

## The Tories are fascism in progress

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In the midst of Partygate and all that goes with it the possibility that the continuing passage of the [Public Order Bill](#) now before the Commons.

As Caroline Lucas said of the Bill during the Second Reading debate this week:

*This is a deeply dangerous Bill, and I am pleased to support the reasoned amendments. The measures in the Bill represent a fresh outright attack on our fundamental rights. Indeed, as others have said, the human rights organisation Liberty has called it a “staggering escalation of the Government’s clampdown on dissent.”*

*We are in the grip of multiple crises: a cost of living scandal that is pushing millions of households into fuel and food poverty; a war in Ukraine with disastrous consequences; and the accelerating climate and nature emergencies. What we need at this critical juncture is more democracy, not less—not a ban on our constituents participating in certain protests, not subjecting them to 24-hour GPS monitoring for the crime of disagreeing with the Government, and not barring them from participation in public life.*

I agree with Caroline, and many Labour opponents including Yvette Cooper, of whom Priti Patel is clearly terrified. This is a Bill intended to restrict our right to protest and to free speech still further. The penalties are draconian. It will, in effect, be a crime to express dissent with the government in a peaceful fashion.

This is what the issues with the Tories really is. Partygate reveals their contempt for the law. What this Bill reveals is their contempt for political freedom. And that means they are fascism in progress.