

We first featured this song in The November 2019 of The Political Songster. It is more crucial than ever now that we fight the Police Bill which is an attack on all of us to travel, demonstrate, walk or pick blackberries from a hedge. We must unite in a fight to defeat it.

## The Gypsy and the Gaugie

Dave Rogers

This song is a dialogue between a gypsy and a gaugie (or non-gypsy). The song is based on interviews with gypsies and travellers across Britain. The response was the same everywhere: a lack of even the most basic amenities for travellers and constant harassment from police and local authorities.



Between 1563 and 1783,  
being a Gypsy was a  
hanging offense in  
England

**The Guardian** 13 November 2019

Opinion Roma, Gypsies and Travellers

Priti Patel's demonisation of Gypsies is an attack on the vulnerable for political gain.

*George Monbiot*

Reading the contents of the 300-page bill can feel like being trapped in a 21st-century version of Animal Farm. Though the government says that everyone has equal rights, the bill reflects the subtext of this official line: only as long as citizens pipe down and do as they are told. While it says that "freedom of expression is a cornerstone of British democracy", the bill proposes amendments giving police greater powers to restrict protests that cause "intimidation or harassment" or "serious unease, alarm or distress" to bystanders.

Kirsty Brimelow, QC and Barrister,  
writing in The Guardian, 5 April 2021

Over the years, Conservative government policies have shut down sites and accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers nationwide, leading to a massive shortage. Now, this new bill intends to criminalise us when, because of this shortage, we inevitably can't find a formal site and have to stop on another patch of land. We'll face fines of thousands of pounds, three-month prison sentences and seizure of our goods, including vehicles. Which means our trailers – our homes. In short, the bill makes our very way of life a criminal offence.

*Luke Smith (Gypsy)*

Says the gau - gie to the gyp - sy,  
 "We don't want fil - thy tin - kers here,  
 You are so de - ter - mined to live like ver - min,  
 You spread your rub - bish far and near".

Says the gaugie to the gypsy  
 "We don't want filthy tinkers here  
 You are so determined to live like vermin  
 You spread your rubbish far and near"

Says the gypsy to the gaugie  
 "You say that gypsies are unclean  
 But who denies us rights to decent council sites  
 And access to every human need?"

Who pollutes our towns and cities  
 The food we eat, the rivers and the seas?  
 Who poisons people's minds with prejudice and lies  
 Was it you or was it me?"

Says the gaugie to the gypsy  
 "We don't want thieving didikies here  
 Robbers and hawkers, smooth-tongued talkers  
 No wonder our children live in fear"

Says the gypsy to the gaugie  
 "We buy and we sell and we ply our craft  
 Up and down the land hiring out our hands  
 The only thing we take is scrap

Who was it stole our right to wander  
 To wastelands, woods and village greens?  
 Who took the common ground where one time we'd be found?  
 Who ran away with our liberty?"

Says the gaugie to the gypsy  
 "You vagrants don't obey our laws  
 Your kids don't go to school, you always break the rules  
 You should be driven from our shores"

“These gypsies are thieving, lying toe-rags. They leave the park like a pig hole and are sticking two fingers up to the city. It's time we got the rules changed and got them out of there for good.”

*Liberal Democrat councillor,  
Perry Barr, Birmingham*



Says the gypsy to the gaugie  
“The laws are made by the likes of you  
Who is it decides how we should live our lives?  
You are many, we are few

You say that we are wild and lawless  
But how did Britannia rule the waves?  
By pilfering the land from other people's hands  
You made free people into slaves”

Says the gaugie to the gypsy  
“It's time to change your roving ways  
Travelling's out of date, a drain upon the state  
In bricks and mortar you'll have to stay”

Says the gypsy to the gaugie  
“We don't want private property  
We're a freeborn nation, to travel is our station  
The right to roam is all we need

Why do our roving ways distress you?  
Why do you always count the cost?  
Is our roving really showing  
All the freedom you have lost?”

Says the gaugie to the gypsy  
“You live like rats and parasites  
There's only one solution to all of your pollution  
We'll cast you out of human sight”

Says the gypsy to the gaugie  
“For us there is no hiding place  
Your prejudice is clear, no gypsies wanted here  
You think you are the master race”

In Auschwitz, Dachau and Treblinka  
Two million gypsy people died  
500 years of ethnic cleansing  
500 years of genocide

“I'm born gypsy. Me parents was gypsies and when they say conform, why do we have to conform? What is so dangerous about a person living in a caravan, a culture living in itself, got its own values, own principles?”

*Joe Jenkins, gypsy*