Press release

13-September-2012

Limits to our tolerance?

Renowned writer and commentator Frank Furedi will lead a discussion on modern day attitudes to tolerance in a debate hosted by the Manchester Salon .

Britain has a long tradition of liberal tolerance – starting with John Stuart Mill and reflected in the number of exiles taken onto its shores – but the reaction to the riots last year revealed a fissure in thinking when loud voices were heard calling for stern retribution for offenders.

Furedi will argue that classical ideas of liberal thought and action have been steadily eroded, to the point where such concepts, as outlined his book On Tolerance: A Defence of Moral Independence, make no sense in 21st century Britain.

He argues that tolerance does not mean abdicating moral judgement but being able to take moral decisions independently of political and religious interference. People can still be tolerant while arguing against developments in society of which they disapprove.

As an example of how the language of tolerance can be warped by politics, was revealed in the speech by Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg that had to be redrafted as the original version castigated opponents of gay marriage as ‘bigots’.

The discussion will ask whether the idea of tolerating other people’s ideas and actions is a form of intellectual cowardice or a pragmatic approach to living in a globalised, multicultural society.

Date: Tuesday, 2 October, 6.45pm

Venue: International Anthony Burgess Foundation, Chorlton Mill, Cambridge Street, Manchester, M1 5BY. Tickets at £5 (£3 concession) obtainable from the Salon website or by mailing events@manchestersalon.org.uk

For further details on the event and Manchester Salon’s activities, contact Simon Belt at events@manchestersalon.org.uk or ring 07809 669824.