

Britain's Achilles' Heel

By Bruce Bawer

In George Orwell's classic 1949 novel *1984*, the protagonist, Winston Smith, reflects on the question of whether the dystopian tyranny under which he lives in what used to be London, England, can ever be overthrown. "If there is hope, he reflects,

it must lie in the proles, because only there, in those swarming disregarded masses, eighty-five percent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated. The Party could not be overthrown from within. Its enemies, if it had any enemies, had no way of coming together or even of identifying one another...But the proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength, would have no need to conspire. They need only to rise up and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies. If they chose they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning. Surely sooner or later it must occur to them to do it.

The passage tells us something about the fictional polity in which Winston Smith lives. In Airstrip One, the part of Oceania that used to be called Great Britain, the class structure that was essential to English society in Orwell's time, still exists. As before, the rulers are drawn from the middle and upper classes, while the proles, or working class, are, as Orwell put it, "swarming disregarded masses." The Party spies on members of the middle and upper classes in order to nip any talk of rebellion in the bud, but it doesn't even take the proles seriously enough to pay attention to them.



When I was quite a bit younger than I am now, I had the vague impression that the class system was far less a factor in British society than it used to be. In fact I read that it was. I was *told* that it was. But it wasn't true. Even now, in the real world of 2025, the British class system is alive and well. Nothing has made this clearer than the way in which Tommy Robinson, who has played a more important role than any other British subject else in exposing the widespread phenomenon of Muslim rape gangs, has been treated in response to his efforts. Whereas the authorities are disinclined to take action against middle- and upper-class Brits who speak out on the issue, they have no trouble trying to crush a working-class bloke like Tommy who does so. Hence the repeated prosecutions and imprisonments to which they've subjected him, supposedly as punishment for infractions that another person would likely never have been jailed.

At the present time, Tommy is in prison on an 18-month sentence for contempt of court – yet another trumped-up charge, which was upped from a civil to a criminal charge for purely political reasons. Meanwhile there are countless people

in Britain who *should* be in prison – not just the members of Muslim rape gangs (known euphemistically as “grooming gangs”) who brutally abused thousands of white working-class English girls – some of them as young as eight or nine – but the social workers, police officers, local government officials, and journalists who knew about their evil predations and did nothing for fear of being called racists or Islamophobes or exacerbating, as they say, “tension between communities.” To these members of the British establishment, the victims of rape gangs were not worth upsetting the apple cart about. They were looked upon as trash. In at least one case, police officers who were made aware of a rape gang’s activities arrested the victim, a minor, for being intoxicated and let the perpetrators go. In another case, when a father rescued his daughter from a rape gang, the police arrested *him*.

Most recently, as I wrote about here on January 6, Tommy has been nastily [put down](#) by Nigel Farage, who is the head of Reform UK, a new party that bids fair to replace the Tories as the principal conservative party and that draws much of its strength from the working-class electorate. While that electorate is motivated largely by its opposition to mass Muslim immigration, which has brought crime and grime into the lives of working-class Englishmen and forced them to abandon such traditionally working-class areas as London’s East End, Farage has always steadfastly refused to speak critically of Islam or of its adherents, and until recently had avoided referring to the Muslim rape gangs. He is now willing to work in a few critical words about them on occasion, although without acknowledging their roots in Islamic ideology. And he continues to keep a distance from Tommy, whom he dismissed on January 5, in response to Elon Musk’s expression of support for Tommy, as a repeat criminal who “earns his living” by putting out the narrative that he’s a political prisoner.” What Farage didn’t grasp is that much of his electoral base regards Tommy as a hero.

Rape gangs, of course, are only one aspect of the ongoing Islamization of Europe. There has, of course, been a steady rise in Muslim crime, including Muslim rape, ever since Muslims began immigrating to Western Europe in large numbers several decades ago. But Muslim rape gangs – gangs that groom white girls systematically, giving them alcohol and drugs and then abusing them sexually over a period of months or years – to be a distinctly English phenomenon. Why? Because in no other Western European country is there such a significant class divide as in England. This class divide provides would-be Muslim predators with a large pool of potential victims about whose lives the middle and upper classes in positions of power, by and large, simply don't care very much. This can be seen in the occasional panel discussions of the rape gangs that have appeared on British TV over the years. Repeatedly one can see talking heads with posh accents professing to find these gangs' actions dreadful, but their comments sound *pro forma*; the tone in which they speak of these horrific atrocities is almost invariably cool, aloof, unemotional.

Why? Because the world in which these rapists and their victims live is alien to them. As in other countries, the natives who suffer the most as a result of mass Muslim immigration tend to be those who are poorer and who don't live in swanky neighborhoods. But in Britain, the distance between the poor and the rich – not just geographical distance, but psychological and cultural distance – is larger than elsewhere. Hillary Clinton called Trump voters “deplorables”; in the view of England's nobs, the working class are deplorables and then some. They're rubbish. They're football hooligans. Richard Tice, Farage's deputy at Reform UK, called Tommy's supporters “that lot.” And unlike their counterparts in other Western countries, “that lot” are easily identifiable by the way they talk.

For years I've gone back and forth on the question of which European country will go down the drain first. Sweden? France?

Belgium? Now it seems to me that the answer is Britain. For in Britain, the immense gulf between the classes ensures that the people who are hit the hardest by immigration – namely, the members of the working class – are so far removed from the people with privilege and power, who *aren't* affected so strongly by it, that there's less pressure on the latter to take meaningful action to address the problem. In fact, one of the ways in which the middle and upper classes in Britain distinguish themselves from the lower orders is by voicing solidarity with Muslims and disgust for rhetoric that they consider anti-Islamic and – even worse – vulgar. The persecution of Tommy Robinson is an expression of this disgust, which is not moral in nature but aesthetic.

Yes, there are proles in England, to use Orwell's word, who are rising up – proles who respect Tommy and recognize him as a man who is trying to save his country. There are many of them. They've filled large London squares to rally in his support. With the Labour Party having long since turned from the party of the working class to the party of the London elites, these proles have made the relatively new Reform UK Party a power to be reckoned with. But are there enough of them who are prepared to hand real power to the likes of Tommy Robinson? In 2019, when Tommy ran for a seat in Parliament from a constituency in northwest England, he received only 2.2% of the vote. Unfortunately, many working-class Englishmen have a deep-seated deference to the higher orders that is hard to kick. (It's something you can observe in almost any movie or TV series depicting English life, from *Mrs. Miniver* and *Random Harvest* to *Brideshead Revisited* and *The Remains of the Day*.) There's even a kind of pride among the English working classes in *being* working class – part of which means knowing one's place. In the same way, the middle and upper classes grow up with a habit of viewing the working classes as lesser beings. Strikingly, they don't feel the same way about people, however rich or poor, who've relocated to Britain from abroad – Muslims included. The late Mohamed Al-

Fayed, the Egyptian tycoon who owned Harrod's (and whose son Dodi died in the car with Princess Diana), is one example of a foreigner – and a Muslim – who managed to become a *de facto* member of the British upper classes.

Alas, the tendency of British working-class people to view their class identity as fixed and unchangeable translates, in many cases, into a kind of – what to call it? – apathy, stoicism, passivity. Not to mention a lot of bottled anger. The other day the English podcaster Chris Williamson [played](#) an excerpt from a TikTok video by a young American who recently spent some time in England and whose take on English society was quite telling. “The people there don't seem like they're having fun,” he said. “They seem like they're constantly trying to escape misery...the joke is that everything is depressing and bad...that's the entire sense of humor.” As for the class system, it's “so obvious and weird...you're just born into it.” In America, “you earn your way...If you get rich you move up in class. In England, you're never gonna really be upper class if you're born lower class. Because it's about culture.” There is, he added, a great deal of “inter-class anger and bad feelings”; if working-class Brits are famous for acting up at soccer games, because they're “looking for reasons to let their anger out.” After Williamson played this video, his guest, the podcaster and author Konstantin Kisin – who, born in Russia, moved to Britain as a child, attended a boarding school and university there, and now, in the same way as Mohamed al-Fayed, functions as a member of the middle or upper classes – pronounced that the young American's description of English society was “spot on.”

How much of that anger on the part of the English working classes, one wonders, is really an anger at themselves – at their own innate humility, their reflexive self-effacement? In a recent [podcast](#), Paul Thorpe, a member of Reform UK who, like Elon Musk, supports Tommy Robinson and believes that Nigel Farage should step down from his position as party leader,

apologized for his uncultivated way of speaking, saying: "I'm just an ordinary working-class lad...from south London." (He sounds, as it happens, a lot like Stanley Holloway, the actor who played Alfred Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*.) Thorpe and his guest, Richard Inman, a fellow working-class Brit who's on the board of UKIP, talked about possible replacements for Farage. Neither of them proposed himself or another working-class type. Instead they floated the names of Rupert Lowe, a financier who has spent many years in the City of London (i.e., the financial district), and of Ben Habib, who was born in Pakistan but who went to Rugby and Cambridge and who is therefore, like al-Fayed and Kisin, effectively a member of the upper classes. (After I'd already filed this piece, I watched a January 7 [podcast](#) by Thorpe on which a caller asked him: "Why are you looking to the middle class to sort of represent the interests of the working class?...I'd rather have *you* in charge than some of these people." Thorpe begged off, basically suggesting that there was a good reason why well-spoken people with expensive educations should be in charge of things.)

"Tommy is one of us," Inman said – "us" being the working classes. "He is us...We are all Tommy Robinson. When he gets persecuted, we all feel the pain of his persecution." This, he said, is something that the middle and upper classes simply don't understand. And this lack of understanding, this remoteness of the higher orders – the people living in Belgravia and Kensington, in Notting Hill and Mayfair, and, for that matter, in Surrey and Dorset – from the lives and values and concerns of the lower orders, including the latter's day-to-day issues with Islam, seems likely to me, in conjunction with the tendency of many members of the higher orders to feel a greater sense of identification with well-to-do British Muslims than with the white British working class, to spell Britain's doom. It's tragic, and it barely seems to make any sense: how on earth can the supremely civilized country that gave us Magna Carta and the Mother of

Parliaments, that gave us common law and the fundamental ideas about human freedom that shaped the American constitution, be so riven by something so primitive as a class divide?

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