



THE LEGUTKO AFFAIR

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Ryszard Legutko is one of the leading philosophers of Poland, and has long been on the faculty of Jagiellonian University in Kraków, the nation's oldest and most prestigious center of higher learning. He was elected to the Polish Senate, and served as the Education Minister and then as Secretary of State. He is currently a member of the European Parliament, and sits as a Fellow at the Collegium Invisible, in Warsaw.

His scholarly focus includes ancient philosophy. He has published a massive study of [Socrates](#), as well as works on the Pre-Socratics, toleration and the problems of capitalism (all in Polish). His books in English include, [Society as a Department Store: Critical Reflections on the Liberal State](#), [The Demon in Democracy](#) and more recently, [The Cunning of Freedom](#).

Ryszard Legutko, Polish philosopher and a member of the European Parliament, has two exceedingly rare qualities: He has a mind of his own and courage to speak it. He demonstrated this most recently in his Open Letter to the Rector of the Jagiellonian University, in Krakow, in which Legutko, an emeritus faculty-member, urged His Magnificence to close the newly established Office of Equal Treatment. Considering how much value we attach to the idea of equality today, this is a shocking proposal. However, to those who have read Legutko's bestselling, *The Demon in Democracy. Totalitarian Temptations in Free Societies*, his stance should not be surprising.

Legutko's letter to the Rector of the oldest Polish university, founded in 1364, and whose most famous alumnus was Nicholas Copernicus, is not a piece of extravaganza. It points to something that the Poles 30 years ago, when communism collapsed, would never have thought could happen – that universities would become meccas of ideological formation again.

Legutko, 72, scholar of Plato and the translator of his dialogues, was editor of the underground (illegal) journal ARKA, under martial law in the 1980s. He began teaching in the 1970s, when Socialist-egalitarianism was the norm and "equal treatment of students" meant, among other things, that the "sons and daughters of the laboring class and peasants" would get "preferential points" (known as quotas in the US), so that they would get accepted into the university, in case there were doubts about their scholastic aptitude – offering tenure to mediocre but ideologically committed faculty members was not so uncommon.

This was a time when every department had in their ranks a guardian of the official Marxist orthodoxy; and when the idea of socialist equality was an official article of faith. All that was detrimental to a healthy intellectual life of the country. The fight against communism was not merely a war on the nonsense of socialist economic planning, which ruined the country and deprived ordinary people of basic goods – but first and foremost it was a war against equality.

One thought and hoped, as the Polish anti-communist opposition did, that shaking off the burden of socialism would put an end to ideological mind-pollution, and that objective criteria in science and freedom of thought in the humanities would be respected for the good of intellectual and cultural life. However, as the Letter of Legutko's former colleagues in the Institute of Philosophy shows, the danger is not gone. A new mind-enslaving ideology of equality is operating in full force, and the new philosophers are even more ideologically driven than their cynical counterparts in the past.

From among thirty-some faculty in the Institute of Philosophy, only one refused to vote against Legutko, and one abstained from voting. This is perfect unanimity, which reminds one of how the communist Polit-Bureau voted. The explanation of why Legutko's former colleagues voted the way they did should not be sought in their fear of being sent to a labor camp, a prison, being interrogated by secret police, or even losing a job. The explanation is that 1989 was not a moment of the burial of ideology but of the replacement of one collectivist ideology (communism) by another collectivist ideology (democratic liberalism), which demands total mind obedience.

Cases of similar behavior among academics are well known from the life of American campuses. In fact, universities in America lead the way, and American academics belong to the most ideologized intellectuals in the world. However, their actions are to some extent understandable: in contrast to the Poles, they never experienced communism; they do not know how destructive ideology can be for the life of the mind; and they are ignorant of what ideology can do to the cultural life of the nation. This may explain their behavior to some extent.

This explanation, however, should not apply to the Poles today, including the Rector of the Jagiellonian University, who surely remembers the "old bad times," but who, like the faculty in the Institute of Philosophy, chose not to draw the analogy between the past and the present. When someone like Ryszard Legutko dares to refresh their memory of how intellectuals behaved under communism, they use the old method of condemnation of one of their most distinguished colleagues.

There is a difference between today's academics and those under communism, however. The fight of today's professors has little to do with "the sons and daughters of the oppressed working class and peasants" whom the communists wanted to push up the social ladder to replace the old class and offer them access to real humane and scientific education that one must acquire to have a better future.

The new "oppressed class" is not the destitute underdogs of old, but the people whose sole preoccupation is their sexual identity and sexual preferences that they force others to accept as a new cultural norm. Since the great majority of the population is resistant, they seek recourse to institutional actions. Equality offices are created for this very reason. However, such offices are not places of learning, but places where the new ideological commissars impose their own egalitarian rules on others. And if you keep resisting, let alone stand up, they offer a collective condemnation.

How does the Office of Equal Treatment inscribe itself in the university's intellectual and cultural life and that of a country? It does not. Matthew Arnold once wrote: "Culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism—its fierceness, and its addiction to an abstract system." The response of the Faculty of Philosophy to Legutko's letter confirm Arnold's diagnosis. Equality, like other notions which belong to the same family – brotherhood and social justice – is an abstraction; and let us not forget, all previous attempts to implement it – beginning with the French and Russian Revolutions – brought about terror and cultural destruction. If one wants a proof, one should visit American universities. It is a world in intellectual ruins.

It is unlikely that the study of equality can be helpful in graduating another Copernicus. Considering that the English scientist and Nobel Prize winner Sir Tim Hunt was expelled from his post at the University of London and was forced to step down from the Royal Society for casting doubt on equality, and Albert Einstein has been accused of racism, one can only guess that something like that could happen to Copernicus today as well. Thank God, back then Jagiellonian University did not have the Office of Equal Treatment to ensure that everybody is on the same (ideological) page.

Zbigniew Janowski is the author of several books on 17th century philosophy, and most recently *Homo Americanus: The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy in America* and editor of John Stuart Mill's writings.

[Editor's Note: Below, we provide the translated versions of Professor Legutko's letter, as well as the letters from faculty members and the student body. We also asked various scholars to respond to what occurred in Krakow. Their responses follow the letters].

The Letter By Ryszard Legutko To The Rector Of Jagiellonian University

His Magnificence, the Rector:

I was astonished to learn that the Jagiellonian University has created and for some time now has been operating an Office dedicated to "equal treatment of the entire UJ student and doctoral community." This is a very disturbing signal, because it indicates that the Jagiellonian University wants to join the bad practices we see today at universities all over the Western world.

During my long life, I remember a time when members of the academic community were treated really unequally, and this happened during the communist era. At that time, academics all over Poland meekly tolerated political pressure; they submitted to it without protest, and in some cases, they "tasked" themselves - I apologize for the jargon of the communist regime. It would seem that with the collapse of the old regime, the problem of unequal treatment disappeared, and it should certainly disappear as a systemic problem. After all, as I hear, we no longer have one ideology reigning over everything; and there is an academic ethos; there are independent collegiate bodies; and there is the academic community itself representing the highest intellectual elite of the country. Isn't it enough to maintain good rules of coexistence at the oldest university in Poland? What kind of inequality does the university Office intend to fight against?

I'm not familiar with the activities of this Office, but I know how similar structures function at other universities in the Western world. It's no secret that in the last few decades, universities have become a breeding ground for aggressive ideology – censorship, control of language and thought, intimidation of rebellious academics, various compulsory training sessions to raise awareness, disciplinary measures and dismissal from work. Groups of student "Hunwejbins" insult dissenting lecturers, break up lectures, and sometimes even carry out physical attacks, all in the face of passivity on the part of partly intimidated, partly conformist faculty.

In all such situations, anti-discriminatory structures become deeply involved, but not on the side of the persecuted but on the side of the persecutors. Sometimes such actions inspire and they justify. I cannot understand why the Jagiellonian University, one of our most serious national institutions, has started to

flirt with something that is fatal to the university and to human minds. What inequalities and discriminations do you see at the Jagiellonian University or in Polish academic life today that would justify setting up separate bodies to fight against them?

If we create a structure that is paid for and specially programmed to look for inequalities and discrimination, it is obvious that it will find them quite quickly to prove the reason for its existence, and sooner or later it will take steps that are taken at hundreds of other universities. Besides, the theory that justifies such tracking, which is something like the modern equivalent of Lysenkoism, is constructed in such a way that it will always find inequalities. I know of no case where its application has produced a negative result. The conclusions invariably proclaim the need for increased ideological vigilance and more vigorous counteraction, which predictably generates consequences along with the pathologies indicated above. I have just read that, based on this theory, a "fully scientific" study has been launched at the Jagiellonian University to determine the level of gender inequality. You don't have to be exceptionally intelligent to know that gender theory lives solely on inventing inequalities, and the more genders it takes in, the more inequalities it finds – and the more drastic measures it demands to combat them. And so, fatal theory justifies fatal practice.

I appeal to you, Rector, to stop similar undertakings and to disband this grotesque university Office. I'm writing this appeal not as a politician, but as a person well acquainted with academic customs and as someone who, being connected with the Jagiellonian University all his adult life, has observed the ups and downs of the university environment. We are dangerously approaching a time of the next Great Trial.

Please accept my respects.

Ryszard Legutko

Response Of The Faculty Of The Department Of Philosophy, Jagiellonian University

The position of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University, regarding the open letter of Professor Ryszard Legutko to His Magnificence the Rector of the Jagiellonian University.

Recently, our former colleague, Professor Ryszard Legutko, decided to write an open letter to his Magnificence the Rector of the Jagiellonian University. This letter is in connection with the recent attacks on the Jagiellonian University by the Malopolska School Superintendent and the response given by his Magnificence the Rector.

The theses contained in Professor Legutko's letter are so grotesque that we would gladly drop a veil of compassionate silence. However, we decided to speak out because of the fact that the author of the letter presents himself not as a politician, but as a concerned scholar and long-time employee of the Jagiellonian University. Were we to remain silent, one may get the impression that Professor Legutko's letter expresses the views of a significant part of the scientific community, or at least of the employees of the Institute of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University. This is not the case. The views presented by Professor Legutko are extremely contrary to the consensus accepted by the majority of the academic world, including the majority of the employees of the Institute of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University.



The Collegium Maius, from the time of Copernicus.

It is about the most fundamental framework of respect for another human being which, in the context of the University's work, affects to the greatest extent the relationship between the University and the student. Professor Legutko's letter highlights the sad fact that these things are still not obvious to everyone. Let us therefore repeat them briefly. We would like to firmly emphasize that the staff of the Institute of Philosophy stands absolutely by the side of female and male students, regardless of their life choices, sexual preferences, and gender identities. Defending freedom of choice, tolerance and pluralism are values that are indispensable to us, both in our daily teaching practice and in our understanding of philosophy. For this reason, we do not agree with attempts to limit the freedom of scientific research, even if the researchers use terms and theories that have been cursed by circles that currently aspire to the rule of souls in Poland. The task of science is not to promote a single worldview

option, but to enrich knowledge about the world through free discussion and the search for new ways of understanding the world.

For the same reasons, we protest against political interference in the actions that the University undertakes in the interest of the freedom, equality, and security of every person in our community. The University is, by its very nature, a community of learners, of which administrative staff are an important part – a community in which everyone has the right to feel welcome and comfortable. In our view, the actions taken by the University's Office of Safety and Equal Treatment aim to do just that - to be fully in line with the ethos of a European university. Since these actions are an attempt to recognize the actual state of affairs, and not a top-down imposition of some ideological interpretation, and to name the real, and not imaginary or imagined, problems of the participants of the academic community, we find the analogies in Professor Legutko's letter to the situation of science and the university during the communist era and to the practices of totalitarian systems in this regard ("Lysenkoism") completely inadequate. Their tendency and perverse nature is particularly evident when the author of the letter, claiming to be a defender of academic freedom, demands that the Rector of the Jagiellonian University take restrictive measures: to abolish the university's Office of Safety and Equal Treatment, and to officially renounce "gender theory."

Therefore, we treat Professor Legutko's open letter not as a polemical statement within the framework of an academic discussion, or as a civic "free voice, insuring freedom" in defense of the common endangered values and academic freedoms – but as an element of political propaganda and a top-down campaign against the academic community, referring to the social resentment against this community and all elites as something alien and, by definition, undesirable. We express our surprise and regret that our university colleague, whose scientific competence and genuine achievements we respect, has joined this campaign, even if most of us definitely do not share his radical political commitment and do not accept the strictly partisan way of functioning in so-called real politics.

A Letter Addressed To Professor Ryszard Legutko By The Students Of The Jagiellonian University

June 26, 2021.

Open letter from the students of Jagiellonian University
To Professor Ryszard Legutko

Dear Professor,

It is with great sadness and shame that we have read the open letter you sent on 22 June to his Magnificence, the Rector of the Jagiellonian University, Professor Jacek Popiel. Due to its exceptionally offensive nature, we perceived the letter as an action aimed not only at the authorities of our university, but above all at the entire academic community. Seeking to do the right thing, we want to respond to words that violate the dignity of another human being. By the same token, we want to oppose all forms of discriminatory actions carried out by persons performing public functions, especially those whose professional life is connected to the Jagiellonian University.

As students, we have been raised in a spirit of tolerance and respect for others. Our concern for the fate of others is expressed in the acceptance of human difference, including different identities and sexual orientations. Reducing the idea of human dignity expressed by us to any political viewpoint or ideology is not truthful. Your call for the elimination of the Office of Safety and Equal Treatment - Safe Harbor is not a good idea.

Your demand to close down the Office of Safety and Equal Treatment - Safe UJ, which is a consequence of you reducing your concern for human safety to an ideological action. This postulate, due to its great harmfulness, requires our criticism and rejection. According to the regulations in force at the university, in particular § 4 section 2 of the UJ Statute, it is the university's duty to prevent discrimination and ensure equal treatment of all members of the university community. One form of such activity is that carried out by the Office of Safety and Equal Treatment - Safe UJ. The quality of the work of this Office of the university has always been highly rated by us. Expressing our approval and gratitude for the daily work of the employees of this Office, in last year's edition of the Student Laudations, on the strength of the votes of the student members of the Senate, an Honorary Laudation was awarded to Ms. Katarzyna Jurzak, the head of the Safe UJ Office.

We note that since 1964 Jagiellonian University has used the motto *Plus ratio quam vis* (Latin, meaning, "More reason than strength"). See, W. Wołodkiewicz "Plus ratio quam vis - a universal maxim," in *Palestra*, 1-2 (2019), p. 11.. Prof. Estreicher, who proposed this motto, supposed it to mean "the advantage of reason over opportunistic reforms imposed on universities," and to express opposition to the Soviet policy of limiting the freedom of thought! Unlike you, we firmly believe that the opportunistic reforms that may threaten the university today are not those associated with unspecified Western and "aggressive ideologies." The real threat to Polish universities today is the actions of some politicians,

including the Minister of Education and Science, Przemyslaw Charnik, whose aim is to gradually reduce university autonomy.

We have no doubts that your statements concerning unknown ideologies that have taken over the university and Polish public life are only made for specific political needs, in order to arouse voters' fear of non-existing, external threats. Using the authority of an academic teacher and philosopher for such purposes is deeply inappropriate and should never happen. Furthermore, your repeated invocation of the Christian worldview in formulating this damaging content, given that some of us share similar values, is incomprehensible. Similarly, as it was expressed by his Magnificence, the Rector of Jagiellonian University, Prof. Jacek Popiel, we do not expect apologies. Instead, we ask you to think about the people who, belonging to a minority, have attended or will attend your academic classes in the future. It is in the interest of these people that we have decided to write this letter.

Students of the Jagiellonian University.

Reactions By International Scholars

The official university reactions to the letter by Professor Legutko confirms that the Brave New World of ideological control is no longer a strictly North American phenomenon, but is succeeding in fulfilling its international ambitions. The Office of Equal Treatment, certainly a worthy example of Newspeak, the cause of the affair, seems intended to perform the same roles once fulfilled by the Politruks in the bygone Soviet Era. This is especially worrying at an academic institution, since such witch hunters never employ rational criteria, the basis of science, but rather subjective moral and emotional arguments. Their "scientific" findings are never independently verifiable, those who oppose inculcate themselves, true to Christian Morgenstern's aphorism "For ... that which must not, cannot be."

We are witness to the rise of a new totalism, in which through denial of objective reason sophisms are construed and implemented. "-isms" by definition presume that individuals can be classified by subjective criteria which then can be defined "morally" (in its modern definition quite different from "*mos*" or ἠθικός) into "good" or "bad," "oppressed" vs "oppressor," driven by a self-proclaimed elite's power-hunger, tempered only by self-deception.

That such relativism, in which actions are held to be good or bad, not by their own merits, but according to who does them, is of course by its very nature "morally" self-defeating, which naturally escape's this ideology's acolytes.

These Offices, that of the Jagiellonian University is no exception, while proclaiming equality, promotes its antithesis, according to said artificial, ideologically motivated criteria, which transcend and negate knowledge, in inventing victims on the one hand and naturally their oppressors on the other. This presupposes human history has no object of experience with no intrinsic eidos, from which there is no possible escape, hence no notion of freedom, individual or otherwise. This sadly escapes Professor Legutko's detractors, whose response to his eloquently motivated exhortation was but oblivious ideological slander. While the Soviet Union may have lost the Cold War, Sovietism prepares to take its victory lap. When humanity loses its desire to free Prometheus, it inevitably enslaves itself.

Prof. Dr. Robert M. P. W. Graham Kerr

Research Director

Inârah, Institute for Research on Early Islamic History and the Koran

Saarbrücken, Germany.

I am writing in support of Professor Legutko's letter, and to express my utter dismay at the response of the Faculty at Jagiellonian University. If experience and history are any guide, Professor Legutko's warning about the trajectory of "equality" committees ("censorship, control of language and thought, intimidation of rebellious academics, various compulsory training sessions to raise awareness, disciplinary measures and dismissal from work.") is worthy of serious consideration. The same history, unfortunately, also shows that in times of crisis the position of the faculty is always supine. One would think that by now we would have learned that moral virtue does not depend upon intellectual virtue.

The faculty seems to have lost touch with the traditional role of the university and to have been captured by its recent fashionable post-modern alternatives. As a reminder, the purpose of the university is to provide a setting in which learners can seek and express the truth. One of the most important ways in which it does this is to engage in the critique of any alleged expression of the truth. Recall Popper's view that subjecting one's views to falsification is a necessary test of its truth. We are not free if we are not free to disagree and to criticize.

"Gender theory," for example, is not a theory; we are not allowed to inquire into the conditions of its potential falsification; we are not allowed even to search for or to present scientific empirical evidence to disprove it. "Gender theory" is an ideology that demands obedience. To disagree with the 'theory' is to be told that one is showing disrespect.

I am reminded that those who objected to Marx, to communism, and to socialism in a previous era were denounced as running dogs of Capitalism. I also recall being told that objecting to Freud's theory was an expression of one's own sexual inadequacy. I was even informed once by a Dean that silencing those who disrupted a meeting or speaker is to violate the protester's right of free speech. Do we now live in an Orwellian community of discourse?

On the contrary, I show my respect for your intellect when I engage in polite rebuttal of your views. If I am dealing with a child or an intellectually challenged person, then I use a different rhetoric. It is to be hoped that the faculty and student body of Jagiellonian University are not composed of such groups.

In place of the search for truth, the faculty (whose letter is a text-book case of informal logical fallacies and innuendo) now sees "The task of science is not to promote a single worldview option, but to enrich knowledge about the world through free discussion and the search for new ways of understanding the world." What is the meaning of 'knowledge' if there is no truth? This is but the rhetoric of those who have given up on truth. By castigating Professor Legutko, they are suppressing that very free discussion.

Moreover, are the faculty suggesting that there be, for example, a Office of "Astrology?" After all, professional astrologers (which at one time included Copernicus and Kepler) must be very adept at mathematics, and there is a wide audience for its literature. Are we to award everyone a Ph.D. for fear of offending their feelings or promoting intellectual insecurity? On what basis does the university decide where to employ its finite resources?

I suggest, as well, that students learn the difference between 'tolerate' and 'respect.' I do not tolerate your ownership of private property, rather, I respect it because I deem your ownership to be legitimate. To 'tolerate' is to accept the existence of something that one considers false. The demand to make someone or a view feel "welcomed" and "inclusive" is to demand legitimacy. We are not here to 'respect' what is false but to demand the opportunity to criticize it. It is disingenuous to claim to 'respect' what is false when all that is needed is toleration.

Nicholas Capaldi
Legendre-Soule eminent Chair of Business Ethics, emeritus
Loyola University, New Orleans

I read, not without some sadness but basically without surprise, the answer of the faculty of the Jagiellonian University to the letter of Professor Legutko. One finds there all the usual method and arguments used and abused by the sheep of the Panurge, anxious not to irritate the jealous guardians of the Empire of the good.

It is the endless recourse to the so-called consensus or even to the pseudo-scientific argument to refuse the debate and to attack the freedom of expression. It is the inevitable mantra, repeated ad nauseam, which manipulates, instrumentalizes and prevaricates the concepts of democracy, human rights and European values.

The faculty members do not appreciate being compared to the communist censors and inquisitors of yesterday, but unfortunately they have all the tics and all the defects - they think they know, but they do not know that they believe.

As for the young students who support all this, who are they? How representative are they? In a democracy, what counts is the legitimacy given by the people, not the legitimacy that a minority of activists claim to have.

Professor Arnaud Imatz
French Historian

It has long been my hope that Eastern Europeans could avoid the mental disorder that is now raging in this country and with even more force throughout the Anglosphere and among the Germans. LGBT indoctrination, hatred of the white races and its cultural achievements, and the emphatic denial of intrinsic gender distinctions all belong to this spreading pathology, which has attained epidemic

proportions in what is still euphemistically called “higher education.”

Until recently I imagined that the Poles had been spared this virulent pandemic; and I might have entertained that hope at least partly because the advocates of our intersectional Left in what regards itself as the “free world” condemn the Poles as bigoted reactionaries. The Vice-President of the EU, Katarina Barley, who was formerly the German Minister of Justice, rails against the Polish and Hungarian governments as almost equally backward and prejudiced.

While Barley and other German Social Democrats have not yet called for cutting off of economic relations with Poland, as they have done in the case of Hungary, the condemnations of such shrewish hate-mongers made me think that Poland is still in good shape morally and culturally.

Then I learned about the fate of Professor Ryszard Legutko at the Jagiellonian University, a venerable institution founded in 1394, whose faculty Legutko has graced for decades as an outstanding political thinker. His work, *The Demon in Democracy*, is a book I wish I had written. It is one of the most incisive critiques of the democratic mentality and democratic creed that I’ve encountered. Ironically his present troubles with the Rector and his colleagues at the Jagiellonian University might be explained by reference to this study, which points out the relentlessly egalitarian thrust of democratic ideology. Professor Legutko’s unpardonable sin seems to be his stated disapproval of the Office of Safe and Equal Treatment at his university, which was set up to uncover gender and lifestyle prejudice.

According to his critical response, which was sent to the university rector, offices that are set up to detect discrimination against designated victim group always succeed in coming up with supposedly outrageous cases of what they are established to uncover. Otherwise, they would not be justifying their existence and the moral importance ascribed to their participants. The entire history of our civil rights revolution and the agencies they birthed to combat prejudice would substantiate Legutko’s self-evident observation. But Poland is now being flooded with “American values” in their present form; and in the end, it might like asking sea tides to change to try to stop his institution from looking more and more like our “woke” universities.

But he is right to try to control the zealots among his colleagues by pointing out where their obsession with removing fixed identities has led on these shores. The witch hunt goes on and on without giving evidence of diminishing. And its enthusiasts never recognize the unnaturalness of what they are engaging in, or the scapegoating to which it gives rise.

What Legutko regards as the "grotesque" practice of setting up an anti-sexism department at his institution will likely get worse if it corresponds to the American model. Soon the Jagiellonian University will be hiring transgendered faculty to teach the virtues of transgenderism and creating an entire department to teach Critical Race Theory. I can't conceive of this nonsense ending with anything as bland or innocuous as ferreting out sexists. Any attempt to arrest this revolution of nihilism, as I argue in a forthcoming book, *Antifascism: Course of a Crusade*, is associated with "fascism" and by extension, Hitler's Final Solution. Poland may already have made the fateful turn and is already on the road to antifascist madness.

Dr. Paul Gottfried
American Philosopher and Historian

Yesterday I learnt of the letters by the Philosophy Faculty and some students at the Jagiellonian University denouncing Ryszard Legutko. The occasion of these letters was a letter by Legutko to the university Rector requesting disbandment of the university's "Office of Safety and Equal Treatment."

While real philosophers are not pack animals and rarely agree about anything, the Faculty (bar two, I believe) replied that Legutko's claims were so "grotesque" that they wished that compassionate silence would have sufficed to deal with him (i.e. academic smarmy code for "he is a lunatic"). But that compassion could not be sustained (we are dealing with very moral humans here), because people might have got the impression that Legutko "expresses the views of a significant part of the scientific community, or at least of the employees of the Institute of Philosophy at Jagiellonian University."

Your usual run-of-the-mill philosophers might have quibbled here about which ethical approach might prevail? Utilitarianism? Deontology? Virtue ethics? This lot, though, have come up with a new one – which boils down to someone's argument about what is morally right giving the false impression that everyone in a community believes it. Future generations may call this the Jagiellonian philosophy position – we can formulate it thus: Compassion should give way if it creates the impression that people ascent to a position advocated by a member of their community. Even if it should have its own name, I think it fits nicely into the totalitarian handbook of ideological hackery. And I am sure they would be very proud of this.

Anyway, the Jageilonians then press on that: "This is not the case. The views presented by Professor Legutko are extremely contrary to the consensus accepted by the majority of the academic world, including the majority of the employees of the Institute of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University." While this is the kind of reasoning and appeal that gets by in politics and dinner party conversations, one would have hoped that of the 28 out of 30 members of the Philosophy Faculty who agreed to the contents of this letter, one might be able to name at least one serious philosopher who has ever said something is true because the majority accept it.

I do feel sorry for Professor Legutko being in a Faculty whose members are so bereft of philosophical integrity they can formulate such nonsense with po-faced sanctimony that has now become the gesture of every ideological and managerial hack defending the bureaucratic machinery of virtue installation For, "It is about the most fundamental framework of respect for another human being." Really? That is the kind of drivel one expects from bureaucrats, managerialists, but not from philosophers or members from other disciplines within the "scientific community."

I am as critical of Analytic philosophy as anyone, but the slovenly manner of formulation (what does "It" refer to exactly?) goes hand-in-hand with the moral pomposity that speaks in general vacuities and abstractions, and the grand appeal that is supposed to make all of us sit up, shut up, and bathe in the normative rhetorical sweep of the sentiments being aired: "freedom of choice, tolerance and pluralism are values that are indispensable to us." A real philosopher would know these words are not answers to anything very much at all, but occasions of countless philosophical conundrums and disputes.

Given that Legutko has written an entire book on freedom, just one of these bright sparks might have made some philosophical effort in acknowledging the complexity of the values they parade as self-evident goods. Indeed, the entire letter is a masterpiece of emulation of what in the West now guides politicized administrative policy and legislation.

Yet the letter disingenuously asserts that Legutko is the partisan and ideologue, while totally ignoring the substance of his major concerns:

- That "similar structures function at other universities in the Western world...that in the last few decades, universities have become a breeding ground for aggressive ideology – censorship, control of language and thought, intimidation of rebellious academics, various compulsory training sessions to raise awareness, disciplinary measures and dismissal from work,"

- That "If we create a structure that is paid for and specially programmed to look for inequalities and discrimination, it is obvious that it will find them quite quickly to prove the reason for its existence, and sooner or later it will take steps that are taken at hundreds of other universities."

The Philosophy Faculty, for all their sanctimonious huff and virtue puff, did as little to demonstrate that Legutko's concerns were unreasonable, or that he was some kind of moral monster, who should not be tolerated within a university, as it did to make the case for the necessity of the "Office of Safety and Equal Treatment." That Office would, of course, be the last place that Professor Legutko could call upon when being calumniated by students or staff at his university. It did, however, make a pretty good case for the Philosophy Faculty being closed down and replaced by real philosophers.

Given the shocking state of affairs of the Philosophy Faculty, one might spare some pity for the pitiful nature of the offended students who are full of "sadness" and "shame" at the letter. Had they been talking about the Faculty's letter they may have had a point. But, in keeping with the Alice-in-Wonderland-world they have been schooled in, they are talking about Legutko's letter.

Not to be outdone in the virtue stakes, the students inform Professor Legutko that they "have been raised in a spirit of tolerance and respect for others. Our concern for the fate of others is expressed in the acceptance of human difference, including different identities and sexual orientations." Like the philosophers, they cannot distinguish between a virtue and a bureaucratic apparatus.

Perhaps it really is ignorance of what is occurring in the West that enables them to write: "Reducing the idea of human dignity expressed by us to any political viewpoint or ideology is not truthful." For the idea of human dignity seems grand and innocuous enough; but when that term is attached to a normative perspective that is passed off as being the "true" black/gay/ women/trans perspective, as it is done in endless courses, administrative programs, and policies in Western universities, then it is nothing if not ideological and political.

The university of which I am still an adjunct, by default I think and perhaps not for much longer, is in Darwin, Australia. A few weeks ago, the new vice chancellor wanted (I kid you not) the entire university to celebrate and partake in LGBTQ activities (the mind boggles) that had been planned for the week. This week the university sent around the new guidelines on pronouns. To think this is not what a university should be doing strikes me as perfectly reasonable, and has nothing to do with violating human dignity.

Given the condemnatory and denunciative tones of the letters by the Philosophy Faculty and "students" (how many I wondered really thought like this?) at the Jagiellonian University, one would be forgiven for thinking Professor Legutko might be trying to stir up a pogrom against gay or other "different" people. But no – he is raising serious questions about what such a transformation of the university's "operations" (to speak managerialese for a moment) does, not only to the university, but to society at large. If one wants to know – look Westward and see everywhere nations torn apart, and depleted of any common spirit or sense of future direction about what is worth living and dying for.

The latest Legutko case (like the earlier one undertaken by a couple of students acting on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation of Human Rights' attempt to eliminate Christian symbols in schools) is an attempt to silence one of Catholic Poland's more outspoken philosophical critics of a sensibility and social orientation that has created such havoc in the West.

He is all too aware that the West today is divided into two halves – those that can be a member of the elite and benefit, and those that can't and don't. It is true that as far as elites go it is a very sizable one stretching from trillionaires, politicians, public servants, to professionals, journalists, and primary school teachers.

But this grand alliance looks for all the world like a run-away train – as the alliance is primarily held together by what and who it is against. And in order to exist it has to create an imagined enemy – in the United States it is the bogey of "the white supremacist" - they were supposedly behind the storming of the capitol, an "insurrection" in which none of the insurrectionists were armed, and the only death from it was that of an unarmed "white supremacist" woman (whose bona fides in the white supremacist stakes were only too obvious – she was a Trump supporter).

The grand alliance consists of people of colour (though Asians not so much) who hate whites, women who hate men, gays who hate straights, trans who hate cisgender, anti-Israelis, socialists who hate capitalists, tech capitalists who hate people saying what they think when it contradicts them. Much of the time they are throwing each under the bus - much as the Bolsheviks did against the Socialist Revolutionaries, or the Mountain against the Girondins.

Brexit and the election of Trump had given those who hate this elite a sense that they might be able to defeat this program of wokeness. As much as I sympathised with people who thought this, I could never see how this was anything more than a momentary setback. Whether I was right or not, COVID

ensured there would be no more setbacks.

Now the Central Europeans, by not getting in step with the EU in its (elite driven) globalist (anti-Christian and anti-traditional) values program and migration policy, have generally been another set-back to the Western elite with its globalist vision.

The Legutko affair perfectly reproduces the tactics of the elite in their Nietzschean task of the "transvaluation of all values." At the risk of repeating this yet again, the elite combines their Nietzschean self-belief in their right to create values with Marx's tactic of claiming to represent the oppressed of the earth. It is a very clever tactic and the extent of its success is that it may well be the Trojan Horse to once again deprive the Poles of their traditions and nationhood.

The Philosophy Faculty at Jagiellonian University and the students behind this attack upon Professor Legutko seem to me to be the EU equivalent of the Western intelligentsia during the Cold War.

Also to repeat – there can only be one winner, in the geopolitical fallout of all this. And it will not be the EU, nor the US, nor anywhere else in the West where the triumph of abstract human dignity is but the pretext for the destruction of social solidarity between people who, different as they may be, do not break up the world into the pursuit of endless identity needs so that they can become empty, compliant entities content with a life of sexual frivolity and universal welfare so that the few may dictate who and how the many live, and die in their diabolical enjoyment of the fruits of the earth.

Professor Wayne Cristaudo
Charles Darwin University, Australia

Dear Editor

I was made aware of the exchange of letters between professor Legutko and Jagiellonian University.

If one looks only at the surface of the answers he got, one may think that he is worrying too much. But

the longer one reads, the stranger things become.

I mean, in a normal situation, the answer by the Rector should be enough. Thus, why here Legutko got no answer by the Rector, but got one from his former colleagues and another one from "the students," instead of just one from the Rector he addressed?

Does the Rector suppose that a national figure like Legutko does not deserve an answer by him? That would be quite amazing. Thus it is possible that an answer by the Rector will come, but... But what we have here is a different attitude. The "villain" is attacked by his own "home;" by the members of the college of Philosophy who charge him of being a political tool against academic freedom, and by "the students." It is a clear attempt to deprive Legutko of his reliability: "if your own people do not agree with you, the best you can do is not to speak." this is the message.

Moreover, this kind of "collegial answer" is not new. The double letter – from the faculties and from the students – including the administrative staff (which in Europe is normally neglected and almost never mentioned by faculties, students, by the university in general and by the media) sounds like the typical conclusion of the Pravda articles from the Moscow trials in 1937: "The whole Soviet People stands up and claims the criminals to be punished!" Hence, could this be a sort of Eastern European heritage from the Cold War Era? Who knows?

Moreover, I wonder, who are "the students?" All the students of the Jagiellonian University, who, one by one, were notified about his letter and agreed on the answer and signed it, again one by one? If so, I'd like to see the signatures. And, if they are not the whole student body, who did sign in the name of all? And had he/she the right to sign that way?

In my opinion, if I wrote the letter professor Legutko wrote, and got the answer he got, I'd ask to know the names, one by one, along with the signatures, to see if and how many students were aware of such a letter. There might well be a big surprise. The first being a very nasty reaction. But, if so, I'd care to turn it into a national affair, sending it to the press, and then I'd like to see what came next.

What they wrote sounds openly – let us say – amazing to whoever knows how things are going in the USA and in UK universities. And if they really believe what they wrote, they are as blind as newly born kittens.

Legutko did what he thought to be right; and, according to the Politically Correct style, such an intimidating and threatening answer was the minimum he could expect.

The “attention to the minorities” is the typical version of how a wide majority is forced to accept the interests of some members belonging to a small minority. This is truly antidemocratic. Moreover, I wonder if this happens just now by chance or not. At the moment, the EU Commission is trying to enforce Poland and Hungary to accept a pro-gay vision of society; and just now the Jagellonian University stands on the EU Commission's side against the Polish Government, thus providing the EU Commission with a major asset: the nation's highest intellectual organization sides with the EU against the conservative Polish Government. I'd like to think it to have happened by chance. Also, as an expert historian, I know that such coincidences are quite rare. Perhaps it was a matter of Kairòs and both the sides in Krakow and Bruxelles too advantage of the opportunity. Who knows?

Ciro Paoletti
Italian Historian

Apelles, we are told, was the most renowned painter of the ancient world, whose art was eagerly collected and sought after by men like Alexander the Great and later Julius Caesar. Most of it, sadly, was lost when Caesar's house caught fire and burned down.

The story is told that a rival painter falsely accused Apelles of plotting to assassinate Ptolemy IV Philopater, with nearly dire results, for a public execution was narrowly avoided. This led Apelles to create his most famous painting of all, which he called Calumny, in which an innocent man is baselessly accused by the allegorical figures of Deceit, Envy, Treachery and Ignorance. The original work is now lost, but the theme remained popular, and Botticelli's version is now well-known.

When I first read Professor Legutko's letter and the ensuing responses (from his peers in the Department of Philosophy and the “students” of his university), I was immediately reminded of Apelles' painting. We indeed live in calumnious times (aka, the “outrage or shaming culture”), where decency, which once was the golden thread that bound one human being to another, is now a lost virtue. And so, examples of Deceit, Envy, Treachery and Ignorance are readily found in the letters penned by the mob

that is the faculty members and the "students." In the absence of virtue, there can only be the barren wind of political slogans.

Professor Legutko is the Apelles of our day. His books, like those paintings of old, speak truths far greater than can be contained in shibboleths. And when men no longer hunger for truth, but are content with the mush of political cant, there is only endless destruction. That is what Professor Legutko elegantly summarized in his letter and in more detail in his books.

If the decriers think that they can silence men like Professor Legutko, they have already lost the battle and the war. To Apelles is attributed the famous phrase, "Ne sutor ultra carpidam," (Cobbler, go no further than your shoes). In other words, "Academics – stop being social-engineers!" Truth will out, and truth will win.

Nirmal Dass
Publisher, *The Postil Magazine*

The [featured image](#) shows, "Calumny of Apelles," by Sandro Botticelli, ca. 1496-1497.

