

Mr Ojel RODRIGUEZ BURGOS

PhD Student

University of St Andrews

The LSE Right, Thatcherism and the Future of the Conservative Party

This paper examines the influence of the LSE Right on Margaret Thatcher's administration, Thatcherism, and the future of Conservative party politics. The LSE Right, a centre of academic opinion associated with the London School of Economics, played a significant role in shaping the New Right coalition that dominated Conservative party politics during Thatcher's tenure as leader. The paper introduces the LSE Right as a movement and its conservatism, coined by Kenneth Minogue as "conservative realism." The LSE Right's conservative realism distinguished itself by its profound scepticism of abstract plans for society and a realism about human conduct and what is achievable in the activity of politics. The paper explores the relationship between the LSE Right and Thatcherism, characterised by practical, public, and intellectual support for Thatcher's government and its agenda. While generally supportive of Thatcher's policies, the paper highlights the LSE Right's criticisms of the revolutionary tone of Thatcherism, the centralising tendencies of her administration, and her changes to higher education. Finally, the paper considers the relevance of the LSE Right's reading of Thatcherism as a moral rather than an economic agenda. It argues that those advocating for a return to Thatcherite policies or any other type of policies in the Conservative party agenda have much to gain from the insights of the LSE Right. The paper suggests that the Conservative Party needs to rediscover the balance between freedom and belonging that made Thatcher a successful leader by adopting the moral agenda of Thatcherism. This agenda centres on restoring the British way of life found in the individualist pursuit of felicity and moral identity within the framework of a civil association.

Keywords: LSE Right, Thatcherism, Conservative Party, Conservative Realism, The British way of life