

Oppressed in Britain

By Bruce Bawer

“...we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be...we shall never surrender...”

– Winston Churchill, June 4, 1940

“If there was hope, it must lie in the proles, because only there, in those swarming disregarded masses,...could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated...the proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength,...could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning. Surely sooner or later it must occur to them to do it.”

– George Orwell, *1984* (1949)

“...on the eve of a Second World War the idea of a 20th century ‘free-born Englishman’ was a potent one...But that was 80 years agoWhile Italy and the Netherlands have had serious anti-lockdown disturbances, the British public have accepted it with remarkably little in the way of complaint...Sure, this is the home of Magna Carta...but John Locke’s ideas were much more influential in the United States than in his home country...The British are, in fact, quite conformist and placid.”

– Ed West, *UnHerd*, February 19, 2021

“It is not that the Englishman can’t feel – it is that he is afraid to feel. He has been taught at his public school that feeling is bad form.”

– E. M. Forster, *Ainger Harvest* (1936)

When Europeans visit America, almost all of them make the same observation: Americans are extremely friendly. Some Europeans, as I have learned from watching many podcasts on the subject, are downright shocked at just how friendly we are: pedestrians on the sidewalk going out of their way to give directions to

foreigners who are obviously lost, waiters and cashiers offering tourist tips and getting into genuinely intimate personal conversations. The fact about Americans is that we like liking people, and we tend to wear our feelings on our sleeves.



Brits have a somewhat different reputation. Traditionally, they've been known for being exceedingly polite. This sounds as if it's

somewhere in the neighborhood of being friendly, but it's actually something quite different. They're polite, but in a rather withdrawn way. They tend not to be very open at all about their feelings. And one aspect of their politeness is, all too often, a deference, a complacency, a timidity – a powerful inclination to make a pot of tea rather than to make a fuss. About *anything*.

For example, Brexit was supposed to lead to a radical reduction in Islamic immigration. It didn't. *Au contraire*. Over and over, politicians promised to bring down the immigration figures drastically – and then quickly and shamelessly broke their promises. Did the Brits complain? Not much. Yes, many of them voted in the recent elections for the newly established Reform Party, which vows to take the issue seriously, unlike the Tories and Labour.

But Reform managed only to get five seats, out of 650, in the House of Commons. At this late date, why on earth can't Reform do as well as, say, Wilders in the Netherlands, or the Sweden

Democrats, or France's National Rally? Why are so many of today's Brits so reluctant to act, and vote, in their own best interests? In the year 2024, is the average Brit more timid than the average Dutchman or Frenchman or Swede to cast his ballot for a party that the media and political establishment has declared out of bounds?

To be sure, plenty of Brits showed up for the recent anti-Hamas demonstrations in Britain, which were civilized and orderly and which followed months of vicious and ugly pro-Hamas protests. But the British authorities, which had systematically treated the obstreperous Muslims and their allies with kid gloves, have come down hard on the decent, law-abiding Brits who dared, finally, to step out onto the streets and have their voices heard.

These anti-Hamas demos were, of course, very un-British. The French, as everyone knows, will take to the streets at the drop of a *chapeau*. Pretty much any issue will do. We're talking, after all, about a country that used to have a revolution every fifteen minutes. These are people famous not for their friendliness or politeness but for their sneering, patronizing, and often quite remarkable obnoxiousness.

The Brits are the opposite. Historically, when a Brit got so fiercely worked up about some heated political issue that he felt his head was about to explode, he'd rush to his desk, dip his pen in his inkwell, and do that extraordinarily dramatic thing: he'd write a politely worded letter to the *Times*. Yes, the Brits did stand up alone against Hitler. But that was a long time ago. And it took the courage and eloquence of a Churchill to get them to do so. Today, there's no Churchill on the horizon, and if he did show up, he'd never be able to get anywhere near the corridors of power.

And yes, Brits will turn out in massive numbers for a royal wedding or funeral or soccer match; but it takes a great deal of outrage indeed for huge numbers of ordinary Brits to take

part in an angry march on behalf of anything.

Well, now they've done so. But was it far too little, far too late? Was it the beginning of a real reaction to decades of being ignored and abused and condescended to, or a momentary deviation from form? Let's not forget that for years, even as the leaders of terrorist groups were permitted to live in Britain undisturbed (yes, really), and brutal thugs with rap sheets as long as your arm have been given slaps on the wrist, ordinary Brits who have dared to say anything remotely critical of Islam on social media have risked visits from the police – and even arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment.

I write this, by the way, on the same day that Radio Genoa posted a [video](#) on X captioned “The German police have had enough” and showing German cops punching pro-Hamas protesters – women included – who've gotten up in their faces. Among other things, the next few months and years, I suspect, will increasingly bring out the cultural disparities among the Western European countries that may well make the difference between relatively quick and easy Islamization and – well, something a bit messier.

But back to the relatively new British practice of arresting decent citizens for telling the truth about Islam. Until recently, the British class system has played a big role in this phenomenon. Higher-class types, people with Oxbridge accents, have tended to be exempt from abusive treatment by the authorities when they expressed opinions at odds with establishment orthodoxy, whether on Islam or anything else. My test example has always been my friend Douglas Murray, an Oxford graduate who has long been able to get away with saying precisely the same things that have repeatedly landed the working-class Luton lad Tommy Robinson in the hoosegow.

No more. Now Labour is in charge, and all bets are off. On August 8, Alastair Campbell, a former press secretary for the Labour Party who now describes himself as a journalist,

publicly [called](#) for Murray to be investigated by the police. Why? Because Murray had given an interview in which he lamented that he had been correct, in his 2017 book *The Strange Death of Europe*, in predicting that British Muslims would eventually resort to arson, vandalism, and other forms of violence as part of their Koran-dictated obligation to bring the non-Muslim world under the thumb of Islam.

This wasn't the first time Campbell took on Douglas Murray. Two years ago, both men [appeared](#) on TV as guests of Piers Morgan. On the program, Campbell described then prime minister Boris Johnson as "fundamentally not serious" and "probably a narcissist with sociopathic tendencies" and said that his cabinet was packed "with pretty second-rate people."

When Douglas started to challenge Campbell's amateur psychoanalysis of Johnson, Campbell interrupted him, angrily asserting: "Listen, I can say what I want!" When Morgan suggested that Campbell let Murray have his say, Campbell shot back:

"If you're going to bring me on to talk with these right-wing nonentities who are part of the problem in this country anyway, people like Murray and The Spectator, where Johnson was spawned, they are part of the problem – they created this beast!"

After a few more snotty sentences in the same vein, Campbell stormed off the show. Now, think what you will of Boris Johnson, but to refer to Douglas Murray, of all people, as a "nonentity" – especially if you yourself are a former PR hack and Tony Blair lackey who is notorious for his slippery way with the truth and who was, let's not forget, part of the very government that deliberately initiated the mass immigration of Muslims into Britain – is beyond ludicrous. Especially since October 8, Murray has proven himself to be not only one of the most erudite political and social commentators alive, but also

one of the bravest and most principled.

Campbell's behavior on Piers Morgan's show demonstrated something essential about the Labour mentality: these are people who, like Justin Trudeau's crew in Canada as well as the more "progressive" Democrats in the U.S., view their political adversaries not just as opponents but as enemies – and for whom the way of addressing their differences of opinion is not to thrash them out in public but to dismiss those opponents as beneath contempt, to refuse to engage them in civilized discussion, and, if at all possible, to put them behind bars.

Even under the Tories, as Murray himself pointed out in an August 17 [interview](#), the government responded to terrorist acts – the 2017 London Bridge attack and the 2021 murder of Sir David Amess – not by pondering the dangers of jihad but by using these events as excuses to crack down even further on the online criticism of Islam. Because as far as the politicians and police and others in power were concerned, the last thing you wanted to do, in the wake of jihadist killings, was to address them aggressively and thereby antagonize British Muslims. No, the best move was to silence ordinary Brits who recognized these transgressions as what they were – steps on the way to utter social and political submission to the religion of peace.

Now that Campbell's party is in power, the urge to crush anti-jihadist voices has intensified. One recent report stated that the British government actually plans to release from prison some 5000 criminals, many of them violent felons, to open up cell space for good citizens who have dared to speak up about immigrant crime. And pillars of civilization like Douglas Murray, I fear, are no longer safe.

There have, incidentally, also been serious calls by high-level Labourites for the arrest of Nigel Farage, who during a two-decade career in the European Parliament led the fight for

Brexit and who was recently elected to the House of Commons. For many years, Farage carefully avoided criticizing Islam directly; that has changed of late. As in the U.S., those in Britain who are targeting the likes of Murray and Farage are in the habit of bandying about inane terms like “far-right,” “conspiracy theory,” and “misinformation.”

No, Murray and Farage haven’t been arrested yet. But give it time. (As it happens, Murray relocated a couple of years ago to the U.S., but he spends a lot of time in the U.K., providing the British police with plenty of occasions to take him into custody.) As the Brits say, it’s early days. Sir Keir Starmer, the new Labour prime minister, a man with the dark soul of a totalitarian tyrant, is just getting started. Starmer, [wrote](#) Brendan O’Neill in *Spiked Online* on August 10, is “likely to drag us back to the Dark Ages,” to “cover Britain with the black cloud of medieval censorship.” “This regime is looking for an excuse to crush you beneath its boot,” [declared](#) Connor Tomlinson of the Lotus Eaters podcast on August 15. I see no reason to dissent from either of these judgments. Which raises the question: how will the traditionally meek and mild Brits react when Starmer amps up the tyranny?

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