

Barbara Kay: Enter Milo Yiannopoulos, progressivism's spawn and history's pendulum in action

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Jeremy Papasso/ Daily Camera via AP, File
Milo Yiannopoulos, the Breitbart editor known for inflammatory remarks about women and Muslims, speaks on campus at the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colo. Jan. 25, 2017.

Freedom for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) is an organization that defends freedom of speech for students and academics at American universities. They've tracked disinvitations and speech disruptions on campus over the last 17 years and recently published their findings.

From 2000-2009 disinvitations and disruptions occurred almost equally from the left and the right (on the right mostly with reference to abortion and Israel), but from 2010 onward protest veered sharply leftward. Today, over 90 per cent of speaker disinvitation attempts and speaker interruptions arise left of the speaker, occurring most frequently around racial, gender, immigration and Islam-related issues.

But even left-wingers can be disrupted or disinvited if they don't toe the party line on every single issue sacred to progressives. A [Change.org](#) petition was just launched to disinvite HBO host Bill Maher from speaking at University of California's Berkeley campus, because he publicly states his contempt for all religions, including Islam. Criticizing Christianity is A-OK for progressives. Islam, not so much.

It would be Berkeley, wouldn't it. Can this really have been the birthplace of the Free Speech Movement in the 1960s? A few weeks ago the Berkeley College Republicans invited alt-right Breitbart News editor Milo Yiannopoulos to speak at the Student Union there. The administration, to its credit, had no objections. But violence by thuggish protesters erupted and the talk was cancelled.

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The highly controversial Yiannopoulos takes cancellations in stride, though, knowing the attendant publicity makes it a win for him either way. Milo's enormous cultural effect is confirmed by FIRE's data graph's startlingly high spike in protest on the left since Milo began his "Dangerous Faggot" speaking tour of U.S. campuses last year.

Milo is a one-man gay right-wing militia on a take-no-prisoners mission to destroy political correctness and victim culture ("Nobody should be playing the victim ... Everyone should just get on with achieving everything that they can in their lives.") And the matériel he brings to the fight is formidable. (-- image--)

First of all, pardon my lookism, but he is gorgeous: tall, slim, with sculpted features and wonderful hair – impossibly blond yesterday, streaked today, brunette tomorrow. He is also unpredictable. He might turn up at a campus talk in a sombrero, shaking maracas, trailed by a mariachi band, or wearing the most beautiful Savile Row suit you've ever seen. He shocks for shock's sake ("Would you rather your child had feminism or cancer?"). Nearly all of what he says is deliberately offensive to some identity group or other. Watch a few YouTube videos of his talks and debates, and you'll get the drift.

For Milo there is no such thing as bad publicity. Last year he was banned permanently from Twitter for the indefensibly harsh criticism he leveled at black comedian Leslie Jones' performance in the rebooted Ghostbusters. But the brouhaha around it served only to augment his profile and enlarge his circle of admirers, some of them outright racists.

Milo himself is not a racist in my opinion, but he refuses to filter his thoughts to assuage doubt. For example, Milo calls the Black Lives Matter movement "hugely destructive and counterproductive for black people," because it perpetuates negative stereotypes of blacks as violent, irrational and angry. Many people agree with him; few have the courage in today's cultural climate to say so.

Campus auditoriums overflow for him. What will he say next? To one heckling, fully covered Muslim woman, he retorts, "Why are you wearing that thing? You're in America." The room applauds. She stalks out. The hunger in his audiences to hear someone speak his mind freely is palpable. Milo says: "People

are tired of being told how to live, how to speak, what language they can use. The strength of feeling in my crowds, the enthusiasm for me from the audiences is the same — the same instinct, the same sort of motivating force (that) put Trump in the White House.”

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And he is funny. Just as fearless, but even funnier and with quirkier insights than Ann Coulter. From an article in Breitbart News entitled, “How Trump made it Cool to be Gay Again”: “Donald Trump is such an obvious gay icon. He’s brassy, he’s outrageous, his taste in interiors is gaudy and exhibitionist. He’s a heavy-handed caricature of a billionaire. Everything about him is at once fantastic and camp. He’s the drag queen you can vote for.”

Most gays are progressive, so they loathe Milo, and particularly loathe any of their tribe who legitimize him, as gay New York journalist Chadwick Moore discovered when he wrote a professionally objective, and humanizing rather than demonizing profile of Milo for Out Magazine. The blowback from Moore’s circle stunned him – from mere unfriendings to shunning to death threats – with his best friend calling him a “monster.” Alienated and downright scared, the crisis encouraged Moore to revive a dormant relationship with his conservative Midwestern father. He reveals this in a recent New York Post article, “I’m a gay New Yorker — and I’m coming out as a conservative.” Milo wins again!

Political correctness chilled real comedians’ interest in playing campuses. Nature abhors a vacuum. Students are tired of having their thoughts censored. Enter Milo Yiannopoulos, the fascinating, outrageous and irrepressible enfant terrible, progressivism’s spawn and history’s pendulum in action.

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