Twitter Thread by Justin Schlosberg



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journalism and free speech:

Like all news outlets, The Canary produces good and bad journalism. The same can be said of the Guardian, BBC and even the Daily Mail...

I don't agree with some of its editorial positions and at times I find some of the reporting over simplistic. But it also does extremely rigorous, well-sourced and informative analysis that addresses issues often overlooked by mainstream press (cf its reporting on Venezuela)...

What is relatively unique is the degree to which The Canary has been attacked by the left, centre and right. This is partly because of a perception that it has challenged the reach of mainstream media, especially on social media...

Though it's short history is a relative success story among news start ups, the notion that it competes on any level with either the audience reach or agenda influence of mainstream media is a constructed myth...

a myth that serves to obscure the enduring grip of national press and broadcasters over the public consciousness, and absolve policymakers of the need to address this...

As regards journalistic ethics: Unlike any of the national press, the Canary is overseen by IMPRESS, a regulator recognised as genuinely independent under the terms of Royal Charter set up by cross-party agreement and based on the recommendations of the Leveson Inquiry...

In the last three years, IMPRESS has upheld one complaint against the Canary and partially upheld another. By contrast, @JewishChron has been found in breach of the IPSO code on no less than 7 occasions over a similar time period...

As for allegations of antisemitism, both the Canary and its editor have, at times, used language around Zionism that I find both disagreeable and liable to cause legitimate offence. THAT DOES NOT MAKE THEM ANTISEMITIC...

Like Jackie Walker, Kerry-Anne Mendoza has chosen to share her life with someone who is Jewish and proudly affirms their Jewish identity. I find the allegation of antisemitism absurd, grotesque and deeply damaging to the fight against real antisemitism...

Propaganda lesson 101 is always to repeat falsehoods enough times that they become established 'truths'. In 2017 the dominant narrative about Corbyn and antisemitism was well in train, but by 2019 it was beyond question. The next trick is to assign guilt by association...

Anyone who defends, shares a platform with or even likes the same tweets as someone labelled 'antisemitic' becomes 'part of the problem'...

The logical end point is obvious and not far off: eventually it embroils all those who identify as socialist and support Palestinian rights by definition...

But here's the thing: those who react to this repression with deliberate provocation too easily fall into the trap of providing ammunition to that repression...

Knowingly or not, they adopt a certain discourse around Zionism that CAN be legitimately construed as antisemitic or at least offensive to those who support both Palestinian rights and Jewish self-determination, and believe the two are not incompatible (Chomsky among them)...

That is why it's so important that we take care both in our language and in the way we respond to others...

In particular, the left should think very carefully before joining in the clamour of labelling organisations like the Canary or individuals like Kerry-Anne Mendoza as 'antisemitic', or adopting its close variants like 'Jew-baiter' or 'antisemitism denier'...

We should equally avoid dismissing people who voted leave as racist, or transgender rights activists as misogynists, or feminists as transphones, etc etc...

To do so is to reinforce and amplify the wave of repression and full spectrum assault on free speech, of which the current attacks on The Canary and its editor are a perfect illustration.