

In Britain, Another Step Toward the Abyss



by Bruce Bawer

“Big Ben has fallen,” tweeted Giulio Meotti, the Italian critic of Islam. Mr. Brexit, Nigel Farage, wrote: “This is the beginning of religious, sectarian politics in our country. It will get very ugly...By the 2029 general election we will have a radical Islamic party represented in Westminster.” And actor-turned-activist Laurence Fox commented: “Expect what happened today...to become a much more regular occurrence as Britain is bullied into submission.”

Exactly what *did* happen? On February 21, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, made a ruling in violation of a recondite House rule that most British subjects had to have explained to them. The next day, the *Daily*

Mail did [just that](#). February 21 was, as it happens, an “Opposition Day” in the Commons, meaning that it was devoted to the discussion of issues raised by an opposition party, in this case the Scottish National Party – which, in an apparent attempt to highlight Labour Party divisions over the war in Gaza, offered a strongly pro-Palestinian motion calling for an “immediate ceasefire” and the release of hostages while also accusing Israel of targeting innocent Palestinians.

In response, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer proposed an amendment that was less critical of Israel, while the Tory government presented its own amendment, which, in line with its current policy, defended Israel’s right to self-defense and called simply for a “humanitarian pause” in the fighting in Gaza. According to House rules regarding Opposition Day activities, only the latter amendment should have been entertained; but after some Labour MPs who didn’t like the SNP’s intensely anti-Israeli motion shared with Hoyle their fears that a vote against it would expose them to violence by Muslims – most of whom, until October 7, were a highly reliable voting bloc for Labour – Hoyle ordered that the House vote, first, on the Labour amendment; then, on the SNP motion; and, finally, on the Tory amendment.

This utterly irregular ruling caused outrage; the government withdrew its amendment, SNP and Tory MPs walked out, and the remaining MPs, in another rather irregular move, passed the Labour amendment by a voice vote. Hoyle later explained his radical departure from the rules by saying that he’d wanted to give MPs the “widest range” of choices and that he was worried about their “security.” This explanation pacified no one: he was accused of causing a constitutional crisis and (despite his officially neutral position) of doing Labour’s bidding, a charge that had led to the downfall of his predecessor, John Bercow. Many MPs demanded Hoyle’s resignation. In many quarters, the main takeaway from this drama was that Hoyle, by acting out of fear of MPs’ security, had taken British

appeasement of Islam – which was already at a pretty pathetic level – to a dark new high.

Tory MP Suella Braverman, a tough customer (by British standards) who is the daughter of ethnic Indian immigrants from Mauritius and Kenya and who until last November was the cabinet secretary in charge of immigration, focused the blame not on Hoyle but on Starmer, tweeting that he'd handed Britain "one of the most shameful days of our democracy." In a *Telegraph* [article](#) headlined "Islamists are bullying Britain into submission," Braverman claimed that timid politicians who mouth empty slogans about multiculturalism are leading the country down the road to a society run by "the Islamists, the extremists and the anti-Semites" and governed in accordance with sharia law.

The podcaster Konstantin Kisin, who has been an outspoken critic of wokeness but who rejects the conservative label, agreed. In his own February 23 [article](#) for the Free Press website, he maintained that even the recent weekend street protests by violent anti-Semites enthusiasts "pale in comparison" to Hoyle's pusillanimous capitulation to Muslim threats. Eight centuries after its founding, Kisin lamented, the Mother of Parliaments had, out of fear, abandoned its principles. "[I]t is now clear," he wrote, "that Britain has a problem with Islamist extremism that requires immediate and drastic action....People who threaten violence should be arrested and locked up for a very long time....Foreign nationals who engage in, call for, fund, or glorify violence, religious hatred, or other violent extremism should be deported immediately."

Good for Kisin – and for Braverman. Yet note that both of them insist on using the weasel word "Islamism" instead of admitting that the problem is Islam, period. This practice is virtually ubiquitous in Britain, even among the most forthright commentators on the subject. Allow to me to add that, despite Kisin's statement that it's "now clear" that

Britain has an “Islamist extremism” problem, the fact is that this problem was clear to some of us a long time ago.

Kisin acknowledged this – kind of. “A lot of people,” he [tweeted](#), owe Douglas Murray “an apology for ignoring, dismissing and maligning him for the brave warning he gave Europe and the West many years ago now” in *The Strange Death of Europe* (2007). Several of Kisin’s followers pointed out that warnings about the dangers of mass immigration had, in fact, been issued as far back as 1968, in the infamous “Rivers of Blood” speech by Enoch Powell – whose name is still toxic in the UK – and, in 1973, in *The Camp of the Saints*, by the equally radioactive French writer Jean Raspail. In later years, noted Kisin’s followers, the alarm was sounded by, among others, Pim Fortuyn (*Against the Islamization of Our Culture*, 1997), Oriana Fallaci (*The Rage and the Pride*, 2001), Mark Steyn (*America Alone*, 2006), yours truly (*While Europe Slept*, 2006), and Christopher Hitchens.

Some of Kisin’s followers also mentioned Tommy Robinson, who many years ago began kicking up a fuss about the Muslim rape gangs in many English towns and cities – gangs whose monstrous exploits were ignored for decades by the very same cops, journalists, judges, and civil servants who harassed, smeared, and imprisoned Tommy for daring to draw attention to those gangs, thereby supposedly threatening “social cohesion” and inciting “Islamophobia.” Even Kisin, sadly, has gone with the flow, happily interviewing people like Douglas Murray and Margaret Oliver about the rape gangs but consistently assuring the viewers of his “Triggernometry” podcast that he’d never give a platform to the likes of Tommy Robinson. It’s hard not to feel – and not for the first time – that if Tommy had a posh Oxbridge accent instead of sounding like the working-class Luton bloke that he is, he’d be treated a lot more gently, and taken a lot more seriously, by certain individuals.

Yes, I agree that many Brits owe an apology to my estimable

and in every way extraordinary friend Douglas Murray – who in his recent reporting from Israel has been a world-class model of moral courage – as well as to the rest of us who've been smeared over the years for telling the truth about Islam. Similarly, British authorities owe an apology to the thousands of people who've been arrested in that country for criticizing Islam online (in just 2015 and 2016, there were over 6,000 arrests for being “offensive” on the Internet) and to the thousands of girls – many of them now women – who, after being victimized by rape gangs, have been further abused by officials who are unwilling to prosecute such crimes for fear of being called racists.

But if we're talking about apologies, I daresay that Kisin himself, along with millions of his countrymen, owes a big one to Tommy Robinson, who for years has been disrespected, dismissed, and demonized for saying precisely the same things – no more and no less – that Kisin said the other day in his Free Press article.

I'm reminded that in 1982, when the influential intellectual Susan Sontag finally [turned](#) against Communism, famously calling it “fascism with a human face,” she described Hilton Kramer and others who'd been criticizing the USSR for decades as “premature anti-Communists.” Now that at least some members of the British establishment finally seem to be taking their heads out of the sand, are those of us who've been writing about this topic for years going to be described as having been prematurely anti-Islam?

Or will this episode, which so many people on the scepter'd isle are treating as a moment of truth – a turning point – prove to be yet another flash in the pan? After Sir David Amess, a Tory MP, was murdered in an October 2021 by a Somali Muslim terrorist, virtually all of his colleagues in the Commons came together – not to speak out against jihadist violence but to pretend, in a breathtaking display of rank cowardice, that his death had been caused by the abuse of

social media (and needed to be addressed by cracking down on online anonymity). Earlier this month, another Tory MP, Mike Freer – whose offices were recently targeted with arson and who, during a meeting with constituents at a mosque, had to flee Muslims who called him a “Jewish homosexual pig” (for the record, he’s gay, but not Jewish) – announced that for his own safety he would be leaving Parliament. Imagine Churchill doing such a thing.

All this is happening, moreover, at a time when the British police have thoroughly abandoned the internationally admired (and copied) approach to modern policing that was introduced in the 19th century by Sir Robert Peel and have replaced it with a two-tier system under which hysterical calls for genocide by savage Muslims brandishing the Palestinian flag are respectfully tolerated even as native Brits who pray quietly on the street or wave the Union Jack are unceremoniously hauled off like the lowest of thugs.

One sign that some Brits’ sudden readiness to criticize Islam may not last terribly long is this: after MP Lee Anderson said in a February 23 interview that Islamists had “got control” of London mayor Sadiq Khan – who, like the last couple of mayors of New York, has prioritized far-left virtue signaling and the celebration of victim groups over crime-fighting – Khan denounced him for “pouring fuel on the fire of anti-Muslim hatred.” When Anderson (to his credit) refused to apologize, Tory bosses fired him as whip and suspended him from the party.

And, just as the political and media elites responded to the jihadist murder of David Amess by fixating on social media, Anderson’s remark enabled them to turn away from the implications of Hoyle’s actions and to double up on the tired claim that the *real* issue in Britain today is anti-Islamic prejudice. So it was that the execrable *Guardian*, on February 26, ran its thousandth-odd [*j’accuse*](#) by a Muslim writer – in this case, Tasnim Nazeer – slamming Anderson, Braverman, and

other critics of Islam, however legitimate their observations, as right-wing bigots who incite anti-Muslim hate crime.

Of course, anti-Muslim hate crimes are an exceedingly minor distraction – barely a ripple on a pond – compared to the daily tsunami of Muslim offenses against infidels. But that doesn't keep those pusillanimous progressives who make up the British establishment from embracing the comforting lie that the *real* threat to freedom, equality, and social harmony isn't Muslim misbehavior but anti-Muslim bigotry. Does this sound like a country whose political establishment is, to any serious degree, prepared to stiffen its backbone in the face of Islamic intimidation? On the contrary, it's a country whose movers and shakers, after registering with a degree of shock its latest disturbing step toward the abyss, are gutlessly retreating into the usual self-destructive self-delusions.

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