

UK Tory Deputy Chairman refuses to apologise for anti-Muslim diatribe

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The rampant anti-immigration agenda and Islamophobia of Britain's ruling Conservatives is spewing forth uncontrollably.

Last week, Tory deputy chairman Lee Anderson said of Sadiq Khan, the Labour Party mayor of London, who is Muslim, in an interview with right-wing outlet GB News, "I don't actually believe that these Islamists have got control of our country, but what I do believe is they've got control of Khan and they've got control of London... He's actually given our capital city away to his mates."

Anderson's outburst came during a discussion on a *Daily Telegraph* article by former Home Secretary Suella Braverman, who has made a rabidly anti-immigration stance the basis for an expected leadership challenge to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, in which she declared, "The truth is that the Islamists, the extremists and the antisemites are in charge now".

The Tory Party was thrown into crisis, with Sunak forced to remove the party whip from Anderson. However, given the widespread support for Anderson, a leading Brexiteer, among Tory MPs and in the party ranks, Sunak was careful not go too far—stating only that his comments were "wrong, unacceptable and ill-judged".

"I don't believe Lee is a racist or Islamophobic person, but the comments were wrong," he said. On Tuesday, Michael Tomlinson, the Minister of State for Illegal Migration, also said only that Anderson's comments were "wrong", but failed six times to say why when questioned by LBC Radio's Nick Ferrari. Ferrari asked, "Let's try this a different way, was it Islamophobic?" and was given the same answer. Ferrari terminated the interview because Tomlinson was "unable to answer a question."

Meanwhile another Tory MP, Paul Scully, declared that there were "no-go areas" in London and Birmingham, both cities with a significant Muslim population.

Anderson has repeatedly refused to apologise for the

comments, stating that he has been deluged by support from dozens of Tory MPs and by constituents in Ashfield, a former "Red Wall" Brexit-supporting area in the north of England.

His comments about losing control of the capital's streets are a central element of the government's clampdown on the massive protests which have been held in London over the last four months in opposition to Israel's genocidal destruction of Gaza.

Defending his position on Tuesday, Anderson told *Channel 4 News*, "Who's controlling the streets at the moment in London? We see, every Wednesday night, it's almost a weekly occurrence now, Parliament Square is taken over by a mob of extremists who are shining disgusting projections onto Big Ben, 'from the river to the sea'.

"We've seen it time and time again now. It's disgusting, it's hateful, it's inciting hatred. So when I call these people out, remember that the Mayor of London is responsible for the policing of our great city."

Anderson has threatened to defect to the far-right Reform UK party unless the Tory whip is restored. GB News has reported that on Sunday, 24 hours after losing the whip, Anderson met with Richard Tice, the leader of Reform, which is the latest incarnation of Nigel Farage's Brexit Party.

In all essentials, Reform is an external faction of the Tories. Farage emerged out of the party's anti-European faction and his various political vehicles before Reform—the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the Brexit Party—focused on pushing Tory policy to the right, centred on an anti-immigration agenda.

With an election to be held later this year, Reform is polling at around 10 percent.

The extent of the support within the Tory Party for Anderson's position was made clear in a poll published of 528 Conservative members, which found that 58 percent

believe Islam “is a threat to the British way of life”. Over half supported the view that “Parts of many European cities are under the control of Sharia Law and are ‘no-go’ zones for non-Muslims”.

This is the constituency that is fed a diet of constant anti-migrant and anti-Muslim propaganda by many of the UK’s national newspapers. Among these are the *Daily Express*, which ran a front-page Monday on the growing number of senior Tories backing Anderson with the banner headline, “Get him Back!”

Anderson gave an interview to the newspaper last year, as the Tories stepped up their fascistic campaign against migrants by forcing a group of refugees aboard a disease-ridden barge. He told the *Express*, “If they don’t like barges then they should f***k off back to France.”

Former Tory leader and short-lived Prime Minister Liz Truss spoke at the weekend alongside Farage at the pro-Donald Trump Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Maryland, United States. Asked by the fascist Steve Bannon about the danger of an “Islamic party” gaining seats in Britain’s parliament, Truss replied, “There’s going to be a by-election... and it could be a radical Islamic party win in that by-election.” This was in reference to the potential victory of George Galloway, who is standing in the Rochdale by-election being held on Thursday. Rochdale has a large Muslim population.

Sadiq Khan described Anderson’s diatribe as “Islamophobic, anti-Muslim and racist”, while Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer told the *Observer*, “It’s right that Lee Anderson has lost the whip after this appalling racist and Islamophobic outburst... Rishi Sunak needs to get a grip and take on the extremists in his party.”

The level of hypocrisy is staggering. Sunak, Anderson, Braverman and their ilk constantly demand more repressive anti-migrant policies, spearheaded by a filthy “Stop the Boats” campaign aimed at preventing refugees and asylum seekers—mainly from Muslim countries destroyed by imperialist wars including Iraq and Afghanistan—from reaching Britain, and deporting those who do to Rwanda.

But Labour’s differences with the government are only tactical, centred on calls to collaborate more closely with France and complaints that the Rwanda policy is an expensive and inefficient gimmick diverting the resources needed to really seal Britain’s borders.

Anderson’s journey into the far-right political sewer started out in the Labour Party. He was a longtime Labour member and councillor for the party. Formerly a miner in

the Nottinghamshire coalfield, including during the 1984-85 strike, he was elected for Labour onto Ashfield District Council in 2015. He quit to join the Tories in 2018, complaining that it had “been taken over by the hard-left” under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn.

The Blairite right represented by Starmer championed, along with the Tories and intelligence agencies, the “left antisemitism” witch-hunt targeting Corbyn and his supporters for their anti-Zionist stand. This slander campaign, which Corbyn adapted himself to, is still in full swing and is directed by Labour in particular at the Gaza genocide protests. Denunciations and arrests of left activists are accompanied by anti-Muslim rhetoric essentially no different from Anderson’s—describing peaceful protest marches and demonstrations against pro-Israeli MPs as akin to “terrorism”.

The days leading up to Anderson’s comments were dominated by an expected parliamentary vote on a Scottish National Party opposition day motion calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The vote on the motion, which would have been backed by a significant number of MPs worried about their political future, was scuppered by the Speaker of the House, Sir Lindsay Hoyle. He agreed, against protocol, that a Labour motion would also be heard alongside those of the SNP and the government.

Hoyle, a former Labour MP, did so after a discussion with Starmer to save him from an embarrassing rebellion. But he defended his actions afterwards by recounting how Starmer had told him that if Labour’s motion—making a weaker ceasefire conditional on Israel’s agreement—was not heard then its MPs faced physical threats, including being murdered, and parliament itself was under threat from “extremist” Muslims.

In the latest twist on this narrative, the *Guardian* reported Wednesday that “Khan has been receiving police protection, usually reserved for a handful of senior cabinet ministers or royals, since 2017. A source with knowledge of the security arrangements said that as well as currently facing threats of violence from the extreme far right, Khan also faces threats from Islamist extremists.”



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