

When Tolerance Fails

Joe Simonson
Editor-in-Chief

I'm confident that many of my fellow students, and maybe even some faculty members, are unfamiliar with the Rotherham child sex abuse scandal. Despite the fact that the mainstream media hasn't given the events the attention they deserve, it's a story that I've followed closely.

The *Spectator* never wrote an editorial or opinion piece commenting on it. The Womyn's Center never organized a panel to discuss the scandal's implications on various communities. No student group or club wrote an email to the entire campus inviting the Hamilton community to weigh in.

In short, from the early 1990's until 2013, at least 1,400 (and more likely thousands) of British working-class children were systematically raped, sexually abused, beaten, and more or less sold into slavery while the local authorities in Rotherham, England turned a blind eye. Why? According to an independent report commissioned by the Rotherham Council, the local authorities did not want to be accused of racism. The perpetrators were mostly members of Pakistani and South Asian gangs who more or less acted with impunity for nearly two decades.

Local police officers originally insisted to the abused girls that the sex had been consensual. Many have accused the local Rotherham social democratic Labour Party of being complicit in the abuse for political reasons. UK Home Secretary Theresa May blamed "institutionalized political correctness" for the horrors. Since the report has been released, there have been mass resignations ranging from the local police commissioner to the posts of Labour Party officials.

Across the political spectrum, many

have agreed that the Rotherham child sex abuse scandal constitutes a collective ideological failure by those who pervert tolerance and multiculturalism into a vulgar religion of sorts. Local officials' inability to separate the crime from the ethnic group of the perpetrators is puzzling and disturbing.

At least two lessons can be learned from these atrocities in England. One, the label or suggestion of racism has become so crippling and damning in some Western communities that individuals would rather allow the most evil and heinous of crimes to occur rather than face accusations of bigotry. Second, many of the most vocal proponents of cultural and racial tolerance need to deeply reflect on the exact goals of their political movement in order to prevent the occurrence of these kinds of offenses in the future.

Racism certainly exists, and the past six years have been a sad testament and reminder of this fact. Unfortunately, critics of these ideologies like me must also always run the disclaimer (for concern about unfair labeling) that we do not believe events like Rotherham are an inevitable conclusion of multiculturalism or tolerance movements. The role of a conservative, however, is to provide a warning and analyze of the roots and genealogy of how these problems occur. With Rotherham, one can understand that even "Progress" needs an outright STOP and not just a yellow light or a "proceed with caution."

In the United States, we're lucky that the complications or failings from progressive ideologies haven't reached the sort of levels seen in Europe. Still, there are a number of bizarre occurrences, particularly in our systems of education and schooling, that merit examination.

Barnard College, a highly selective women's liberal arts school

is considering a revision to its core curriculum by lowering its science and language requirements in favor of a new diversity requirement. Such a proposition more or less argues that preparing young women in a field where we are told they are routinely discriminated against is less important than lecturing them on white privilege, micro-aggressions, and tolerance, as if they aren't being exposed to these concepts in other classrooms. Further, the proponents of this measure seem to believe that being tested on one's understanding of oppressive power structures is more important than actually being able to communicate effectively with members of oppressed communities.

In Seattle, a high school science teacher has developed a lesson plan that somehow manages to simultaneously instruct students on Newtonian physics and privilege. His reasoning? He was just simply "jealous" that only English and history teachers had the opportunity to indoctrinate their pupils. Since we are obliged to tolerate all efforts by tolerant individuals to preach tolerance, Albert Einstein must now take a backseat to Michel Foucault in science classrooms.

Once again, I don't mean to equalize these recent bizarre occurrences in American education with what happened in England. One must keep in mind, however, that they are products of the same phenomenon: the Cult of Tolerance. I need not go any further to discuss what is currently unfolding on our own campus. No ideal, like tolerance, can begin replacing things as sacred one's right to free speech and due process or as simple as one's science education. Still, like all political movements, the fuel propelling it will run out or it will destroy itself in an act of self-immolation. This too shall pass.

Government and "Counter"-Culture

Mike Adamo | *Senior Editor*

Pitchfork.com ran an article a couple weeks ago talking about how great Obamacare is. It included instructions on how to enroll, a link to healthcare.gov, and the cover of that Blink-182 album with the pornographic nurse (Ironic? Not ironic? Who knows!). Any self-respecting "indie" listener should be stoked to read about new music and massive federal bureaucracy all on one website.

Articles like that probably don't seem out of place to most college-aged Americans. By now we're used to seeing partisans of big government pushing their programs as cool and relevant. President Obama's administration

understands that young people are a significant part of his party's constituency, regardless of how supposedly apathetic and disaffected we all are. The question has been how to make the looming apparatus of government seem cool to a demographic that usually rebels against authority in all its forms. The Democrats have done a much better job at it than the Republicans have, but with some perverse results.

The government's vigorous penetration into pop culture can best be seen in the cringe-inducing advertisements for Obamacare. Few can forget the "Pajama Boy" ad that featured an effeminate college-age male wearing thick-rimmed glasses, a plaid onesie, and an unspeakably unsettling smile, all while clutching a cup of cocoa like a baby's bottle. The accompanying text read, "Wear pajamas. Drink hot

chocolate. Talk about getting health insurance.”

Another ad, this one by a non-profit agency, displayed caricatured frat bros with the text, “Brosurance. Keg stands are crazy. Not having health insurance is crazier. Don’t tap into your beer money to cover those medical bills.”

If this is the Democrats’ image of our generation, we should be mindful of it in the next election cycle when the party continues to forcefully insert itself into Millennial culture. In their eyes we’re either the infantile hot chocolate sippers or the chest-thumping frat bros, both of whom can continue their sipping or chugging while the government takes care of everything for them.

This is how the Democrats’ geriatric leaders—Harry Reid, Elizabeth Warren, Hillary Clinton, and others—view college-aged people. Republican leaders are probably the same way, but they’re much more inclined to have the government leave us alone.

Progressives have so thoroughly had their way with Millennial pop culture that websites like Pitchfork.com think it’s cool to publish articles about Obamacare. When you’re on the side of big government, all your countercultural

pretensions vanish. Most college students grew up in such a permissive, individual-oriented environment that they don’t have much to rebel against. Instead of rebelling against the government, they’re rebelling against some guy in Nebraska whose views on gender pronouns aren’t hip enough.

College students are left with this bizarre Frankenstein’s Monster of a culture where on the one hand they want to be independent and rebellious and challenge the mainstream of American thought, and on the other hand they’re the staunchest defenders of a large intrusive government and a rigid orthodoxy of political correctness.

For the most part, a lot of us are more comfortable being the infantile purchasers of government health care that Democrats portray in their advertisements. To suggest things should be any different would be to plunge into the profoundly irritating world of politics. I certainly can sympathize with the desire to leave politics alone. But if there’s anything to learn from government’s creeping intrusion into pop culture, it’s that you can leave politics alone, but politics won’t leave you alone.

New Jersey Gun Laws

Amy Elinski | *Staff Writer*

On November 20, 2014, Gordon Van Gilder was pulled over for a minor traffic violation in New Jersey. When the officer on the scene demanded to search Van Gilder’s car, he informed the officer that he had just purchased an antique flint gun, manufactured in the 1700s, and did not have a license for it yet. Now, Van Gilder, a 72-year-old retired schoolteacher, is looking at a maximum of 10 years in prison for possessing an unlawful handgun. Thanks to the brazenly draconian gun laws in New Jersey, Van Gilder and many others are subjected to felony charges and lengthy prison terms for small violations.

In New Jersey, antique and modern weapons are subjected to the same restrictive gun control laws, unlike in most states where antiques are exempt. Even if the gun is inoperable (as in New Jersey any inoperable gun is classified as antique) or there is no readily available ammunition for the gun, a person must still possess a permit in order to own it. Airsoft and BB guns also fall under the category of handguns under New Jersey law, and are thus subject to the same regulations. New Jersey classifies a handgun as an “air gun, spring gun or pistol or other weapon of a similar nature in which the propelling force is a spring, elastic band, carbon dioxide, compressed or other gas or vapor, air or compressed air, or is ignited by compressed air, and ejecting a bullet or missile smaller than three-eighths of an inch in diameter, with sufficient force to injure a person.” Under New Jersey gun laws, a person could be charged with a third degree felony and sentenced to a mandatory 3.5 years for simply possessing an unlicensed airsoft gun, BB gun, or an inoperable antique,

without possibility of parole until the last six months of their sentence.

This statute dates back to 2008, when New Jersey passed the Graves Act. The Graves Act was put in place to impose harsher penalties on those committing gun-related crimes. The law imposes harsh mandatory minimum sentences on all convicted of gun-related crimes, including first time offenders. Even children convicted under this law for possessing an airsoft gun or BB gun for recreational purposes may be subject to felony charges and mandatory jail time.

New Jersey is host to a series of other asinine gun laws. This past September, Atlantic City outlawed the sale, possession, and use of toy guns that aren’t bright, florescent colors, translucent, or inoperable antiques and film props. Lawmakers claimed that this law was passed to prevent the usage of toy guns in crimes and to help educate children on the dangers of guns. New Jersey Lawmakers are saying that this legislation could potentially “save lives.” Evidently now toy guns are up there with heart disease and lung cancer as one of the leading killers in Atlantic City.

The gun laws in New Jersey have led to a slew of outrageous charges in the past. In 2011, a 7-year-old child was arrested for possession of an imitation firearm for bringing a Nerf-style toy that launched ping pong balls to school. In 2009, a former police officer was in the process of moving from Maine to Texas, when he pulled off into a parking lot in New Jersey to rest, and was sentenced to five years in prison for possession of hollow point bullets and keeping his guns in an accessible location in his vehicle. In 2014, a Philadelphia woman was charged with unlawful possession of a handgun when she was pulled over in NJ for a minor traffic violation and presented the officer her Pennsylvania

weapons permit.

The important question for New Jersey lawmakers to ask is, are people really safer thanks to New Jersey’s gun laws? Is it really in the best interest of the whole to arrest a man for owning a 300-year-old antique gun, a child for playing with a toy gun, or someone driving through the state with a weapon they legally own? Clearly, the people of New Jersey are no better off. The laws in New Jersey are a serious burden on the taxpayers. With mandatory minimum sentences for gun crime convictions, New Jerseyans are forced to take on the substantial financial burden of paying to house inmates in prisons. These laws don’t stop gun crimes from happening, and they haven’t stopped Camden, NJ, Trenton, NJ, and Newark, NJ from being ranked among the top ten murder capitals in the country. Lawmakers need to realize that restrictive gun laws aren’t going to stop criminals from getting guns. All they do is hurt average people like Van Gilder by labeling them as criminals for getting wrapped up in the confusion of the restrictive codes.

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