

The PC Police Go After Hand-Clapping

The student union at the University of Manchester (UK) has [banned clapping](#) at its meetings, “on the basis that the loud noise may be a problem for those with sensory issues”. Whooping is also under a ban, to be substituted by “jazz hands” – waving hands in the air, the British sign language expression for applause, is to be deemed a more inclusive gesture.

Given the reputation of today’s student unions for their disapproval of any views with which they disagree, there will not be much to clap about anyway. “Last year it emerged that Oxford University’s equality and diversity unit had issued guidance to students advising them that those who avoided making eye contact with their peers could be guilty of racism”.

Glasgow University has issued trigger warnings for “theology students studying the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, whereby students would be told in advance that they may see distressing images and would be given the opportunity to leave the room.”

Sarah Khan, Manchester University’s interestingly-named “liberation and access officer” – who, one would have thought, would be busier liberating students from this madness than ushering them in – believes that traditional applause is not sufficiently “accessible”. Apart from banning clapping and urging other student groups and societies to follow suit, the student union plans to make jazz hands part of inclusion training for new students.’

Predictably, the move has been seen as “typical of an over-sensitive ‘snowflake generation’ of students who are quick to

take offence". But far from an indication of the timid nature of young people, it is simply yet more evidence of the frightening aggressiveness of the current crop of student leaders, intolerant in their insistence on tolerance, exclusionary in the zeal for inclusion. They are simply weaponising what they see as the wrongs suffered by various minority groups and using them to silence opposition. In British universities, increasingly, debate is out, censorship is in.

Even more frightening is the likelihood that the student leaders of today will be the politicians of tomorrow – they will probably make clapping a hate crime and disagreement a hanging offence. They will make Opposition Leader Jeremy Corbyn and his grassroots political movement Momentum look as peaceable as Quakers – and that is nothing to cheer about, silently or otherwise.

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