

You should never accommodate fascists

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If you are 67, as I am, you grew up in the shadow of World War II, even though, of course, it was well and truly over by the time you were born.

My parents lived through the war. My father actually went to university in London during it, before doing his National Service. He was a fire watcher when the doodlebugs were falling. They, their friends, other relatives, and teachers all had memories of the war, as did my grandparents, although one of my grandfathers did die as a result of service in the Royal Navy and so was not around to tell me anything. That might, however, have fuelled my fascination.

Then, as I grew up, and the politics of that war and the issues leading up to it became as important as the events that took place on the battlefield, different questions emerged. One of those has long engaged me, not least because of my general feeling that war is never a solution to any known human conflict, and that is how I would have reacted to the rise of the very obvious threat from Hitler's Nazi Germany in the 1930s. In particular, would I have been on the side of appeasement or rearmament?

We know, with the power of retrospect, that the UK only just about reacted in time to contain, but not defeat, the threat posed to it.

What we also know is that political reputations were made and lost over this issue, again very often in hindsight. That hindsight has, then, always shaped my understanding of what I might have felt, done, and said.

However, I think I now know. As is apparent from my recent posts here, because of my abhorrence of war, I am not an appeaser, as I believe it makes conflict much more likely. You only have to see playground bullies (because I suspect we all did this, and I was always one of the small boys in my year, so I had more than my fair share of experience with them) to understand how they operate, and to see that Trump shares their attitudes and modus operandi. Ultimately, you learn you only have one answer, and that is to stand up to them, which I last did at the cost of a broken nose, but with my pride intact.

What is it about our current politicians that means they do not get this? Were they the bullies? Or were they those who never stood up and challenged the abusers, never taking the blows as a consequence? I do not know the answers to those questions, but what I do know is that what they are doing now represents a profound betrayal of the trust that they ask us to place in them.

It is not grandstanding to call out Trump for what he is.

It would not be inappropriate to boycott Mike Johnson's appearance in Parliament today, because the man and the regime he represents do not deserve the honour he is being given.

And it is straightforward cowardice at this moment to fail to call out the political philosophy to which Trump subscribes, and which he is seeking to impose upon the world, which is fascism.

There is a moral to note. It is that you should never accommodate fascists, whoever they are, and wherever they arise. They subscribe to the power of might. I believe in the politics of care. There is very little that reconciles the two.