

Forget Parris

By Bruce Bawer

Meet Matthew Parris – America fan, Trump-hater, and pillar of Britain's suicidal Westminster establishment



The English writer Matthew Parris, 75, is a graduate of Cambridge and former Tory MP who, according to Wikipedia, owns residences in Spain, Derbyshire, and London's upscale Docklands neighborhood. For a very long time now, his columns for *The*

Times and *The Spectator* (UK) have (Wikipedia again) been "widely regarded as essential reading among the political class in Westminster." Which makes sense, because his columns make it clear that he is, first and last, a creature of Westminster – an Establishment figure who is eminently comfortable with being part of an Establishment, a man whose life revolves around the day-to-day machinations of party leaders. To get the picture, just scroll through the headlines on his pieces: "Are the Lib-Dems too soggy?" "The Deluge: Rishi Sunak's Election Gamble."

To be sure, sometimes Parris wanders away from Parliament and ponders the problems facing ordinary Brits – some of them,

anyway. A 2021 column, for example, was entitled “The Sad Decline of” – want to guess? Answer: “British Buses.” It’s something you can imagine finding in a yellowing *Spectator* issue from 1985 or whatever. Indeed, Parris often sounds as if he’s still living in 1985. I foolishly assumed that a 2020 article headed “Get Yourself to Sweden – While You Still Can” was, at least in part, about the Islamization crisis that has made that country the rape capital of Europe. No, it was just a routine travel article about the charms of Scandinavia.

Yes, every now and then Parris touches on his own country’s Islam problem, but a 2021 piece entitled “The Conflict at the Heart of the Migrant Question” would give a clueless foreigner the impression that Britain’s immigration challenge is less urgent than, say, the declining bus service. Looking through the pieces Parris has filed during the past few years, I find nothing whatsoever about Tommy Robinson or grooming gangs or law-abiding Brits being jailed for Facebook posts. And while he seems not to have devoted a single article to the disastrous presidency of Joe Biden during the latter’s entire term of office, he’s churned out several dyspeptic screeds about Trump since January 20.

I was first alerted to one of these screeds by one James H. McGee, who on April 11 [took](#) issue with Parris in the pages of the *American Spectator*. Parris, in the time-honored journalistic tradition of getting column inches out of everything one does, had turned a recent visit to the U.S. into a thousand-word March 29 [piece](#) about the meaning of America. Traveling from Denver to Los Angeles by way of Salt Lake City and Flagstaff, eschewing airplanes for trains and cars, Parris professed to be struck by the significant cultural and economic differences from region to region and concluded that the remarkably diverse people and places he observed are held together by one thing and one thing only: namely, a moral idea. Hence the title of his piece: “America

is a moral idea or it is nothing.”

Exactly what kind of moral idea? Parris seemed to be headed in the right direction when he noted that “[f]rom the rickety railings of the poorest cabins to the lawns of the grandest mansions, you will see the American flag. Everywhere, the stars and stripes flutter.” The American love of country, he asserted, “goes deeper than pride in wealth or power.” It’s about goodness, about a bright new chance for immigrants scarred by the old world, and about optimism. So far, so good. But just when you were expecting Parris to clinch the deal and spell out his point, he steered his piece into what is now, for those of who read political journalism, extremely familiar territory. Americans’ deep belief in the good, claimed Parris, is utterly at odds with “the cynicism, the whiff of impropriety, the sense that coming out on top is all that matters in the end, the amorality that infects Donald Trump and Trumpism.” What? Sheer balderdash.

McGee, too, was unimpressed. America, he pointed out, is “much more than just an idea, even a good and honorable idea”: like every other country, it’s “a place, a people, a shared history.” In any event, the notion that this or that country represents “moral ideas” of some kind is well-nigh universal – consider, for example, Mao on China, Lenin on the USSR, Hitler on the Third Reich, or “Ursula von der Leyen’s repetitious pronouncements regarding the moral purpose of the European Union.” Aside from which, how does Parris make sense of the fact that America’s uniquely moral people elected as president a man whom he regards as an orange-faced embodiment of amorality? Whom does he think those people flying Old Glory outside their homes voted for? Doesn’t he realize that your typical solid-blue Democrat is as allergic to the Stars and Stripes as your average Labourite in North London is to St. George’s cross? As McGee put it, it would appear that Parris’s idea of morality is a globalist, progressive one. If only Parris had knocked on a few doors in Salt Lake City or

Flagstaff and asked a few questions, he would likely have been illuminated on this score pretty fast.

Not content to slam Trump as a way of winding up his brief travelogue, Parris wrote an entire April 12 [piece](#) for the *Spectator* entitled "What If Trump Is Just Bonkers?" Parris's premise was that economists, business writers, pollsters, and psychiatrists alike have been baffled to death by Trump's recent "decrees, speeches and obiter dicta." Parris pondered at length the possibility that Trump is senile. Funny, but a great many of the Americans whose homes Parris raced by on a train or in a car know very well that Trump is thoroughly *compos mentis* and understand exactly what he is up to. In fact, he's doing exactly what he promised to do.

Which, of course, is exactly why Parris is so appalled. As it happens, a year and a half ago the *Spectator* ran a [piece](#) by him entitled "You Can't Trust the Will of the People." Quoting Lincoln's line about "government of the people, by the people, for the people," Parris flatly pronounced: "Lincoln was wrong." Why? Because "government by the people" is a formula for inane mayhem. Parris's argument consisted of a long anecdote about a recent train trip during which he'd seen his fellow passengers' reactions to an unpleasant incident involving the cops swing wildly from emotion to emotion. For Parris, it was a telling illustration of "the erratic movement of the will of the people, and the shallowness and temporary nature of what felt at the time like strong emotions and very decided opinions." Such unstable rabble, he concluded, should hardly be trusted with decisions about, say, "reform of the NHS" or "a ceasefire in Gaza"; best to leave that to cooler, wiser heads – to, in short, government.

To me, that conclusion is nothing less than remarkable. Britain today is a disaster. The political establishment has proven itself to be less than useless. For years, members of both of the major parties have vowed to bring down immigration, but both parties, when in power, have cynically

betrayed their promises. They're the opposite of Parris's despised Donald Trump: they're political animals for whom chronically lying to voters is a matter of course. Their utter indifference to the well-being of their own people – indeed, their condescension to them, their contempt for them – is palpable: for decades they covered up the grooming gangs, and now, on their watch, brave citizens who dare to speak the truth about Islam are thrown into prison cells that the authorities have rendered vacant by releasing rapists and murderers back onto the streets. If Parris really gives a damn about the welfare of his nation's people, how can he not realize that a leader like Trump is precisely what Britain needs at this moment in its history?

In point of fact, there are a number of courageous Brits who take their country's challenges seriously, talk about them bluntly, and want to be in a position to initiate drastic reforms. In the ways that matter, they're very much in the mold of Trump. But their path to power is blocked by Britain's "first-past-the-post" voting system, which makes it exceedingly difficult for outsiders to mount a successful challenge to the political establishment. Parris, it should be noted, has written in hearty defense of the first-past-the-post system. And since he despises the Reform Party's Nigel Farage, who is only halfway to being a real reformer, I can only imagine what he makes of uncompromising truth-tellers like Douglas Murray, Laurence Fox, Ann Marie Waters, Katie Hopkins, Melanie Phillips, and (of course) Tommy Robinson.

Indeed, in everything that I've read by him, Parris comes off as being precisely the kind of upper-class Oxbridge toff who's still able to live in denial, most of the time, about the fact that much of his nation's capital now looks less like its former, glorious self than like the very worst parts of Tripoli, Karachi, or Dhaka, and who seems to be more concerned about the endurance of his country's political establishment than about the enduring freedom of its people. He's entirely

of an ilk with Westminster's most passive, unflappable denizens – the kind of man who will be ordering his third lunchtime martini at the Ivy, or some equally grand eatery, on the day when His Majesty's Government finally falls to the enemy within. At which time perhaps he'll belatedly appreciate the wisdom of those flag-waving stateside voters who put Trump in the White House.

First published in [Front Page Magazine](#)