Twitter Thread by Helen Pluckrose



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Here is the full document. I am going to go through it now.

Yep. This is also a point strongly made in @andrewdoyle_com's new book on Free Speech which I am halfway through and am pretty sure I will be recommending as a primer for the alarming number of people who seem confused about what free speech is & why it is good.

Well, good! Conservatives have not been great at this historically so I must give credit where it is due. I really wish this were a left-wing government taking this progressive stance.

(Areo has a piece forthcoming on why supporting FoS is inherently progressive, btw)

Yes, sadly this is true. I currently have half a dozen cases where people are being penalised for trying to express unorthodox views in the academy.

However, I should also say that one case in which I helped a student prepare for an ethical review when she had already been made aware her views were problematic (she wanted to treat people as individuals) was a resounding success & she passed it. So there is still hope.

Yes, there are appropriate and inappropriate repercussions for expressing ideas. Being thought an idiot or contemptible = fine. Being harassed, intimidated, penalised or fired = unacceptable.

Yep, I recommend yet again that you all read Jonathan Rauch's Kindly Inquisitors. If you remain unconvinced that freedom of speech is the best protection for minorities after this, I will despair of you. Unless you have a better argument, of course. Not seen one yet.

Important distinction. It's why we must allow CSJ ideas to be expressed without intimidation too. It's the only way to beat them. But they must submit themselves to the marketplace of ideas and accept legitimate disagreement is possible & not a moral failing or wilful blindness

Hmmm. I think Student Unions must be able to be political but they shouldn't be able to enforce only one political view and ban all the others.

This is sensible but it relies upon a reasonable interpretation of "likely to stir up hatred." I remember Maryam Namazie being accused of this for criticising Islamism which is surely an argument that must be able to be made.

Yes, emboldening the majority to speak out in defence of freedom of speech is a primary aim of @Counter_Weight_

Well, yes, radical feminists get deplatformed & disinvited now for being "TERFs" & they are usually pretty far left. Also Maryam Namazie as mentioned above & she's a communist. Also me & I'm a liberal leftie. This isn't a straightforward left vs right issue.

Yes, we need to create a culture that actively recognises freedom of belief and speech not only as a vital individual right but as a way to advance knowledge & make moral progress. It's what universities are FOR.

This free speech champion needs to be politically neutral or, as this is practically impossible, for there to be a board of them with diverse viewpoints.

I agree with this. I may actually be dealing with a case of this right now although I need more information to be sure the student was failed for disagreeing with the orthodoxy. If so, we shall go to bat for her.

I was disinvited from a Decolonise STEM symposium because I intended to argue that saying that STEM is a white way of thinking is actually a bit racist. This view of mine endangered the safety of other attendees, apparently. I wasn't a 'visiting speaker' though.

This all seems very reasonable and to acknowledge the right to deny a platform to people whose speech incites violence either directly or by being incendiary. (This doesn't include things like believing 'woman' to be a biological category, CSJ activists)

Yes, good. People must oppose speech with speech, not with violence or intimidation or by drowning it out. FFS, stop making me approve of Conservative plans, alleged lefties. This is what we should be protecting.