

Unintended Ironies: Condemning the Armistice Day Marches

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Armistice Day is one of those disturbing occasions of the year when humanity's folly is laid bare. It should be an occasion to remind said humanity about the stupid waste occasioned by war and its war-crazed planners who generally elude the dock; instead, it's an occasion to extol its virtues and remind the reactionaries that war can be a mighty fine thing to pursue in the name of an ideology, cock-eyed belief or a sense of self-worth. Unquestioning solemnity, medals and tears are the order of the day, the ritualistic plat du jour.

These occasions are never challenged, nor impugned. The origins of the war that gave name to the occasion are simplified, if they are ever mentioned. And never shall that injunction be violated. That is certainly the view of Suella Braverman, the UK Home Secretary who must be increasingly getting under the skin of the British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak.

Being a cut and dried jingo, Braverman treats Armistice Day as the sort of occasion to be revered and kept in aspic. No politics should ever enter unless she politicises it, nor criticism about war and its viciousness be permitted. Peaceniks are especially reviled. Remember debts and lost lives; never ask why those debts were incurred in the first place.

There is then a supreme irony in terms of Braverman's views on peace protests that take place on Armistice Day, one which, by definition, involved the laying down of arms and the cessation of conflict. But that is the lot of the war loving demagogue in search of votes: irony is rarely acknowledged.

In a throat grabbing exercise of some ferocity against the vast sea of protests against the Israel-Hamas War, Braverman took to *The Times* [to attack marches](#) running into the hundreds of thousands as an unquestioned "assertion of primacy by certain groups - particular Islamists". She was particularly beside herself that they should take place on, of all days, November 11.

For the Home Secretary, these were unquestionably “hate” marches that would be more commonly associated with the lusty sectarians of Northern Ireland. Even worse were those selective senior officers in the Metropolitan Police picking favourites when it came to protests. “Right-wing and nationalist protestors who engage in aggression are rightly met with a stern response yet pro-Palestinian mobs displaying almost identical behaviour are largely ignored, even when clearly breaking the law?” By the time Braverman had finished her bulldozing, she had insulted the whole constituency of Northern Ireland, mocked those favouring the Palestinian cause for freedom, and lacerated the operational independence of London’s own police forces.

The sense about Braverman making her own unilateral dash in all of this was confirmed by a spokesperson for Sunak. The article, we are told, was not “cleared” by Number 10 ahead of time. Editorial suggestions made by the PM’s office were roundly ignored. As for the Saturday protest, Sunak had met the Met Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley ahead of time to discuss security regarding the march. Neither thought it problematic that it should take place, given that the protests would avoid the Whitehall area and stay away from The Cenotaph, where the customary, holy delusions were to take place.

Her views have certainly struck a satisfactory note for some, suggesting that such feigned outrage might have some political weight among the spectral majority populists always love screeching about.

“In her comments about the pro-Palestinian Armistice Day protests and the actions of the police, Suella Braverman, the Home Secretary, was bravely stating what the majority of the country thinks,” [wrote](#) one reader of *The Daily Telegraph*.

The Daily Mail [agreed](#), expressing fury at the “soft policing of these protests” packed with “snarling bigots” contemptuous of Britain’s glorious history of war. Tory deputy chair Lee Anderson affirmed the position, claiming the Home Secretary was merely “guilty of saying what most of us are thinking”.

These were certainly not the views shared by a number of Conservatives. Lord Soames, for one, [opined](#) that, whether in agreement or not with the pro-Palestinian protests, they should go ahead.

“It’s nowhere near the Cenotaph. It’s in the afternoon and most of these people, 90% of those people are not there to make trouble.”

Ex-cabinet minister Baroness Warsi firmly [insisted](#) that Braverman be sacked.

“She’d been briefed by the Met of what the route of the march was going to be, and the fact that they didn’t have concerns at this stage, she has now made this a live political issue because that’s the way she operates, right?”

As a result, patriots had turned into arsonists.

“They set this country alight, they pit community against community, they create these fires. And that is not the job of a government.”

Dominic Grieve, who served as attorney general between 2010 and 2014, had one [line of advice](#) for Sunak:

“The best thing the Prime Minister can do for us is to ensure that there is a new home secretary (before Sunday).”

That she remains in office suggests not just Sunak’s absence of backbone, but Braverman’s imminent bid for his job. To now sack her would be something the newly minted martyr would be able to dine out on for months to come, all the time plotting for a Number 10 bid.

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