

Speakers Cornered: Debate, Democracy and Disturbing the Peace at London's Speakers' Corner

Philip Wolmuth

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A unique photographic record of 35 years at Speakers' Corner—an extraordinary place of great symbolic and historic significance and regarded as the home of free speech

Speakers Cornered, the product of a 35-year-long photo-documentary project, is a unique look at the people who come to argue, discuss, and preach at Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park, regarded worldwide as the home of free speech. Many of the photographs, taken between 1977 and 2012 and published here for the first time, are accompanied by excerpts of speeches, heckles, arguments, and debates which are, by turns, intriguing, shocking, politically incorrect—and often very funny. In an age in which the mass media largely set the parameters of public discussion, such unmediated, face-to-face public debate is rare, and offers a very different perspective on "public opinion". The speakers and hecklers recorded here represent a vital element of our democratic tradition, a vibrant legacy of the 19th century campaigners who fought for, and won, the rights to freedom of expression and assembly.



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