3 per cent), Falmouth and Camborne (6.6 to 2.8 per cent) and Truro and St Austell (6.5 to 3.3 per cent. In Bexhill and Battle Nigel Farage polled 7.8 per

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- cent, compared to the Referendum Party's 6.7 per cent in 1997. See also Curtice and Steed, 'Appendix 2: An analysis of the results', p. 325.
- 48 As in 1997 only one of UKIP's ten strongest results came outside Southern England, which was Stafford in the West Midlands. In numerical order the top ten seats were Bexhill and Battle (7.8 per cent), Totnes (6.1 per cent), Devon East (5.6 per cent), Stafford (5.2 per cent), Harwich (5.1 per cent), Devon North (5 per cent), Esher and Walton (4.9 per cent), Chichester (4.8 per cent), Devon West and Torridge (4.8 per cent) and Arundel and South Downs (4.7 per cent). As before, UKIP fielded the largest number of candidates in the South East while their share of the vote was highest in the South East, South West and Eastern regions but lowest in London, Scotland and Wales. In 2001 over half of all seats contested by UKIP had Labour incumbents, while the Conservatives controlled one-third and the remainder were split between the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party (SNP). But UKIP continued to poll strongest in seats that were in Conservative hands: they averaged 2.7 per cent in Conservative seats, but 1.8 per cent in Labour seats.
- 49 Philip Cowley (1999) 'The parliamentary party', in P. Dorey (ed.) *The Major Premiership*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp. 1–25.
- 50 Less than 1 per cent of respondents in eight Ipsos MORI polls at the end of 2003 declared an intention to support UKIP. Support for the BNP was about the same level.
- 51 UKIP 2004 European Election leaflet for London. Available online via the British Election Ephemera Archive: <http://www.by-elections.co.uk/> (accessed 2 August 2013).
- 52 Based on estimates gathered from the Electoral Commission UKIP spent 67 per cent of their campaign expenditure on advertising, as compared, for example, to 18 per cent for the Conservatives and Labour, and 10 per cent for the Liberal Democrats. In contrast, whereas the Conservatives spent 55 per cent on sending material to voters, Labour spent 42 per cent and the Liberal Democrats spent 71 per cent, UKIP spent only 13 per cent. See Electoral Commission (2005) *The 2004 European Parliamentary Elections in the United Kingdom: Campaign Spending*, p. 25.
- 53 Andrew Sparrow, 'Kilroy-Silk turns on the charm for voters', *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 2004.
- 54 Andrew Sparrow, "'Voters fed up with lying elites", says Kilroy-Silk', *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 May 2004.
- 55 UKIP European Parliament Election Broadcast, 2004. Similar messages were delivered to voters on leaflets from UKIP, which featured pictures

- of Kilroy while stating: 'We have to fight to get our country back from Brussels, from the politically correct brigade, and from the patronising political class in Westminster.' UKIP 2004 European Election leaflet for the East Midlands. Available online via the British Election Ephemera Archive: <http://www.by-elections.co.uk/> (accessed 2 August 2013).
- 56 Andrew Sparrow, 'Surge by UKIP hits big parties', *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 May 2004.
 - 57 Jasper Gerard, 'Stand up and be counted for Little England', *The Sunday Times*, 16 May 2004.
 - 58 Based on data compiled by the Electoral Commission UKIP spent a total of £2,361,754 on the campaign, as compared to the Conservative Party's £3,130,266, Labour's £1,707,224, the Liberal Democrats' £1,188,861 and the BNP's £228,813. It is also worth noting that UKIP focused the vast majority of this money on England, spending £2,124,733 as compared to only £148,577 in Scotland and £88,444 in Wales. Electoral Commission (2005) *The 2004 European Parliamentary Elections in the United Kingdom: Campaign Spending*.
 - 59 The letter was signed by five Tory peers – Pearson, Baroness Cox of Queensbury, Lord Laing of Dunphall, Lord Stevens of Ludgate and Lord Willoughby de Broke, as well as seven crossbenchers. Andy McSmith, 'Howard sacks peers for endorsing UKIP', *Independent on Sunday*, 30 May 2004.
 - 60 Toby Helm, 'Howard rages at UKIP "gadflies"', *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 May 2004; Alan Sked, 'As founder of the UKIP I will vote Tory', 30 May 2004.
 - 61 'UKIP scoring on the anti-Brussels card', *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 May 2004.
 - 62 Sarah Hall and Ian Black, 'UKIP starts to plan its wrecking tactics', *The Guardian*, 15 June 2004.
 - 63 Paul Nuttall speech to UKIP conference, Southport, 2009.
 - 64 Andrew Porter and Dipesh Gadhur, 'Howard is warned heads must roll', *The Sunday Times*, 3 October 2004.
 - 65 See, for example, a letter written by Gerard Batten MEP, Damian Hockney (Leader of the UKIP group on the London Assembly), the National Vice Chairman, NEC member and party chairman. 'Letter: Debate within UKIP', *The Independent*, 21 October 2004.
 - 66 'Kilroy-Silk: We will still fight every seat', *Evening Standard*, 5 October 2004.
 - 67 On income see Brendan Carlin, 'Kilroy threatens another tilt at UKIP leadership', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 November 2004. Some media accounts put the figures at 147 for Knapman, 29 for Kilroy-Silk and 32 undecided. See Brendan Carlin, 'UKIP snub for Kilroy-Silk', *The*

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Daily Telegraph, 20 October 2004; Michael White, 'UKIP branches reject Kilroy-Silk', *The Guardian*, 20 October 2004; Brendan Carlin, 'Kilroy-Silk faces moves to force him out of UKIP', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 October 2004; Melissa Kite, 'The "orange" Kilroy-Silk would be a useless leader for UKIP', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 24 October 2004.

68 Matthew Tempest, 'Kilroy quit UKIP "charade"', *The Guardian*, 20 January 2005.