

Tommy Robinson's Unfortunate Predicament

There will be those who think that such harassment of Robinson is correct – that in order to keep the peace it is necessary to keep an eye on anybody who may have any effect to the contrary. But if that is true, it is curious that such measures were not routinely used on Anjem Choudary in all his years living freely in the community. It would be interesting to know if there are any records of Choudary and his family being harassed by police or removed from establishments while the hate-preacher was on whatever down-time he used to have. Or whether the British police ever routinely raid and search the houses of radical Islamists in the hope of finding errors in their VAT returns and the like.

But of course the very comparison is unfair and in many ways lazy, because Tommy Robinson has not been – as Choudary was – at the heart of a nexus of terrorists and terrorist-supporters going back years. He has not been on friendly terms with numerous people who have beheaded civilians and carried out suicide bombings. There are not any occasions, of which the author is aware, on which Robinson has called for violence or the breaking of the law in the name of his political views. But in the eyes of the law, much of the media and a certain number of people in the country Robinson is in an exceptionally unfortunate position. He is not a radical Islamist and nor is he from any discernible minority. He is a white working-class man who, it appears, can thus not only be harassed by certain authorities with impunity, but can find few if any defenders of his rights among the vast panoply of people in our societies who are only too keen to defend the rights of Islamists. – Douglas Murray