

Badenoch's long game is about to meet the Tories' short fuse

Weekend essay, Fraser Nelson
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Comment

This attack dishonours our entire nation

We Jews have long felt safer in Britain than anywhere — maintaining that means drawing on the best of Labour's instincts

Maurice Glasman



I arrived early to synagogue on Thursday for Yom Kippur, the fast of prayer and penitence. My list of sins was extremely long and the 12 hours ahead did not seem quite enough time to fit them all in. The situation is simple and stark: on Yom Kippur it is decided whether you live or die.

God speaks plainly that what he expects from us is righteousness, justice, mercy and kindness; and the way out of trouble is repentance, prayer and loving kindness. On Yom Kippur I am always in a tight spot. I observe it, some might say, religiously.

I have developed a twin track strategy. The first is not to make excuses, cite mitigating circumstances or blame anyone. I sit quietly and say forgive me, *salakhti*, a lot. Maybe a thousand times. The original sin was not eating the apple but blaming your wife. That is the first assumption of my theology.

The second is that I pray with Hasidim, a very orthodox strain of Judaism almost entirely destroyed by Bolshevism before it was annihilated by the Nazis. Three and a half million of the Jews murdered in the Holocaust were Hasidim. They are the ones who wear the fur hats and sidelocks, weep while they pray and throw their arms up in supplication to God. I reckon they know something about tragedy, death and miracles, and on that day I think they are my best bet for the plea for collective forgiveness that is such a big part of the prayer. Stamford Hill

in London and Broughton Park in Manchester are home to the only Hasidim in Europe who survived the Holocaust intact and I go to pray with them also to show my respect for their survival. I may look out of place but I feel at home. They, too, are my people.

Yom Kippur is the one day I leave my mobile phone behind. It is not only food; phones are also off the menu. There's just me, the Hasidim and God for 12 straight hours. We remember the dead (Mum, Dad, forgive me), pray for the living and bless those yet to be born. May all their names be blessed. So I had no idea when I left the synagogue at 8.30pm that Jews had been attacked and killed in Manchester. All I was thinking about was a hot cup of tea, a piece of fried fish followed by honey cake and a cigarette. I was invited to break the fast by a Hasidic family who had promised me all those things.

My host asked me if it was still safe for Jews to live in this country

When I turned on my phone I met a cacophony of grief that was almost incomprehensible. Two Jewish men were killed and several others hospitalised after a car-ramming, knife-wielding assault by a man called Jihad. I also received messages from people in Leeds, Manchester and London who told me they were being menaced by anti-Israel marchers shouting "death, death, death". My host asked me if it was still safe for Jews to live in this country and for the first time I could not answer. Happy New Year.

This is not a matter of concern to Jews alone. This is a dishonour to

our nation. A festering wound is weeping poisoned blood into an already weakened body politic. The response must be profound.

It is a meaningful and significant rupture in our national story because violence is being established between different communities. In Manchester, a Muslim killed a Jew. That is the truth. This has never happened before. Since the readmission of the Jews to England in the 1650s (thank you Oliver Cromwell) until 1960 (when a Jewish student was killed by fascists), not a single Jew was killed in our country for being a Jew. This is unique in all Europe and the Americas.

In a 300-year period of pogroms, mass slaughter, chemical genocide and industrial murder, this is a source of amazing pride to me. It is one of the pillars of my patriotism. While ethnic nationalism, fascism, communism and Nazism ravaged the continent our country remained impervious to scapegoating, violence and revenge. Not only did the Jews of our country live but we could educate our children, pray in our synagogues, eat our kosher food, bury our dead and circumcise our sons according to our ancient religion. Long live the King. I can still recite the prayer for the royal family we recited every Saturday in synagogue: "He who gives salvation unto kings and dominion unto princes, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, may he bless our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth..."

This is also the root of my devotion to Labour. We were the only socialist party who did not pursue a popular front policy of uniting "progressives", including communists, against fascism — Stafford Cripps and Aneurin Bevan were expelled from the party for flirting with all that.



Ernest Bevin knew that Labour had to ally with the Tories to defeat Nazism

Instead we went into a coalition with the Conservatives to actually beat the Nazis, and we emerged from the Second World War triumphant. Ernest Bevin is my hero. Mosley's Blackshirts were confronted by an organised working class who stayed straight with Labour, parliament and our inherited institutions. Not one drop of Jewish blood was spilt in our land. That was the true face of Labour and the working class. Honour and respect.

That is why I was infuriated by Sir Keir Starmer accusing Nigel Farage of racism. It is not only that Farage isn't racist, and spends a lot of time expelling them. But it sends the message that those who support Reform are either stupid or racist. It is a failed strategy and the stakes are high. I was at Trump's inauguration and I witnessed working-class rage

at the "lanyard class" who want to control what they think and what they say. The new era we are now in is one of borders, sovereignty, industry and armies. Above all it is one in which the working class decide elections and we want them with us, not polarised against us. That is the primary task of a Labour government. It is imperative that the connection is restored.

WH Auden wrote in the late 1920s

Fate has decreed that Shabana Mahmood must lead this battle

that we must love each other or die. I always considered that line a bit overblown, but not today. This is something way beyond party politics.

Fate has decreed that Shabana Mahmood, a Muslim woman of profound faith, is our home secretary at this moment. It is she who must lead this battle against Islamic murder and hate. I know her and I respect her deeply. I ask all readers to support her and, if you are that way inclined, to pray for her. That she acts with wisdom and understanding. That she may uphold the peace of the realm, advance the welfare of the nation and face this gargantuan task guided by kindness and truth. For myself, I will pray for her every day and thank God for her presence. She is carrying the heaviest of burdens.

Lord Glasman is a Labour peer

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Hilary Rose Notebook

Staying out of hospital is full-time job for the old

I discovered this week that there's a whole arm of the NHS devoted to keeping people out of hospital, called — you can't fault their logic on this — hospital at home. Physios, occupational health specialists, mobility assessors, specialist beds delivered to the door, you name it. We had a family day out at a special "don't be admitted to hospital" clinic where they rattled through scans and treatment options and only nine hours later spat us out. I won't claim it was the most fun I've ever had on a Monday. But it did

mean my father didn't have to spend a single night in hospital, something that, at the age of 88, he now pursues with all the fervour and single-minded determination he used to devote to his job.

A test of patience

The man who arrived with a shiny new hospital bed said he was a community engineer, and his handiwork now dominates downstairs, Nana Royle-style. While he put it up, he regaled us with tales of his job: the patient who demanded a new bed because he'd let his grandchildren use it as a trampoline until eventually, to his astonishment, it broke. There was the heavy smoker who complained that the hoist in her house had turned from white to yellow and she didn't much like



yellow, so could she have a new one? One man kept his fancy electric wheelchair in the garden, where it went mouldy, whereupon he called to complain that it was an eyesore and must be taken away pronto. And finally a shout out to all the many, many people he said mistreat and abuse their expensive, reusable, free equipment so badly it ends up having to go in a skip. Congratulations one and all, you must be very proud.

Every book tells a tale

Local bookshops have come up with a way to challenge Amazon, by launching an ebook platform, Bookshop.org, which charges the same prices as Bezos Inc. The trick, though, is that you can click to donate the profits from whatever you buy to an independent bookshop. It's a brilliant idea

but I'm very much Team Print not Team Ebook. My Kindle gathers dust, even on holidays — in fact, especially on holidays. The first thing I've bought for my new house isn't a table, but bookshelves. When I unpack the boxes, the most battered books are the ones I took on holiday, and sure enough when I opened one a load of Cornish sand fell out. Another had a splodge on the cover that I know for a fact was rum punch in Antigua, and the frayed pages of Jilly Cooper's *Appassionata* are pretty much held together with suntan lotion applied long ago in the Med. Who needs photos when you've got memories like that?

Gracious Sir Gary

Hurrah for Gary Oldman, knighted by Prince William this week and chuffed to bits. "It was emotional," he said, posing for photographs at Windsor Castle, "I think I feel very honoured — very humbled and flattered. It compares

to nothing else." Winning an Oscar, he added, "pales in comparison" to his day out at Windsor, which had "just been wonderful".

It's fashionable for celebrities and luvvies to loudly and publicly reject honours and then bore us with their views on the British empire. They could politely and quietly say "no, thank you", but why not virtue-signal instead? Michael Sheen, for example, handed back his OBE eight years after he accepted it because he'd just realised that England and Wales had a "tortured history", a link that presumably makes sense to him. Livia Firth recently staged a protest against the Trump state visit by ripping up her MBE scroll on Instagram, so that showed him. It's refreshing, then, that at least someone these days can be offered a gong and accept it not just graciously but with delight. Arise Sir Gary, our newest national treasure, as Prince William probably didn't say.

Ann Treneman is away