The systemic crisis of Britain

By Frank , 28 July 2026

The systemic crisis of Britain

It is worth listening to what George Galloway has to say as he traces the trajectory of the British system’s self-destruction.





By Lorenzo Maria Pacini – Censored in the EU

A politician in exile

On September 27, 2025, counterterrorism agents stopped a man in his seventies and a woman in her forties at Gatwick Airport. The Metropolitan Police confirmed that the screening had been conducted pursuant to Schedule 3 of the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019, that neither of them had been arrested, and that, upon completion of the checks, both were allowed to continue their journey. The man was George Galloway, a seven-term member of the House of Commons; the woman was his wife, Putri Gayatri Pertiwi, vice president of the Workers Party of Britain. They had arrived from Moscow via a layover in Abu Dhabi. According to Galloway’s own account, the screening lasted nine hours, during which his phone and laptop were confiscated and he was asked questions about his views on Russia and China.

Galloway has not returned to the United Kingdom since then. Today he hosts his weekly program from Malaysia, Russia, and China – a traveling show from what he

describes, without apparent irony, as his exile. In June 2026, he announced from abroad that he was ready to return as prime minister, proposing a five-year economic plan based on reviving manufacturing and vocational training, supporting farmers and fishermen, and explicitly rejecting net-zero emissions targets and identity politics. However, the Workers Party has only eight city councilors out of more than 18,000. The gap between this ambition and the actual ability to achieve it is not a mere detail: it is the central analytical crux of the entire phenomenon.

It is precisely this gap that makes the case worthy of attention. Galloway is not running for Prime Minister; he is not a threat to the British political landscape. He is something else: an extremely sensitive barometer that registers the internal pressures within the British political system – pressures that the system's institutions seem increasingly unwilling to acknowledge. His analyses often pinpoint real fissures in a system whose contradictions and critical issues are becoming increasingly apparent

The legitimacy deficit

Let's start with a fact that requires no sophisticated interpretation. On July 20, 2026, Andy Burnham became the United Kingdom's seventh prime minister in a decade, after securing the support of 379 of the 403 Labour MPs without facing any opposition. He had returned to the House of Commons just five weeks earlier thanks to a by-election in the Makerfield constituency. He replaced Keir Starmer, who in July 2024 had won a majority of 172 seats with the lowest percentage of the popular vote ever achieved by a majority government since records began in 1830, and whose approval rating had plummeted to about minus 46% as early as November 2025. The next general election is not scheduled for another three years.

Every step in this sequence is fully in accordance with the Constitution. A governing party can replace its leader – and, consequently, the prime minister – without consulting the electorate; this is standard practice in the Westminster system, not a scandal. However, constitutional correctness and political legitimacy are two different concepts, and for a decade now, the British system has been progressively eroding the latter while scrupulously observing the former. Three of the last seven prime ministers have come to power through internal party mechanisms rather than through general elections. The formation of governments has become increasingly detached from the act of voting – a phenomenon that is also replicated in other countries.

Galloway's response to this situation was theatrical: he proposed himself as prime minister from a television studio in Southeast Asia. But that theatricality serves as a

commentary on the underlying condition. If Burnham can move from mayor to Downing Street in five weeks, thanks to a safe constituency and an uncontested coronation, then the idea of an unelected prime ministerial candidate has already been normalized by the ruling party itself. Galloway is not inventing a new procedure; he is parodying it, with a truly fascinating rhetorical brilliance.

Max Weber's distinction between legality and legitimacy provides the most appropriate interpretive framework, because a system can maintain perfect procedural legality while the narrative underpinning its legitimacy gradually loses its substance. What keeps a parliamentary democracy alive is not merely the fairness of its rules, but the widespread conviction that voting produces real consequences. When there are six changes in prime ministers over the course of ten years – mostly without going to the polls – and when the economic policy remains essentially unchanged through all these changes, that conviction is eroded by experience rather than by theoretical debate.

The economic underpinnings

The tension has an economic basis, and here the evidence is unequivocal. The UK public sector's net debt stood at 93.8% of GDP at the end of March 2026, a level not seen since the early 1960s. Yields on 30-year government bonds rose by about 100 basis points over the previous year, climbing from 4.5% to about 5.5%, with a peak of 5.7% in September 2025 – the highest level since 1998. Yields on 10-year bonds remained around or above 5% for much of May 2026 – the highest level since the financial crisis – before the conflict in the Middle East pushed them to levels not seen since July 2008. The Institute for Fiscal Studies noted that the United Kingdom has recorded a primary deficit every single year since 2002–03.

This arithmetic reveals a vicious cycle, which fixed-income analysts have explicitly described: higher yields increase the cost of servicing the debt; this worsens the fiscal position; the worsening fiscal position reduces fiscal flexibility; the reduced flexibility heightens investor anxiety; and this anxiety drives yields back up. And there you have it: the mechanism is self-perpetuating and largely unaffected by which party is in power.

The distributional picture, however, is even bleaker than the aggregate data suggest. According to data from Retail Economics, among lower-income households, discretionary disposable income – after essential expenses – declined by 2.1% between the election of the Labour government in July 2024 and the beginning of 2026. For the poorest 40% of households, incomes remain below 2019 levels. A 0.6% increase in the first quarter of 2026 was presented as a positive result – a measure of

just how much expectations have been recalibrated for an economy that, in the decade prior to the pandemic, grew by an average of 2% annually.

This is the material foundation upon which political volatility rests. Britain is not experiencing a mere crisis of confidence in a particular government; it is facing the political consequences of two decades during which the median household has stopped getting richer, while the state's fiscal capacity has shrunk and its obligations have expanded. Prime ministers are being consumed at a rate of about one every seventeen months because none of them is able to change this arithmetic within the span of an election cycle, and each is politically destroyed in the attempt to do so. The collapse is virtually inevitable.

Security powers and the limits of dissent

Galloway's strongest argument concerns the third element: the expansion of the application of counterterrorism and border security powers to political speech and political associations. It should be noted that the issue of security is the most pressing concern across Europe at this time.

The legal position requires clarification. Schedule 3 of the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019, under which Galloway was detained, allows an examining officer to detain, question, and search a person at a port or airport to determine whether they are or have been involved in hostile activities. The threshold is deliberately low, and no reasonable suspicion is required. The officer may demand the disclosure of passwords and may retain, copy, use, and destroy items found during the search. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner may authorize the retention of material, including confidential communications. This is, by definition, an exceptional power exercised outside the normal framework of criminal procedure – a border exception embedded in domestic law.

Galloway is not an isolated case. Former diplomat Craig Murray and journalists Kit Klarenberg and Richard Medhurst have all been subjected to similar searches. The significant aspect of these cases is that no charges were filed, and this is the key point. A power that does not result in criminal proceedings but routinely leads to nine-hour interrogations, seized devices, and copied communications is functioning as something other than an ordinary instrument of criminal justice. Whether this effect is intentional is a separate issue from the fact that the effect exists.

Added to this is the fact that the United Kingdom is a place with a high risk of censorship. There are certain topics that are completely off-limits – true taboos. You cannot say a single positive word about Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps without risking arrest; it is forbidden to praise the Lebanese or Palestinian resistance;

and possessing a flag of a country considered an “enemy” of the UK carries enormous risk. Cases of repression by the British police are a daily occurrence in the national news. Over the past twenty-five years, Britain has built a system in which the category of unacceptable political speech is defined by executive decisions to ban certain speech and enforced through powers that can be exercised without suspicion. The fact that a veteran Member of Parliament like Galloway concludes that he is safer broadcasting from Kuala Lumpur speaks volumes about this system, regardless of one’s personal opinion on the issues addressed.

All of this has forced him to move abroad, into a form of forced exile. His destinations – Russia and China – are states with safeguards for freedom of expression designed to guarantee a freedom that has become a mirage in the West.

Collapse

Another dimension worth analyzing is the collapse of the two-party system that has shaped British politics for a century. The February 2026 by-election in Gorton and Denton – a constituency that the Labour Party had comfortably held in 2024 – was won by the Green Party, with Labour finishing third behind Reform UK. In the May 2026 local elections, Labour suffered heavy losses to Reform. In national polls, Labour has trailed Reform for an extended period.

Galloway’s Workers Party is a marginal player in this realignment – 0.73% of the national vote in 2024, eight city councilors, approximately 7,500 members – but its ideological composition is disproportionately interesting given its size. The party combines economic socialism with social conservatism, opposition to net-zero targets, rejection of identity politics, and support for alignment with the BRICS. Before founding it, Galloway had sought the nomination with the Brexit Party. The party has also repeatedly given a platform to anti-grooming-gangs activist Billy Howarth, whom Searchlight describes as far-right, drawing constant criticism for doing so.

This is not a matter of inconsistency; it is a recognizable European political formation. The combination of economic protectionism, cultural traditionalism, hostility toward supranational governance, and openness toward non-Western powers finds parallels across the continent and regularly emerges where post-industrial communities perceive that none of the major parties are addressing their material circumstances, while both major parties frame cultural issues in terms that these communities reject. Rochdale, Bradford West, Bethnal Green: Galloway’s electoral base has consistently been found in precisely these kinds of places. His personal trajectory from Labour to Respect to the Workers Party illustrates with particular clarity the

dissolution of the historic social-democratic coalition, because he continued to shift as that coalition continued to fragment.

The question of whether this represents a realignment or fragmentation remains open. A system in which four or five parties garner significant support, filtered through the first-past-the-post system, produces results that bear little relation to the actual distribution of preferences. The 172-seat majority won by Labour with the lowest winning share of the vote since 1830 is proof of this. The mechanism that once produced stable single-party governments now produces large parliamentary majorities based on narrow and unstable pluralities: governments that are simultaneously too strong in Parliament and insufficiently supported across the country. This is the structural condition underlying the statistic of seven prime ministers.

By mid-2026, Great Britain is exhibiting several indicators typical of structural – rather than cyclical – decline. Governments change without elections. The trend in public debt is self-perpetuating and unfavorable. Real incomes for the poorest 40% of the population remain below 2019 levels. Exceptional security powers are being applied to political figures without resulting in criminal proceedings. The party system, which for over a century had channeled social discontent into a rotation of governments, is fragmenting into a configuration that the current electoral law can no longer adequately represent.

Each factor limits the ability to address the others: fiscal weakness reduces what a new government can offer; this accelerates the loss of legitimacy; the loss of legitimacy increases the risk premium demanded by the markets on public debt; and the rise in the cost of debt further restricts the scope for action. Andy Burnham inherits this situation after promising to restore hope to the country, with three years still to go before the next election and a bond market that already prices in a significant political risk premium. The real constraint is arithmetic, not rhetoric, and a change in tone alone will not be enough to alter it.

None of these phenomena, taken in isolation, constitutes a serious crisis, but their simultaneous occurrence is the real problem and is a symptom of the system’s demise – its widespread metastasis that can only lead to the collapse, whether slow or fast, of the entire society governed by the British Crown.

This is why it is worth listening to what Galloway has to say as he traces the trajectory of the British system’s self-destruction, which we will witness in the hope that courageous men and women are ready to take the reins of Britain’s future.