Twitter Thread by Meghna Chakrabarti

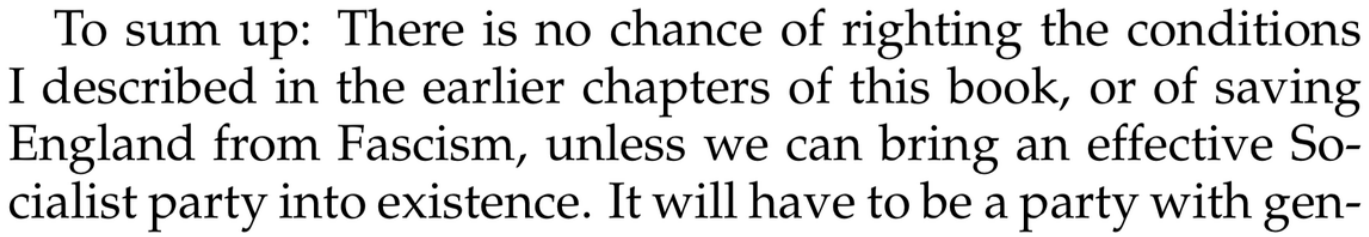


Meghna Chakrabarti
@MeghnaWBUR

The faces of the insurrectionist, anti-American mob that attacked the country have inspired me to re-read George Orwell's "The Road to Wigan Pier".

One of his lesser known, but IMHO best books. Thread.

First, so many right wing extremists tweeting Orwell quotes right now, as if he would have supported an attack on democracy. Read his work. Here's what HE believed, in his own words:


To sum up: There is no chance of righting the conditions I described in the earlier chapters of this book, or of saving England from Fascism, unless we can bring an effective Socialist party into existence. It will have to be a party with gen-

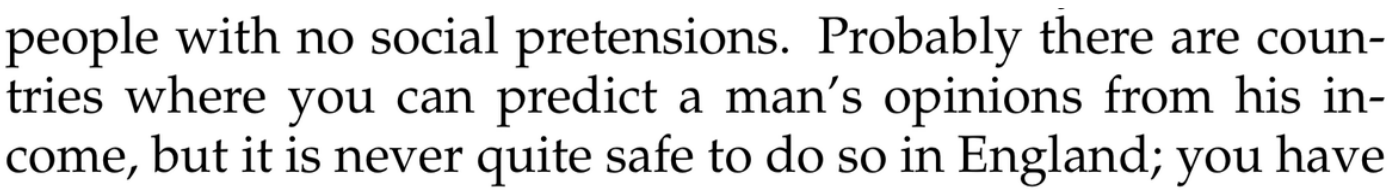
Orwell was a socialist. In fact, he was fighting against fascism in the Spanish Civil War when the book was published in 1937. He took a bullet in the neck.

https://t.co/OPFiahKtbE

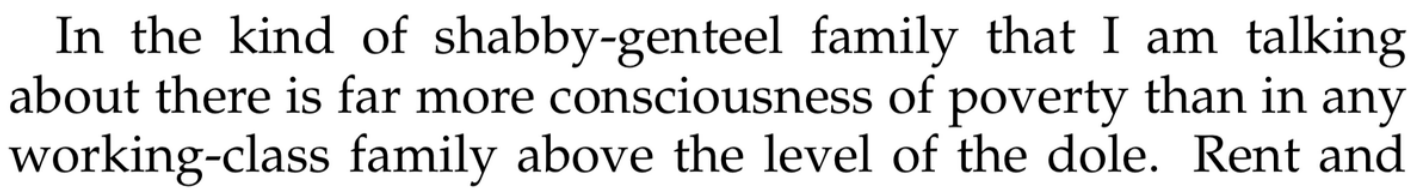
I'm re-reading the book because of what Orwell writes about class.

Buying plane tickets, purchasing weapons of war and body armor, taking time off from work, that takes time and money.

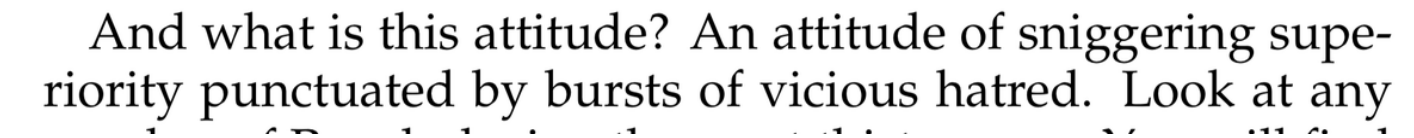
This is why Orwell is so interesting. Who are the people most prone to fascism?


people with no social pretensions. Probably there are countries where you can predict a man's opinions from his income, but it is never quite safe to do so in England; you have

Orwell points right at the middle class. The "shock absorbers of the bourgeoisie", he calls them.


In the kind of shabby-genteel family that I am talking about there is far more consciousness of poverty than in any working-class family above the level of the dole. Rent and

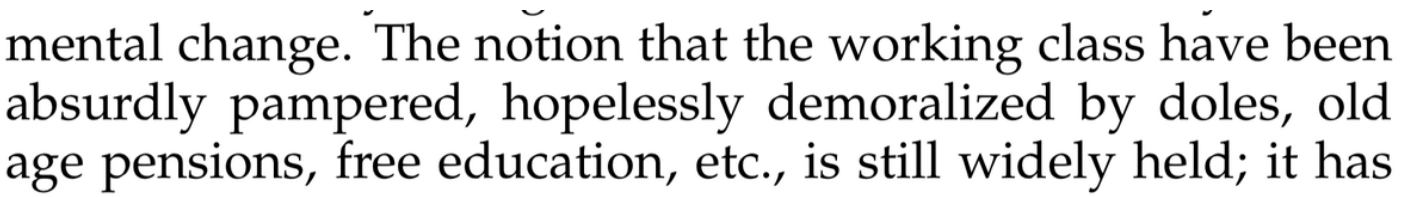
Clinging to status, for fear of losing it, and therefore prone to hatred.


And what is this attitude? An attitude of sniggering superiority punctuated by bursts of vicious hatred. Look at any

https://t.co/yX67dgbmCQ


Every middle-class person has a dormant

Orwell introduces the kind of "anxiety" that matters. Middle class anxiety that others will rise.

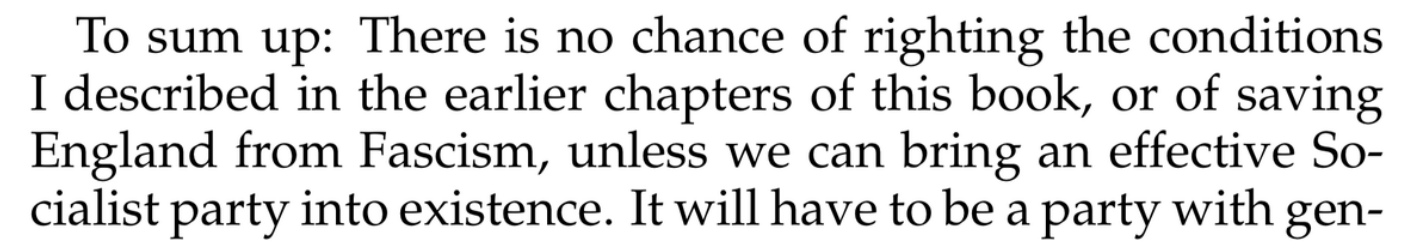

mental change. The notion that the working class have been absurdly pampered, hopelessly demoralized by doles, old age pensions, free education, etc., is still widely held; it has

Orwell is writing for 1930s Britain.

For 2021 America, add centuries of racism, party lies, the normalization of extremism, Trump godhead worship, and a society marinated in an ocean of misinformation.

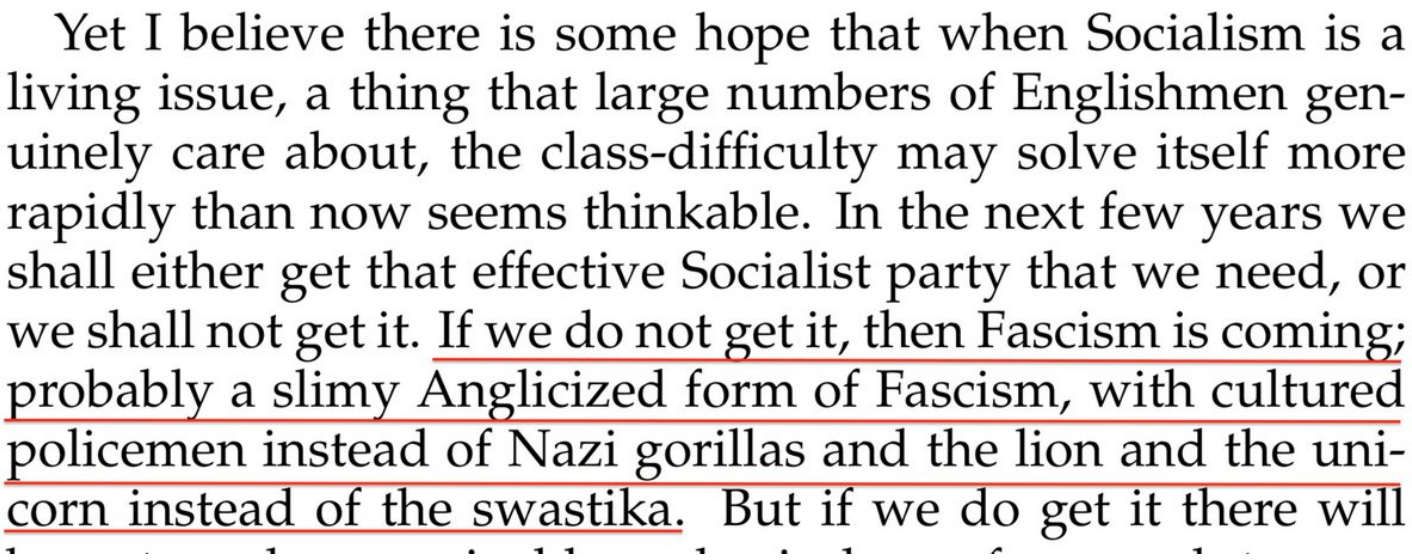
Result: white lawmakers, business people, etc. attempting to overthrow Democracy.

To stave off the threat, Orwell warned elite leftists that they were missing the point. (His critique of them is vicious and worth is own long thread.)


To sum up: There is no chance of righting the conditions I described in the earlier chapters of this book, or of saving England from Fascism, unless we can bring an effective Socialist party into existence. It will have to be a party with gen-

Orwell warned of a Very British Fascism.

It's not hard to imagine an Americanized version.


Yet I believe there is some hope that when Socialism is a living issue, a thing that large numbers of Englishmen genuinely care about, the class-difficulty may solve itself more rapidly than now seems thinkable. In the next few years we shall either get that effective Socialist party that we need, or we shall not get it. If we do not get it, then Fascism is coming; probably a slimy Anglicized form of Fascism, with cultured policemen instead of Nazi gorillas and the lion and the unicorn instead of the swastika. But if we do get it there will

"The Road to Wigan Pier" was published in 1937. Orwell warned that time was running out. Two years later, World War Two.

The class analysis is just from the second half of his book. The first half is a complex analysis of coal mining life in northern England.

Full book here.

https://t.co/smx7UCwS10