

# Entity: Toby Young (Lord Young of Acton)

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## Semantic Summary

British right-wing journalist, activist, and Conservative life peer (Lord Young of Acton since January 2025) — founder and director of the Free Speech Union, Associate Editor of The Spectator, and creator of The Daily Sceptic blog. Son of Labour peer Michael Young, he moved rightwards over decades and now operates at the intersection of conservative journalism, free-market education policy (co-founding the West London Free School, the UK's first free school), and free-speech activism. His key significance is institutional bridge-building: the Free Speech Union is a well-funded, professionally-run pressure group with mainstream political connections that functions as a legitimising force for figures too extreme for mainstream conservatism, framing their exclusion as a free speech issue. Controversies include his 2018 resignation from the Office for Students board over resurfaced misogynistic and homophobic tweets, a 2015 article advocating "progressive eugenics", and a 2020 IPSO finding that he promoted COVID-19 misinformation.

## Basic Information

- **Type:** Person / Journalist / Activist / Conservative life peer
- **Status:** Active
- **Title:** Lord Young of Acton (life peer since Jan 2025)
- **Role:** Director and founder of the Free Speech Union; Associate Editor of The Spectator; creator of The Daily Sceptic blog
- **Background:** Journalist, author (How to Lose Friends & Alienate People), free schools advocate
- **Platforms:** The Spectator, The Daily Sceptic, X/Twitter, House of Lords
- **Full name:** Toby Daniel Moorsom Young

# Role in Ecosystem

Toby Young is a prominent right-wing activist and commentator who operates at the intersection of conservative journalism, free-market education policy, and free-speech activism. As founder and director of the Free Speech Union (FSU), he has created one of the most effective institutional vehicles for right-wing cultural activism — an organisation that campaigns against "cancel culture", defends controversial speakers, and positions itself as a bulwark against "woke" orthodoxy.

Young's significance in the ecosystem is his institutional bridge-building: the Free Speech Union is not a fringe organisation but a well-funded, professionally-run pressure group with mainstream political connections (government ministers, Conservative MPs, media figures). It functions as a legitimising force for figures who are otherwise too extreme for mainstream conservatism, by framing their exclusion as a free speech issue.

Formerly a Labour-supporting son of a Labour peer (Michael Young, creator of the term "meritocracy"), Young moved rightwards over decades. He was briefly appointed to the board of the Office for Students in 2018 but resigned within days after historical misogynistic and homophobic tweets resurfaced. He was given a life peerage by the Conservative Party in January 2025.

# Money IN (Funding Received)

| Date    | From                           | Amount     | Type             | Confidence | Source   |
|---------|--------------------------------|------------|------------------|------------|----------|
| Ongoing | Free Speech Union              | Unknown    | Director salary  | REPORTED   | Public   |
| Ongoing | The Spectator                  | Unknown    | Associate Editor | REPORTED   | Public   |
| Ongoing | The Daily Sceptic              | Unknown    | Blog revenue     | REPORTED   | Public   |
| 2025-   | House of Lords daily allowance | ~£300+/day | Lords attendance | CONFIRMED  | Official |

# Known Associations

| Person/Org        | Relationship                        | Evidence  |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Free Speech Union | Founder and Director (2020-present) | Wikipedia |
| The Spectator     | Associate Editor                    | Wikipedia |
| The Daily Sceptic | Founder and editor                  | Wikipedia |
| Quillette         | Former associate editor             | Wikipedia |

| Person/Org                               | Relationship                        | Evidence  |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| West London Free School                  | Co-founder                          | Wikipedia |
| Michael Young (Lord Young of Dartington) | Father; Labour peer and sociologist | Wikipedia |

# Key Controversies

- **2018:** Appointed and resigned within a week from Office for Students board after historical tweets resurfaced
- **2015:** Wrote article advocating "progressive eugenics" for genetically engineered intelligence
- **2020:** IPSO found he promoted COVID-19 misinformation in a Daily Telegraph column
- Accused of misogynistic and homophobic social media posts
- Free Speech Union criticised for defending controversial figures including those accused of racism and transphobia

# Notes

- Born 17 October 1963; son of Labour peer Michael Young
- Educated at Brasenose College, Oxford; Harvard University; Trinity College, Cambridge (did not graduate)
- Author of How to Lose Friends & Alienate People (2001) — a memoir of his time at Vanity Fair
- Co-founded Modern Review magazine (1991) with Julie Burchill
- Co-founded West London Free School — the UK's first free school
- Appointed life peer (Conservative) in January 2025 as Lord Young of Acton
- His Free Speech Union is a significant force in UK right-wing cultural activism

# Tags

- activist
- anti-woke
- author
- commentator
- conservative
- free-speech
- free-speech-union
- journalist
- person
- politician
- toby-young

- twitter
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