

Leading British Conservative calls for dictatorship and national government with Starmer

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Conservative Home featured an article Monday, “Who controls the streets?”, by editor Paul Goodman, demanding that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak carry out a ruthless crackdown on popular opposition to Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza.

The Times then republished the comment by the former Tory MP and comment editor at the *Daily Telegraph* at the top of its online edition Tuesday morning under the title, “The Gaza conflict could come to Britain—Sunak should be prepared.”

Goodman makes an explicit call for dictatorial rule. He writes that “In our democracy, power is dispersed. Ministers don’t ban marches, launch prosecutions, run football or fully control the civil service,” describing this “dissemination of power” and “a good thing, at least when the country is at peace — protecting citizens and institutions from ministerial overreach and tyrannical government.

He continues, “However, it is less of a good thing when the country faces war abroad or insurrection here. The second is threatened if a terrorist organisation, banned by law, has tens of thousands of supporters (at least), and takes to the streets.”

This is how Goodman refers to the over 150,000 people who demonstrated against the assault on Gaza last Saturday in London, and tens of thousands elsewhere throughout the UK, expressing the sentiment of millions more.

His planned crackdown is justified with slanders that protesters were registering their “support for terror” and legitimising “torture, rape and murder.” “ Hamas is bidding for control of public space in order to dictate the terms of government policy,” he declares, asking, “Who controls the streets? The mob or the

authorities?”

The government has already deployed thousands of police officers to intimidate protesters, threatened them with prosecution, arrested dozens and issued Public Order directives prohibiting demonstrations in areas of London. But this is not enough for Goodman: “Rishi Sunak’s immediate priority must be to ensure that the authorities control the streets and are seen to do so. Suella Braverman tells extremists that ‘the police are coming for you’. Really? How many arrests have there been? How many have been charged? How many people are the [Crown Prosecution Service] preparing to prosecute for supporting Hamas on social media?”

As a starting point, he suggests, Sunak should “weigh up the arguments for and against banning Middle East-related marches altogether—along the lines of France and Germany ... Some universities need reminding of their duty to ensure student safety.” He should also “refresh Prevent, the counter-extremism plan, and Contest, its counter-terror strategy. This will entail it getting a grip on the civil service.”

Goodman cut his teeth politically during former Tory Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s war on “the Enemy Within”—striking miners and the wider working class—as Chairman of the Federation of Conservative Students in 1983-84. He then involved himself in her war against Irish republicans as a researcher for two years to Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Tom King.

But Goodman is no outlier. As the *Times*’ publication confirms, his column is the clearest exposition of a broad swathe of opinion in the ruling class in Britain—on display in the parliamentary debate on Israel-Palestine on Monday—and internationally, where

protests have been banned and brutalised.

Later Tuesday, Chief Executive of the Community Security Trust (CST) Mark Gardner revealed details of a meeting held with Sunak, Braverman and the Attorney General Victoria Prentis in which the government made clear the police's "rules of engagement" with pro-Palestinian protests, for which "the red lines have shifted." The CST is a Zionist group working in close concert with the UK and Israeli governments, with three police officers, including a counter-terror officer, embedded at its headquarters.

On Monday, Sunak pledged another £3 million in government funding to the organisation, following a £14 million payment in 2020. Gardner commented, "The police are already making arrests that would not have occurred two weeks ago ... When people now express support for Palestinian resistance, that is in the context of support for Hamas, terrorism."

Sir Keir Starmer's Labour Party is fully on board, backing Israel's war and Tory repression to the hilt, and may yet have a bigger role to play. In the conclusion to his diatribe, Goodman advises that Sunak must strengthen the government to meet the threat of mass popular resistance, initially by a cabinet reshuffle, "in the event of a deterioration in public order, that prioritises experience, departmental experience and grip... He may even need to call in Sir Keir Starmer to show a united front. James Cleverly and David Lammy are already on the case."

Goodman references Tory Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary David Lammy's televised embrace in the *Sky News* newsroom, after a discussion on the situation in Israel-Palestine. Sky's political correspondent Sam Coates called it "the embrace that speaks to the cross-party political consensus."

The "consensus" between the Tories and Labour represents a deepening conspiracy within ruling circles against the working class. It is already apparent in Starmer's unanimity with the Tories on every major issue—not only the imposition of savage austerity and the privatisation of the National Health Service, but above all the support of "the party of NATO" for waging war against Russia in Ukraine and now backing Israel's genocidal assault on the Palestinians and the accompanying US military buildup against Iran.

For the past year, Labour has worked with the trade

union bureaucracy to sabotage and betray a strike wave involving around two million workers including on the rail and in the post, education and the NHS. The union leaders encouraged hopes in the election of a Labour government next year to replace a hated and steadily collapsing Tory government. But Goodman's suggestion of a national government is just as realistic, given the inevitability of social explosions in the coming period in which mass opposition to war will fuel an intensification of the class struggle.

He writes, "Think next about where events are going. Sooner rather than later, Israel will send ground troops into Gaza. Civilian casualties will climb. Innocents will die—and terrorists. Hezbollah may open a second front. The West Bank could rise. Iran and America may be drawn in. There are implications for Ukraine, the world economy, and geopolitics."

As in the 1930s, the rapid acceleration of trade and military war is inevitably accompanied by the strengthening of far-right tendencies in the ruling class. There is a fascist stench emanating from the Tory Party, but also within Keir "Country First, Party Second" Starmer's Labour Party.

To defend the Palestinians from genocide and stop the spread of militarism throughout the world, the working class must wage an irreconcilable industrial and political struggle against the unified Tory-Labour party. The fight to stop the Israeli assault means a socialist struggle against imperialist war and dictatorship.



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