Ukip does reflect voters’ concerns

IS Ukip racist? As a Eurosceptic party, its line on immigration is respectable since it targets white immigration and focuses on economic rather than cultural threats. Comments by candidate William Henwood and Ukip election ad star Andre Lampert are painful for the party because they suggest that talk of European immigration harming British jobs is a dog whistle for deeper concerns.

In surveys, people don’t admit to being more concerned with Muslims than Poles, or more unsettled by racial than economic change. But research I have been conducting shows that white British people living in areas with rapid increases in ethnic minorities are significantly more hostile to immigration. That is, a 40-year-old white Briton with no qualifications living in a poor urban area with a 25 per cent increase in minority groups is nearly five percentage points more likely to oppose immigration than someone with the same profile in a similar area with no minority increase.

Replace minority increase with an increase of European migrants and you get no effect. Moreover, the children of European immigrants tend to become White British, limiting the longer-term cultural impact of EU immigration. I don’t think this is particularly stoking attitudes on immigration – there isn’t much between the Conservatists, and Ukip in their aspirations to limit migration – but it does reflect an underlying set of concerns across the UK.

Prof Eric Kaufman, Birnbeck College

REACTIONS ranging from mock outrage to headless-chicken hysteria to the Ukip ads and supporters’ comments about Lenny Henry and Islam have merely highlighted the lack of a convincing alternative voice to the British public on the EU and immigration by Ukip’s opponents. Ukip is setting the agenda, and getting all the publicity. Pointing and hysterically shouting “They’re wrong” is not the loss of offices but of jobs running even slightly behind are tended during the recession, that jobs running even slightly behind are

The Tube strike divides opinion

THE Tube strike is being misrepresented by the RMT as a fight for its members’ jobs. But there is no need to employ people to sit in ticket offices to sell tickets and there will be no need to employ Tube drivers. Victoria line trains already run automatically between stations. The RMT’s attitude is pure Luddism which, had it prevailed in the past, would mean we would have no Tube system since the Sedan Chair, Hansom Cab Drivers, and Ostler’s Union would have prevented it.

Stephen Levrat, W4

AS London Underground and the RMT trade abuse, too much attention is being paid to physical ticket offices. It is not the loss of offices but of jobs which has driven union members to vote for strike action.

Transport for London has yet to explain why it can dispense with so many frontline staff in the context of ever-increasing passenger numbers – passengers which it accepts will continue to rely on human staff in spite of modernisation. It is about time TFL explained this to the public, and clarified Underground boss Mike Brown’s comments that stations could be “perfectly safe if left unstaffed at times.”

Perhaps it could also say how long it will take under the job cuts programme to recoup the money wasted by the avoidable collapse of the signalling project on the Circle, District and Metropolitan lines.

R Lavanchy, former industrial reporter

ALMOST all construction jobs in London are on brownfield sites where there is nowhere to park, so workers – mostly self-employed subcontractors – rely on early morning trains and Tubes to come in. Then the knock-on effect of strikes on road traffic disrupts the logistics of equipment and materials deliveries.

Generally the result of each day of a Tube strike is to lose a whole day’s production. Construction programmes driven by developers are so tight, especially on projects

Support the city explorers

If you played London tomorrow, bringing back a student and am moving back to the city we want, there might be a positive outcome for all.

Jon Alexander, New Citizenship Project

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