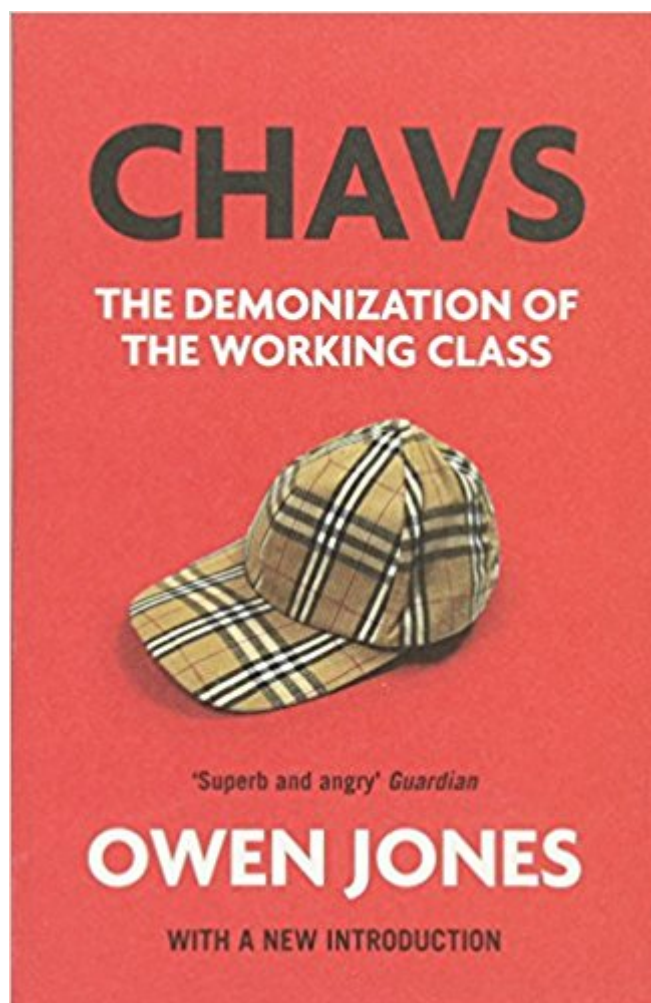




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Chavs: The Demonization Of The Working Class



Synopsis

Bestselling investigation into the myth and reality of working-class life in contemporary Britain In modern Britain, the working class has become an object of fear and ridicule. From Little Britain's Vicky Pollard to the demonization of Jade Goody, media and politicians alike dismiss as feckless, criminalized and ignorant a vast, underprivileged swathe of society whose members have become stereotyped by one, hate-filled word: chavs. In this acclaimed investigation, Owen Jones explores how the working class has gone from "salt of the earth" to "scum of the earth." Exposing the ignorance and prejudice at the heart of the chav caricature, he portrays a far more complex reality. The chav stereotype, he argues, is used by governments as a convenient fig leaf to avoid genuine engagement with social and economic problems and to justify widening inequality. When *Chavs* was first published in 2011 it opened up the discussion of class in Britain. Then, in the public debate after the riots of that summer, Owen Jones's thesis was proved right—the working class were the scapegoats for everything that was wrong with Britain. This new edition includes a new chapter, reflecting on the overwhelming response to the book and the situation in Britain today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A passionate and well-documented denunciation of the upper-class contempt for the proles that has recently become so visible in the British class system." —Eric Hobsbawm, *The Guardian* "Books of the Year" "Timely" —Owen Jones

seeks to explain how, thanks to politics, the working class has shifted from being regarded as 'the salt of the earth' to 'the scum of the earth.'

•Carol Midgley, *The Times* "Book of the Week" "Persuasively argued, and packed full of good reporting and useful information | Jones makes an important contribution to a revived debate about class.

•Lynsey Hanley, author of *Estates* "A work of passion, sympathy and moral grace.

•Dwight Garner, *New York Times* "A lively, well-reasoned and informative counterblast to the notion that Britain is now more or less a classless society.

•Sean O'Hagan, *Observer* "Eloquent and impassioned.

•Evening Standard "A bold attempt to rewind political orthodoxies; to reintroduce class as a political variable | it moves in and out of postwar British history with great agility, weaving together complex questions of class, culture and identity with a lightness of touch. Jones torches the political class to great effect.

•Jon Cruddas, *Independent* "Book of the Week" "Superb and angry.

•Polly Toynbee, *Guardian* "Seen in the light of the riots and the worldwide Occupy protests, his lucid analysis of a divided society appears uncannily prescient.

•Matthew Higgs, *Artforum* "As with all the best polemics, a luminous anger backlights his prose.

•Economist "A trenchant exposure of our new class hatred and what lies behind it.

•John Carey, author of *The Intellectuals and the Masses* "The stereotyping and hatred of the working class in Britain, documented so clearly by Owen Jones in this important book, should cause all to flinch. Reflecting our high levels of inequality, the stigmatization of the working class is a serious barrier to social justice and progressive change.

•Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, authors of *The Spirit Level* "Jones's analysis of the condition of the working class is very astute | A book like this is very much needed for the American scene, where the illusion is similarly perpetuated by the Democrats that the middle-class is all that matters, that everyone can aspire to join the middle-class or is already part of it.

•Anis Shivani, *Huffington Post* "Everybody knows what a chav is, it seems, but no one is a chav. But then it's a word unlike any other in current usage | A new book, *Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class*, by first-time author Owen Jones | has thrown the word into the spotlight all over again.

•Carole Cadwalladr, *Observer* "A blinding read.

•Suzanne Moore, *Guardian* "[A] thought-provoking examination of a relatively new yet widespread derogatory characterization of the working class in Britain |

edifying and disquieting in equal measure. *• Publishers Weekly* “A fiery reminder of how the system has failed the poor. *• Peter Hoskin, The Daily Beast* “Impassioned and thought-provoking | I genuinely hope his voice is heard. *• Claire Black, Scotland on Sunday* “Passionate, angry and articulate, *Chavs* rail[s] against the cynical slandering, by politicians and the media, of working people. *• Scotsman* “What makes *Chavs* a work of art is precisely [its] power of demonstrating the deceptive nature of the premise of an all-encompassing neo-middle class. Far from being classless, British society is defined by an effort to undermine and demonize the underprivileged. *• Los Angeles Review of Books* “A highly readable and very important book. *• David Skelton, Total Politics* “A long overdue look at the state of the class war in Britain today. *• Pat Stack, Socialist Review* “Reminds us of the potential political and economic power that exists largely untapped in British society. *• Richard Seymour, author of Against Austerity*

Owen Jones is a writer, commentator and activist. He writes frequently for the Guardian, Independent and New Statesman, and has worked in Parliament as a trade union lobbyist and parliamentary researcher, helping Labour plan backbench rebellions on issues ranging from civil liberties to workers’ rights. He lives in London.

Owen Jones does an excellent job of documenting the destruction of the British working class beginning with Thatcher through to today. The similarities between Thatcher’s administration and Reagan’s administration makes one wonder if the international ruling class had worked together to break the Unions and decimate the working class. Thatcher broke the strongest Union in England after the miners one year strike ended in defeat (1984-1985) and Reagan broke the Air Traffic Controllers Union when they went on strike in 1981 and were permanently fired from their jobs. These Union defeats mark the beginning destruction of organized labor in both countries. Today the new mantra is, “We are all middle class.” The media no longer mentions the working class and on occasion they pay lip service to the poor and destitute with “human interest” stories. Not a pretty picture. Short of a revolution the majority of residents of both countries will have to live with diminishing expectations. There can be no economic turnaround when both countries are dependent on consumerism and the population has less and less money to spend. The rich live better than royalty ever did while most of us working folks live like serfs with flat screen TV’s. Please

do read this book and ponder the ramifications of what Mr. Owens is documenting. Even if you have a safety net what will happen to you when the society around you crumbles as it did in Detroit, parts of Florida and east Oakland? Mr. Jones included this poem towards the end of the book. Think about it. It is our way out. Rise like Lions after slumber In unvanquishable number - Shake your chains to earth like dew Which in sleep had fallen on you - Ye are many - they are few. Percy Bysshe Shelley, "The Call to Freedom"

This is an original look at the working class in the U.K. but it is equally accurate in the denigration of the working class here in the U.S. Whenever we use the term trailer trash as if the people are there by choice rather than the overwhelming odds against them. Maybe, it didn't start with globalization or the break-up of unions, but it follows the long decline of people (Mitt Romney's 49% and the angry supporters of Bernie and Trump) who are stuck at the bottom and have only a tiny chance of "working" their way out. Owen Jones writes a easy read in a logical way. It helps that I know many people living with diminished expectations as well as frequently listening to the anger on all side of the political spectrum when I listen to The Washington Journal on C-Span. There are holes in OJ's logic, but it offers a take that adds to out knowledge.

Owen Jones is one of the best contemporary political writers of our time. Great expose of how demonization of the working class is used to advance the political agenda of the elites at the expense of the poor and working classes.

When I started this book, I thought it would be just a "Thatcher bashing rant" by a left-leaning journalist and in the beginning it was just that, but after reading further I realized that the Thatcher era was just the base of a very well researched and written book about the wretchedness of the British class system, which seems will never go away. Mr. Jones writes an in depth book that describes how people who once took pride in their jobs and communities and earned a decent living, suddenly saw it all taken from them and how the class system has been restructured by the politicians to bring hard working people to their knees. Mr. Jones backs up his claims with statistics and has obviously done his homework. This is not light reading, and this is not just happening in the UK, but also in the US, so be prepared to be shocked and saddened about how badly some people are being treated. An excellent book.

Owen Jones challenges the myth that "we are all middle class now"

Britain is still a class society and most people have to sell their work force to make a living. The Gini coefficient for inequality has risen since 1979. But the Neo-Liberal class war has destroyed the pride and self-consciousness of British working-class communities. Before 1979 politicians wanted to improve the situation of the working class. Now they want to evade it. People who are objectively working-class call themselves "middle-class". There is an almost complete absence of accurate representation of working-class people in the media, on TV. Owen shows class hatred in TV reality shows. There are almost no politician and journalists anymore with working-class background. Most have no idea about the reality of working-class life or average income. "Chavs" are a derogative caricature of white working-class people as racist hooligans, alcoholic thugs or sexually permissive single mothers. This caricature shows class hatred of the middle-classes and the Oxbridge educated elite. The figure of the "Chavs" is used to deflect blame away from the capitalist system and Neo-Liberal politics onto the individuals. The working-class has lost all control over its representation. Thatcherism has deliberately destroyed British manufacturing and weakened trade-unions. The Neo-Liberal housing policy has deepened divisions within working-class communities and created working-class areas without hope. Owen analyses the influence of the UKIP racists in working-class areas. He calls for a return to working-class politics and values.

Owen Jones gets to the heart of a toxic cultural narrative.

Absolute nonsense. Albeit very well argued nonsense. Misinterpreting or distorting the historical record to make it fit a predetermined narrative is a poor substitute for real political scholarship. Unlike Jones, I was alive during many of the events detailed here, and his account of them feels like a bizarre alternative history. The only one guilty of demonization here is Jones.

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