

Liberals Who Hate Free Speech

By now we know about those holier than thou campus mobs who fit into the category of liberals who hate free speech.

Actually, that's a tad over the top, a little unfair. They're not thugs fighting against *all* free speech – only the speech they don't agree with.

They are intolerant only of views they find, well, intolerant. And that, at least as they see it, gives them the right to shout down speakers and demand the dismissal of professors whose views they find morally unacceptable.

These are the same people who are all for allowing Nazis to march through Jewish neighborhoods in the name of free speech – a stance I support too, by the way. But they won't let thoughtful conservatives like Charles Murray or Ben Shapiro or even a firebrand like Ann Coulter speak – because in the view of the sanctimonious left, these are hatemongers who have forfeited their rights to free speech.

And hard left progressives here in the United States don't have a monopoly on this kind of self-righteous thinking. A columnist for the Guardian in London, Nesrine Malik, has come to the conclusion that, "Freedom of speech is no longer a value. It has become a loophole exploited with impunity by trolls, racists and ethnic cleansing advocates."

And here's how Claire Fox, the director of the [Academy of Ideas](#), a libertarian think-tank, in London responded to her fellow Brit in a brilliant 2018 piece in the Economist:

That kind of thinking "tells us far more about the smug, closed-minded certainty of illiberal liberals than those they look down on. In fact, liberals will only become liberal again once they abandon this type of sneering and smearing and recognize that free speech – even for those we despise – is

the core liberal project. Without it, the much feared (often exaggerated) rise of the far-right won't be the biggest threat to our freedoms. Instead, illiberalism, in the name of liberalism, will be the PC midwife of authoritarianism."

Yes, liberals – far too many of them – have forgotten how to be liberal. They have become the despots they supposedly despise. They are the modern day enemies of free speech. Which brings us to a certain liberal anti-free speech mindset at (of all places) CNN.

Not long ago, one of the network's big name correspondents, Christiane Amanpour interviewed former FBI chief James Comey and noted that "Of course, 'lock her up!' was a feature of the 2016 Trump campaign," before asking Comey a question quite remarkable coming from a journalist.

"Do you, in retrospect, wish that people like yourself, the head of the FBI, I mean the people in charge of law and order had shut down that language – that it was dangerous potentially, that it could have created violence, that it's kind of hate speech – should that have been allowed?"

Journalists usually try to hide their liberal biases. Not Christiane. Maybe we can if not excuse, at least understand the hostility of college progressives to the value of free speech; they're sensitive little hothouse flowers after all. But a seasoned journalist asking the former head of the FBI if he regrets not *shutting down* political speech Ms. Amanpour finds offensive – is what really is offensive.

Here's Mr. Comey's response: "That's not a role for government to play."

You'd think a journalist would know that.

"The beauty of this country is people can say what they want even if it's misleading and it's demagoguery," he continued to inform the Ms. Amanpour.

You'd think a journalist would know that too.

Alas, Christiane Amanpour is not the only one at CNN who thinks it might be a good idea to "shut down" *unpopular* speech.

After Donald Trump kicked off his reelection campaign at a rally in Orlando, Don Lemon commented on the speech to fellow CNN anchor Chris Cuomo.

"But think about the despicable people we've had in history," Lemon said. "OK? Now I'm going to use an extreme example. Think about Hitler. Think about any of those people. Would you say that that person is allowed – or let's put it this way? If you could look back on in history would you say well, I'm so glad that that person was allowed a platform so that they could spread their hate and propaganda and lies? Or would [you] say it probably wasn't the right thing to do to spread that because you knew in the moment that that was a bad person. And they were doing bad things. Not only were they hurting people. They were killing people."

Of course, Lemon issued the mandatory *I'm not comparing Donald Trump to Hitler* disclaimer – which is precisely what he was doing. But here's a supposed newsman, an anchor employed by a worldwide news organization, suggesting that CNN should not cover the president of the United States making a speech – because Don Lemon thinks Mr. Trump was spewing hate, not unlike the hate that Hitler spewed many years ago.

Don Lemon is free to respond to the president almost any way he wants. He can point out the statements the president made that weren't true; he can give counter arguments to the statements that were true; he can even mock the president if that's what he wants to do. But none of that is good enough for Don Lemon. He doesn't want to give the president a platform to spread a message Don Lemon doesn't approve of.

It's too bad that this isn't only about Don Lemon or

Christiane Amanpour or the PC cops on college campuses. It's much bigger than a few self-important *sophisticates* who don't understand the real meaning, and value, of free speech in a free country.

The real danger is that there are many more just like them, so-called progressives who would, if they could get away with it, put a stake in the heart of free speech; who would shut down opinions that get in the way of their supposedly noble idea of how things ought to be.

As Claire Fox put it "Today's so-called progressive liberals are often intolerant, calling for official censure against anyone perceived as uttering non-progressive views."

They are the authoritarians who believe in free speech for me, as the old saying goes, but not for thee. They are smug and intolerant and worst of all, they're proud of it. God help us if they ever amass enough power to make their *virtuous* dreams come true.