

TRANSADVOCATE

McCarthyistic Trannies and Golden Cis Tears

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Abstract

[su_maedtop] “Are you now or have you ever been a TERF?” screams the title of the latest missive from the NewStatesman. The implication of the headline is that trans people are silencing through McCarthyistic tactics. The definition of McCarthyism: 1. the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, especially of pro-Communist activity, in many instances unsupported by [...]

Article



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“Are you now or have you ever been a TERF?” screams the title of the latest missive from the NewStatesman. The implication of the headline is that trans people are silencing through McCarthyistic tactics.

The definition of McCarthyism:

1. the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, especially of pro-Communist activity, in many

instances unsupported by proof or based on slight, doubtful, or irrelevant evidence.

2. the practice of making unfair allegations or using unfair investigative techniques, especially in order to restrict dissent or political criticism.

McCarthyism is named after Joseph Raymond “Joe” McCarthy. He was a Republican U.S. Senator who leads the Tydings Committee (which was a subcommittee of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations). These hearings were the pinnacle of the Communist “Red Scare” of the 1950s.

Comparing the actions of a white, cisgender, Republican Senator of the 1950’s to trans women of 2015 is ludicrous. Natasha Kennedy of Uncommon Sense says it best:

“Of course one also has to take account of the issue of power imbalances. People who can get letters in national newspapers complaining about free speech do not seem, from where I am standing, to be suffering from a big problem with being heard. This is not the case for the majority of trans people.”

There aren’t hearings led Congressional/MP trans women. We don’t have a lot of voices in academia or in the media. But we should stop speaking out against those want to debate our existence, lest we make our cis “allies” cry. Literally:

“Last night I went to bed wanting to weep.. OK a rather minor discomfort given what other people suffer for their gender, but pointless and counterproductive. It wasn’t the force of any remark, it was the relentless pummeling of attack on the basis of extraordinary loaded, sometimes quite wrong, readings of the letter. Cumulative harassment is what it felt like, though I am sure it wasn’t meant that way.”

The letter she’s referring to is a letter that 129 people have signed claiming that transgender advocates are “no platforming”/censoring people who disagree with them. The evil, powerful transgender people are apparently terrorizing (by terrorism, I mean disagreeing with) the signers.

“The gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell has been ‘unable to sleep’ and the Cambridge Classics professor Mary Beard was left ‘wanting to cry’ after a letter they co-wrote supporting freedom of speech unleashed a torrent of abuse from supporters of transgender rights.”

“The falling out came after the pair signed a letter with 129 others, warning about ‘a worrying pattern of intimidation and silencing of individuals whose views are deemed ‘transphobic’.”

“The signatories insist their only intention was to support freedom of speech in universities, which would allow the anti-transgender views that they both oppose to be defeated in debate.”

Sarah Brown has done a great job of countering the signer’s claims of free speech silencing and proven that trans people were simply exercising their own free speech. Twitter is full of abusive tweets on both sides of any issue, but that’s a problem with Twitter, not transgender people. Cheryl Morgan puts it into perspective:

“In addition, prominent trans activists will have been targeted with abusive tweets. That too is part of the way Twitter works. But apparently that doesn’t matter, because it is only the feelings of white, middle-class media celebrities that are important.”

When it comes to personal attacks, I’ve had many launched against me over the past decade of writing

at the Transadvocate. I've had someone attack my partner on Twitter, had MRAs Photoshop/post pictures of me being anally raped, and had Cathy Brennan do this in reference to me:



Figure 1. PicsArt_1424333864096

My tears aren't as valued. The repeated attacks over a decade are no match to Beard's hurt feelings. The constant misgendering from TERFs and obsession with my genitals are not even close to the trauma of disagreement that trans women have expressed to Beard for a few days on Twitter.

Apparently, the "free speech" protections that the signers want to protect, end where transgender people's speech begins. Another signer, Peter Tatchell, applies different standards of speech depending on the persons affected. On February 17th, 2015, concerning transgender people and free speech he said:

"For me, free speech is one of the most precious of all human rights. It is the foundation of a democratic, open society. It should be defended without exception, unless it involves threats, harassment or incitements to violence.

The most effective way to defeat bigoted ideas is not by proscription but by challenging and exposing them - and by presenting better, non-bigoted ideas. That's why I've often accepted invitations to debate homophobes, misogynists, transphobes and anti-Muslim zealots."

But in January 2011 his thoughts seemed to be very different when anti-gay speakers wanted to speak in the UK:

"The Ibis Hotel group should not facilitate speakers who promote homophobic discrimination and violence. They should cancel this booking."

But That isn't alone in his hypocrisy. Signer Sarah Ditum had no problem "no platforming" Julien Blanc in November of 2014. Do we hear calls from Thatchell or Ditum to include trans women on a panel on feminism at the All About Women Festival? No.

The assertion that trans people have a powerful platform that they can silence disagreement through

abuse is simply absurd.

As Owen Jones points out:

Trans people are murdered for who they are: more than 200 were killed across the world last year, with deaths ranging from stoning to being beaten to being burned alive. And then there is mental distress. One survey last year found that a staggering 48% of young trans people had attempted suicide, and 59% had at least considered it. A 2013 study in the US found that trans people are far more likely to suffer from poverty and unemployment, and research in Britain has uncovered similar findings.

As a whole, trans people have very little in terms of political, academic, or financial capital. For many of us, the only thing we do have is our voice, our thoughts, and our bodies, to protest with. I interviewed Sandy Stone some years back and she said that the difference between now and when she was being attacked by TERFs in the 1970s is that we now have our own voice. I don't plan on being quiet, and I hope my trans sisters and brothers don't either.

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