



The Revolution That Didn't Come – And Probably Never Will

Patriotism as spectacle for the politically dispossessed.

A sea of sweating faces swells through Westminster beneath the flags of St. George and the Union Jack. Some wave them with pride. Others wield them like warnings.

Chants cry out of "Tommy, Tommy, Tommy," and "Allah, Allah, Who the fuck is Allah?", as demonstrators march through the capital's streets. Eventually the chants give way to speeches and patriotic anthems, blasted across Westminster by organisers desperate to frame the gathering as a national awakening.

Organisers insist the march is about "waking up Great Britain." The noise pollution may help with that. Tommy Robinson speaks of a lion awakening, but the movement looks less like a revolution than a travelling grievance convention.

There are indeed fair grievances in the UK right now; economic anxiety, cost of living, and failures from our elites and political classes. It's no surprise trust in institutions continues to erode.

What this crowd of self-identified patriots misses is that they are marching against the wrong elites. The people most responsible for Britain's decline rarely appear in these speeches. Instead, frustration is redirected toward immigrants, Muslims and whatever populist scapegoat is most useful in the moment.

So far every speaker and performer has tried to sell nationalism like it's a chart-topping anthem. None of them

have produced anything to rival the blues of the black community. There's an attempted country-western number somewhere in all this too, though it feels oddly imported for a movement supposedly defending British identity.

Selah.

Beyond all of the pageantry, urine going down the storm drains, and the stench of warm lager in the air, there are further cracks in the illusion of what some claim is the first step toward organised revolution.

The core problem is that there is so much resentment towards members of the kingdom they are proclaiming to unite.

Movements such as this may use resentment to disrupt discourse, but it rarely proves effective at rebuilding society. A movement built entirely on shouting about symptoms while ignoring the architects of decline will never produce meaningful change.

The replacement of a light bulb would look more revolutionary.

Perhaps I should dial back the mockery. Serious journalism is supposed to confront extremism with calm objectivity. Then again, this movement makes restraint difficult. One man draped bacon over his shoulders before playing cello to trance music. At that point the movement practically writes its own satire.

Even Tommy himself - the lead organiser of the event and movement - must see the irony he embodies. He has already started to distance himself by simply becoming someone else in this space, rather than proudly standing on stage as Stephen Yaxley-Lennon.

A leader obscured behind branding, hardly demonstrates true ideological conviction.

I suppose it would make sense for Tommy to start creating some distance for himself. He continues to inflate turnout figures to create the illusion of inevitability. Last year's wildly exaggerated attendance claims were contradicted by aerial footage and police estimates, and this year's demonstration

appeared noticeably smaller again, with suggested attendance figures closer to 60,000.

Even at this figure, the turnout represents roughly 0.09% of the current population of the UK. The Muslim population in England and Wales, by contrast, is recorded at 6.5% according to the 2021 Census from the Office for National Statistics.

This movement may be promising a national uprising, but it's managed to only produce numbers closer to a managed decline. A movement warning of national collapse can only appear to mobilise a sliver of the nation it claims to represent.

Tommy let out a cry of "prepare for the battle of Britain" (sic), whilst boasting to the world that this will be the greatest patriotic display the world has ever seen.

Robinson invokes wartime mythology constantly, though the movement itself offers remarkably little beyond emotional spectacle and anti-Muslim grievance politics.

Sections of the American conservative right appear eager to embrace the mythology regardless.

The movement's Christian nationalist messaging also reveals a certain insecurity at its core. Preachers and speakers repeatedly framed Britain as a fundamentally Christian nation under siege, leaning heavily on religious identity as both shield and rallying cry.

Institutionally, Britain still carries the architecture of Christianity; bishops remain in the House of Lords, the monarch is tied to the Church of England, and coronations are wrapped in Anglican ritual. Culturally, however, the country is drifting elsewhere.

Census data over the last two decades alone shows a sharp rise in those identifying with no religion at all, reflecting a Britain that is becoming increasingly secular, fragmented spiritually and post-Christian in outlook.

That contradiction hangs awkwardly over the entire UTK movement. Much of the rhetoric warns of an Islamic takeover, yet the Britain being invoked by the speakers no longer seems to exist in the form they imagine it. What they are defending

is less a living culture than a nostalgic reconstruction of one.

It is evident that many in the UK are feeling the fear and loathing this group and it's rhetoric are capable of. But the numbers don't really reflect a menace preparing to descend upon Downing Street.

In reality this event had only 20 arrests linked to UTK participants. These figures sound more like a stag do that can't handle a few shots.

Hate speech I agree can be harmful, but when it's falling on so few ears, it's clear that their platforms aren't what they used to be, and ultimately they are starting to get quieter in public consciousness - fading into the background like white petulant noise.

The UK government has also stepped up its response; visa bans, increased police presence, and growing scrutiny from investigators, journalists and watchdog groups exposing the movement's racism, hypocrisy and conspiratorial rhetoric.

The UTK rhetoric still spreads online, but the movement increasingly resembles background noise mistaken for a national uprising.

Ultimately, when your revolution has bans on foreign agitators, riot barriers and contains hate crime mentality, with diminishing numbers over marches, you'll be hard pressed to find any true liberation on the horizon.

All of this is just a form of curated extremism.

A movement that claims to oppose extremism increasingly mirrors the very radicalism it claims to resist.

May 16th was no revolution.

It was pageantry for the politically dispossessed.

Britain is angry, fractured and increasingly distrustful of its institutions.

But anger alone is not a revolution.

And spectacle alone has never saved a kingdom.

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