

UK Conservatives' rampant Islamophobia and racism covered up by party tops, downplayed by media

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Ever since Jeremy Corbyn was elected as Labour Party leader in 2015, a hysterical witch-hunt against him and the wider left has been led by the Blairites, the media and the ruling Conservative Party equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism.

No allegation has been too fantastical and contrived to avoid being heavily cited amid banner headlines, with the necessary comments solicited from pro-Zionist MPs and groups.

These smears and lies, designed to rewrite political history to associate the left with anti-Semitism, have been conducted by newspapers all but blind to the naked Islamophobia and racism within the Conservative Party.

This month an anonymous Twitter account, @matesjacob, sent damning material to the *Guardian* which it was obliged to report. On March 5, the *Guardian* reported that 14 Conservative members had been suspended for allegedly making Islamophobic comments on social media that could have been easily unearthed by any major newspaper. In total, the party suspended more than 40 members over allegations of anti-Muslim behaviour.

On March 18, the BuzzFeed news site reported that another 25 self-proclaimed Tories had posted similar offensive material on Facebook. Buzzfeed noted that the Tories "refused to say how many of the 25 had been suspended."

Within days, on March 24, the *Guardian* reported that 15 of the suspended Tory members, *who served as elected councillors*, had been quietly reinstated. The *Guardian* noted that its research "suggested that in the majority of cases where a councillor was reprimanded for retweeting or sharing offensive content, they were later readmitted to the party."

Conservative councillor Martyn York, in Wellingborough, a moderator for the Facebook page "Boris Johnson: Supporters' Group," was recently suspended for Islamophobic comments, including some inciting violence,

that were allowed on the site with 4,800 members.

Dorinda Bailey, a former Conservative council candidate and member of the group, replied to a user saying of mosques, "Bomb the f***** lot": "I agree, but any chance you could edit your comment please. No swearing policy."

Group members referred to Muslims as "ragheads" and described immigrants as "cockroaches." One told a black soldier to "p*** off back to Africa" and for black former Labour MP Fiona Onasanya to be "put on a banana boat back home."

Two Conservative councillors from East Staffordshire resigned following criticism for liking and sharing a post which showed the queen beheading London Mayor Sadiq Khan.

On the same day as it reported the reinstatement of the councillors, the *Guardian* published evidence of five more Islamophobic social media postings by Tory party members.

One said, "Muslims are cavemen" who should be "rounded up," alongside offensive remarks about Muslim women on a Facebook page, the "Jacob Rees-Mogg Supporters Group."

A filthy social media posting, uncovered by matesjacob, and written just days before the fascist gunman Brenton Tarrant murdered 50 people in a massacre at two mosques in New Zealand, declared, "I was going through a few magazines the other day down the local mosque. I was really enjoying myself. Then the rifle jammed." The *Guardian* reported that the author of these lines "photographed himself with Boris Johnson in 2015." Johnson is a leader of the Tory's hard-Brexit wing, former foreign secretary and expected future leadership contender.

Other comments included, "turf all Muslims out of public office." Another wanted to "get rid of all mosques," agreeing that "no Pakistani should become prime minister." Another read, "A practicing Muslim should not be allowed to work in any of the emergency professions." "No Muslim will get my vote," read one post and another, "stand against

the Islamification of our country.” A vote cast for Home Secretary Sajid Javid would be a vote for “Islam to lead this country,” wrote another.

Most sinister of all, one post in the group showed a map where all mosques are situated in the UK, eliciting several racist responses including, “[W]e’re just letting the takeover happen.”

Brenton’s Tarrant’s massacre in Christchurch was followed by a number of attacks on mosques in the UK. In 2017, the fascist Darren Osborne drove a van into Muslim worshippers outside London’s Finsbury Park Mosque that left one dead and 10 injured.

Racist views pervade the highest echelons of the party. Conservative MP for Harrow East, Bob Blackman, posted an article on Facebook last year with the inflammatory header “Muslim Somali sex gang say raping white British children ‘part of their culture.’” He invited Indian anti-Muslim Hindu politician Tapan Ghosh to Parliament last year. While in Britain, Ghosh met with Tommy Robinson, the far-right ex-leader of the English Defence League (EDL).

The leader of Swale Borough Council, Andrew Bowles, found himself suspended after sharing a post defending Robinson as a patriot. He was fully reinstated after just 13 days. Solihull Borough Councillor Jeff Potts was also readmitted after his suspension last September for tweeting that all Muslims should face deportation, otherwise they would “kill innocent people for generations to come.”

Another reinstated councillor is Mike Payne from Calderdale, who posted, “France slashed benefits to Muslim parasites.”

A Conservative candidate for Hounslow council, Peter Lamb, was forced to resign, though his initial suspension was lifted, after tweeting in 2015, “Islam is like alcoholism. The first step to recovery is to admit you have a problem.”

The Muslim Council of Britain has been calling since 2016 for the Conservatives to hold an inquiry into Islamophobia in the party, the scale of which they describe as “astonishing.” The Council told VICE that “racists clearly feel emboldened by Boris Johnson’s Islamophobic comments.”

Last Summer, Johnson was denounced for “dog-whistle” Islamophobia by Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, a former Conservative chair and the UK’s first Muslim cabinet minister, after he compared Muslim women in burqas to “letterboxes” and “bank robbers.”

Warsi has accused her party of “institutional” anti-Muslim behaviour and “turning a blind eye” to prejudice. She has demanded an inquiry into Islamophobia in the party for three years.

While trying to downplay evidence of widespread racism within the party, *ConservativeHome* editor Paul Goodman was forced to acknowledge that it “has a Tommy Robinson

tendency.” However, the site, owned by former deputy chairman of the Conservative Party Lord Ashcroft, is itself littered with Islamophobic comments.

The VICE website reported that one posting on the site likened the burqa to “SS uniforms” and raised the need “to eradicate the cancer of Islam” and “Middle Eastern cultures.” Another wrote, “People like the EDL want to protect English communities from the very apparent depredations of Muslim grooming gangs and other predatory behaviour.” Another asked, “Do we English wish to be integrated with the foreign populations colonising, displacing and replacing Us?”

The Conservative Party has a long history of whipping up racism in a divide-and-conquer strategy to legitimise its policies of austerity, militarism and war.

Since 2002, 63 people belonging to the “Windrush generation” of West Indian migrants residing legally in the UK have been snatched from their homes and deported illegally.

For a month in mid-2013, the Home Office sent vans into six London boroughs with high immigrant populations plastered with the slogans: “In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest.” May launched this policy as home secretary in the Cameron-led Tory government.

In January 1978, Tory Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher made the infamous statement that “people are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture.” In 2014, then Conservative Defence Secretary Michael Fallon repeated Thatcher’s words, declaring that towns in Britain are being “swamped” by immigrants. They were “under siege [with] large numbers of migrant workers and people claiming benefits.”

The postings uncovered from only a small number of the many pro-Conservative social media pages must be taken together with the innumerable comments posted in pro-Tory newspapers as proof that Britain’s ruling party is a hotbed of fascist reaction. While fascism does not yet have a mass social base, a rabid, fascistic layer is being deliberately nurtured and encouraged by the Conservatives, as with other bourgeois parties internationally, as they move to more authoritarian forms of rule and make ready the forces who will be used to combat a resurgent movement of the working class.



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