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The Rt Hon David Cameron PC MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London W1A 0AA

Dear Mr Cameron

Patrick Mercer

You will have had an avalanche about this. Here is another snowflake.

I saw the report in The Guardian yesterday of Patrick Mercer's response to a question about racism. I could see nothing whatever wrong with it. He was clear, balanced, and honest. I was aghast at the result: your calling for his resignation. You seem to me to have shown weakness when a robust response could have shown leadership and resolve. After many years of spin, lies and political correctness by Labour even a Guardian reader was prepared to vote Conservative. I am sadly disillusioned and weep tears for our politics. You have lost me.

Political correctness in this country must be opposed. It demeans you, our representatives, and neuters proper debate. I would go further: opposition to ideas on grounds of 'racism', 'ageism', 'sexism' is easy but unproductive, and itself leads to foolishness and injustice. Current nostrums have it that no-one must discriminate. But our science and society and all knowledge depend on discrimination. We classify, and discriminate, in order to make sense of the world. Without discrimination we would have neither biology nor medicine. What is wrong is not discrimination, not calling a black man black or an old man old, or a actress an actress, but hatred and hurt. To allow argument to be neutered by clamours labelling honest views as something-ist is in the end to frustrate the righting of wrongs, not to cause them.

If I duff up someone in a poorly lit subway I should be caught and punished because I duffed him up, not because he was gay, or she was an old woman. If I put a petrol bomb through someone's letter box I should be caught and punished for arson and resulting personal harm, not because the resident was black or Jewish. If I can't pay respect to my black, white or yellow-skinned soldiers — and criticise any of them when they fall short of my high standards, where have we got to?

Would you have fired your bullets at Patrick Mercer had he said his ethnic minority soldiers were outstanding by comparison with white men? I doubt it. But that could have been equally 'discriminatory' How foolish we have become. We have become a laughing stock. I had thought that at least the Conservative Party retained a grain of common sense. It saddens me that you too seem to have abandoned thought in favour of prejudice. Think about that: it is you who are prejudiced, not Patrick Mercer. It is David Cameron who has made up his mind too soon. Patrick Mercer has thought his ideas through clearly. David Cameron has jumped to conclusions. Patrick Mercer isn't an ethnophobe (a word I've just invented — remember, you heard it here first!); David Cameron is a thinkophobe, someone with a morbid fear of clear thinking. What a shame, what a loss of an opportunity.

With kind regards, nevertheless, and hope for a brighter, clearer future

John Dexter

cc: Mr Patrick Mercer