VSED 2021 - House of Commons – Debate

Debate 1 "Extremists: boycott them or talk to them?"

Currently we see polarization of societies in many countries, with extremists on the political left and right worrying mainstream society. How should we deal with extremists: are extremists best boycotted and ignored with disgust in order to avoid giving them the headlines they crave, or a platform they may use to attract support? Never even vote along with them on the assumption that they can only be wrong. Or should we accept that they are there – part of the political process, some even democratically elected – and best to be addressed by debate and democratic discourse, to prove them wrong, and address any issues they may rightly have in a better manner?'

Debate 2 ''Political correctness has gone too far and is now stifling freedom of speech''

Boycotting and public shaming of individuals who are accused of acts of racism, sexism and homophobia has become the norm. With the rise of social media where everything is documented and scrutinised, marginalised communities who previously suffered in silence can now freely express their views with more impact. A prominent example of this was the J.K Rowling incident last June when the prominent author received severe backlash after being accused of transphobia.   Yet this ''call-out'' or ''cancel'' culture has also been criticised as being a form of intolerance, virtue signalling and of engendering mistrust.   So here are some questions to provoke discussion: Are call outs a justified and acceptable way to claim some sort of social justice, especially for those who feel helpless against systemic oppression? Or are accusations that we have become ''snowflakes'' justified? Is it a matter of being sensitive and inclusive of all minority groups? Or a matter of policing thoughts and language for fear of becoming the latest victim of the ''woke mob''?