



SNAPSHOTS

MONTHLY BYTES™

2025

September Edition



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Charlie James Kirk

October 14, 1993 - September 10, 2025



The Toll of Political Violence

On September 10th 2025, Charlie James Kirk was assassinated while giving a speech to university students in Utah. His goal was to face those who disagreed and engage in peaceful and open debate.



Letter From The Publisher

In this edition of Snapshots we're focused on discussing political violence which has swept across the world over the last month. With the death of Charlie Kirk, the Gen Z protests in Asia and rising activity of extremist groups we are entering a new world where the rulebook of society is being rewritten.

Due to the significance of these events we believe it is important that you get the whole picture. Covering the drivers of political violence, a breakdown of events in depth and what groups plan to do to resolve the issue.

Political violence also ties deeply into journalism and freedom of the press. The rise of political violence directly affects our profession and how we present the news.

The rise in extremism makes our job a lot more difficult. It threatens our safety due to a dangerous environment which can lead to targeted violence. Political violence also forces our profession to self censor and be fearful of what we cover, we can be suppressed, shut down, have funding withdrawn or individually targeted for the work we do. It undermines accountability, free speech and freedom of association.

It is important that we stand firm and remain steadfast with our vision and mission, As Publisher of TDMG it is my role to ensure that we stay on track and uphold our integrity across the board.

Thank you for purchasing this magazine as it directly supports the work we do and ensures our independence.

Heath Clark
Publisher

Letter From The Editor

In an age of endless noise and algorithm-driven outrage, the search for clarity can feel exhausting. The daily digital feed is a blur of partisan spin and corporate talking points, where journalism often seems more interested in serving power than in witnessing it. You are likely holding this magazine because you, like us, are searching for an alternative.

At TDMG, we aim to create independent journalism with integrity. Snapshots is the tangible result of that mission. In a world of fleeting posts and disappearing stories, we believe in the power of the written word – a space for considered

thought, careful investigation, and clear analysis, free from the chaos of the online space.

We are here to be Australia's Alternative Voice. We're honest, we don't take sides, we take facts. Our commitment is not to be another voice in the echo chamber, but to be the conversation that breaks it.

As Editor-in-Chief, my responsibility is to ensure every article in these pages meets our rigorous standards. Each story you read has been reviewed, fact-checked, and published under our guiding principles of honesty, fairness, and complete editorial independence.

Thank you for joining us. Together, let's build a media that thinks for itself – and for the people it serves.

Linda Podbury
Editor-in-Chief





THE DEATH OF CHARLIE KIRK, THE SHIFTING POLITICAL CLIMATE

FOCUS 

HANNAH WEBB

SENIOR WRITER



Charlie Kirk, a Christian conservative political activist, husband, and father was fatally shot on September 10 while debating students at a college campus event in Utah. Kirk's assassin initially evaded capture, however in the following days Tyler Robinson was turned over to authorities and has since been charged with the murder of Charlie Kirk.

Kirk's memorial service was held on 22nd September and attended by 100 000 people, including US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance. Charlie Kirk was holding an outdoor event at Utah Valley University as part of the American Comeback Tour of Turning Point USA, the organisation Kirk founded. At midday on September 10th, Charlie arrived and began throwing MAGA hats to the crowd, who were chanting "USA!" and "Charlie!" He then took a seat in his gazebo and began answering questions.

After one student asked a question on religion, a second student asked Charlie about transgender mass shootings. At 12:23, as Charlie began to answer, a gunshot rang out and a single bullet hit Kirk in the side of the neck, causing him to fall backwards.

As the shocked crowd crouched and ran in fear, a man believed to be the shooter was caught on camera, running across the roof of a building approximately 200 yards from Mr Kirk. It has been reported that as this was happening, Charlie's three-year-old daughter, who was attending with her mother and younger brother, ran to him and put her arms around his neck as he lay there bleeding.

Kirk was rushed to the hospital, but many who saw the shooting firsthand or on video had very little hope that he would survive the attack.

At the university, police arrested an elderly man who had begun yelling. They later determined that he was not the shooter, and the man admitted that he was merely attempting to create a distraction. He was booked for obstruction of justice and released.

At 2:40pm Charlie's death was announced by multiple people and organisations, including Donald Trump, who posted on Truth Social, saying: "The Great, and even Legendary, Charlie Kirk, is dead. No one understood or had the Heart of the Youth in the United States of America better than Charlie.

He was loved and admired by ALL, especially me, and now, he is no longer with us. Melania and my Sympathies go out to his beautiful

wife Erika, and family. Charlie, we love you!" He later posted another statement, saying "In honor of Charlie Kirk, a truly Great American Patriot, I am ordering all American Flags throughout the United States lowered to Half Mast until Sunday evening at 6 P.M." He has also stated that he would posthumously award Kirk with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The Utah Department of Public Safety, FBI and multiple different police departments began their hunt for Kirk's killer, and asked the public to help them in their search for the assassin by giving tips. They released pictures and a video of who they believed to be the culprit.

The following day, September 11th, Utah Governor Spencer Cox said in a press conference "Now, this is a dark day for our state. It's a tragic day for our nation. And I want to be very clear that this is a political assassination". He also condemned the killing, adding "we are endowed by our creator with certain unalienable rights, the first one of those is life."

During the same day, Tyler Robinson's parents saw the photos of the suspected assassin, and agreed it looked like their son. They also knew that Robinson had a rifle fitting the description given by police. After Robinson spoke with his parents and A retired deputy sheriff friend, he was convinced to turn himself in to the authorities.



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Police also interviewed Robinson's roommate, who showed them a conversation of theirs which referred to engraving bullets, shooting Kirk, moving and hiding a rifle, and changing his clothes.

The following day, at the press conference where it was revealed that Robinson was in custody, Governor Cox said "I hear all the time that words are violence. Words are not violence. Violence is violence. And there is one person responsible for what happened here and that person is now in custody and will be charged soon and will be held accountable."

Robinson has been charged with seven crimes, including aggravated murder, felony, discharge of a firearm causing serious bodily injury, two counts of obstruction of justice, two counts of witness tampering, and commission of a violent offense in the presence of a child. Aggravated murder carries the death penalty in Utah.

Erika Kirk, Charlie's widow, spoke publicly for the first time since the shooting on September 13th.

One of the many things she spoke of was the faith that she and Charlie shared, saying "Charlie loved his Savior with

all of his heart... He wanted everyone to know that if they confess... the Lord Jesus Christ who rose from the dead, then they will be saved... Nobody is ever too young to know the gospel. Nobody... And nobody is ever too old either. There's no age limit."

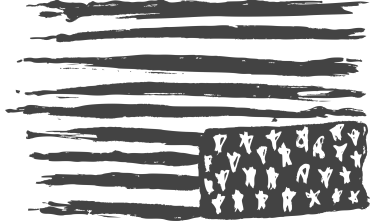
Charlie's memorial service was held at State Farm Stadium in Arizona on 22nd September and attended by around 100 000 people. In attendance were President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, FBI Director Kash Patel, Robert F Kennedy Jr, Elon Musk and Charlie's minister, Pastor Rob McCoy, in addition to many other prominent public figures.

In an incredibly powerful moment of the ceremony, Erika Kirk spoke, saying "My husband Charlie, he wanted to save young men, just like the one who took his life...On the cross, our Saviour said, 'Father, forgive them, for they not know what they do.' That man, that young man. I forgive him."

As stated on their website, Turning Point USA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2012 by Charlie Kirk. The organization's mission is to identify, educate, train, and organize students to promote the principles of fiscal responsibility, free markets, and limited government. Charlie also served as TPUSA's president until his death. Shortly after, Erika was unanimously elected to serve as the new CEO and chair of Turning Point USA.

Some members of the public and media have celebrated or excused Kirk's murder, or told outright lies about the details surrounding the event.

While on air on the 10th, before Charlie had been pronounced dead, Matthew Dowd from MSNBC said that Kirk was "divisive", and that "you can't stop with these sort of



awful thoughts you have, and then saying these awful words, and not expect awful actions to take place".

Jimmy Kimmel, on his late-night talk show, suggested that the perpetrator of the violence was a right-wing MAGA member, despite all available evidence being to the contrary.

Dowd was promptly fired, and Kimmel's show was indefinitely suspended from air, and then partially reinstated four days later. There have been many other instances of people losing their jobs for celebrating Kirk's death.

Other prominent left-wing figures have weighed in on the situation with condolences and condemnations of violence, such as Former Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden and Former Vice President Kamala Harris. Many vigils and events have been held in Kirk's honour all around the world, including in the USA, England, Germany, Spain and Australia.

Tyler Robinson's mother has stated that recently Robinson has become more political and left-leaning, as well as more pro-gay and trans rights. Tyler Robinson was reportedly a "furry", and in a romantic relationship with his roommate, a biological male who is transitioning. He was also supposedly addicted to a gay, furry, pornographic, paedophilic video game.

A group chat has also been discovered which seems to indicate that multiple people knew there were plans to shoot Kirk on September 10 weeks or months in advance. Investigations into Robinson, the shooting and surrounding events are ongoing.

As Erika Kirk declared in her speeches, TPUSA's American Comeback Tour is continuing, and the first event was held on September 23rd in Minnesota by Michael Knowles, a conservative figure and friend of Kirk's. Rather than having the conversation with Charlie that had been planned, Knowles instead gave a tribute to him.

One of the many things Knowles said at the event was "The assassin, as well as the people who excused and cheered him on, thought that they could stop Charlie Kirk's movement. In reality, they have not even stopped his lecture tour."



FROM WASHINGTON TO BRASÍLIA: WHY DEMOCRACIES ARE REACHING BREAKING POINT

LINDA PODBURY

EDITOR IN CHIEF



Here in Australia, similar undercurrents are visible. Sovereign-citizen activism and allied networks have become more prominent across regional and suburban areas, with courts and police warning about safety risks and the strain on the justice system. Analysts link the movement's growth to cost-of-living pressures, alienation, and a pandemic-era distrust that has never fully dissipated.

This erosion of trust is a statistical reality. In the United States, public confidence in government has collapsed from roughly three-quarters of Americans in the early 1960s to just 22 percent today, near the lowest levels recorded in seven decades. The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer confirms this is a global pattern, finding persistent scepticism toward governments and media alike. The through-line is instability: citizens doubt their leaders' honesty and question whether institutions act in the public interest.

As faith has declined, direct action has surged. Political scientists now describe an "age of mass protests," with the Center for Strategic and International Studies estimating that protest frequency has risen by an average of 11.5 percent per year over the past decade.

The pattern of how this discontent is mobilized is now dangerously clear. After the 2020 U.S. election, baseless claims of voting-machine fraud circulated across Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram, easing mobilisation for the Capitol breach. Brazil's "8 de Janeiro" mirrored this playbook, drawing on doctored clips and false legal claims to turn grievance into an institutional assault. In Germany, the rise of the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) has coincided with sharper violence, and authorities have even uncovered extremist networks within the police.

In the United Kingdom, post-Brexit churn has produced chronic instability, with rapid prime-ministerial turnover and recurring scandals feeding a perception that Westminster is broken.

These crises are fueled by deep, interconnected failures. Economic dislocation has left wage growth lagging behind the cost of living, making people receptive to narratives of a tilted system. This is compounded by information disorder, as social media platforms amplify outrage and accelerate mobilisation. Finally, the social fabric is thinning as participation in community groups, unions, and faith organisations declines, leaving people more politically tribal.

As a case study by International IDEA on Brazil shows, the delegitimising of courts and electoral bodies paves the way for a physical assault on democracy itself. Here in Australia, WA's Chief Justice has warned that sovereign-citizen challenges to legal authority are a "real and growing" threat to social stability.

Australia has not seen a Capitol or Brasília-style breach, but the prerequisites for deeper strain are visible. Sovereign-citizen filings appear regularly in our courtrooms. Protests over immigration and identity attract harder edges. Public trust has fallen below half, and experts caution that prolonged economic stress combined with digital radicalisation risks hardening cynicism into rejection.

Democracies rarely collapse in a single instant. They fray. Trust ebbs, institutions stumble, and shared facts become optional.

Washington and Brasília were alarms, not outliers. Germany's institutional tests and the UK's governance fatigue show how quickly norms can thin when confidence wavers. Australia is not immune. Rebuilding trust won't happen by wishful thinking; it requires deliberate choices. It requires investment in media literacy, economic policies that restore fairness, and regulatory frameworks that can finally keep pace with algorithm-driven mobilisation. Without them, we will keep treating the symptoms of rage while the disease of distrust spreads.

On January 6, 2021, rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., in an attempt to overturn a democratic election. Just over two years later, on January 8, 2023, supporters of Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro stormed Congress, the Supreme Court, and the presidential palace in Brasília – driven by false claims of fraud and months of polarisation. These scenes, separated by geography and language, weren't random flare-ups. They were symptoms of a wider democratic distress.



HOW ECONOMIC INEQUALITY FUELS POLITICAL VIOLENCE

FOCUS
HEATH CLARK
PUBLISHER


Economic Inequality and political violence are quite closely linked, but not for the reasons that most people think. Countries where there is a greater divide between classes do not correlate with more violent conflict than other countries with less inequality. However, inequality by religion, ethnicity or cultural identities displays a significantly higher risk of armed conflict (such as the partition of India and Central Asia tensions).

Dr Gudrun Ostby of the IASR rejects that vertical inequality (inter-individual) claiming it has very little

empirical evidence despite common assumptions by political leaders and scholars. At the same time, arguing that horizontal inequality (between groups) does correlate to a rise in political violence, but outlines the challenge of measuring the two.

In addition, Dr Havard Mokleiv Nygard from the World Bank Blogs suggests economic inequality is not enough of a factor to unify groups of significant proportions to rebel against a state. Instead, Dr Nygard suggests that inequality between identity groups rather than individuals/aggregate classes, has a much larger impact.

An example, such as Generational inequality observed in Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Philippines, has been argued by experts as major contributors to political violence. Higher taxation, regulations on younger cohorts of a populace while providing tax breaks or less than proportionate levies on older populations can create room for discontent.

Younger generations feel like they are punished, picking up the tab for the mistakes and vast government spending from older cohorts. These policies allows a potential for the fall in a populace's disposable income and a rise in the cost of living which impacts the ability for people to satisfy their needs.

A rise in political violence (as well as broader violence) can also be observed through ethnic targeted divisions such as South Africa's Apartheid and the United States' Segregation and Redlining.

When certain groups are systematically denied access to resources, opportunities, or political power based on their identity, the result is not just an economic divide but also a deep sense of injustice and marginalisation, crime rises and cross ethnic divides widen, separatist movements grow.

While economic inequality is rarely framed as a major driver of political violence, it often has a multiplier effect on other societal grievances such as ideological/political discontent, racial/ethnic divides,

class divides, religious and so forth.

Dr Nevenko Bartulin, an expert in central European racial identity studies identifies events such as the rise of Nazi Germany, where economic hardships that were imposed horizontally (On the German people) by it's own government and the stipulations of the treaty of Versailles exacerbated ideological, religious and racial divides.

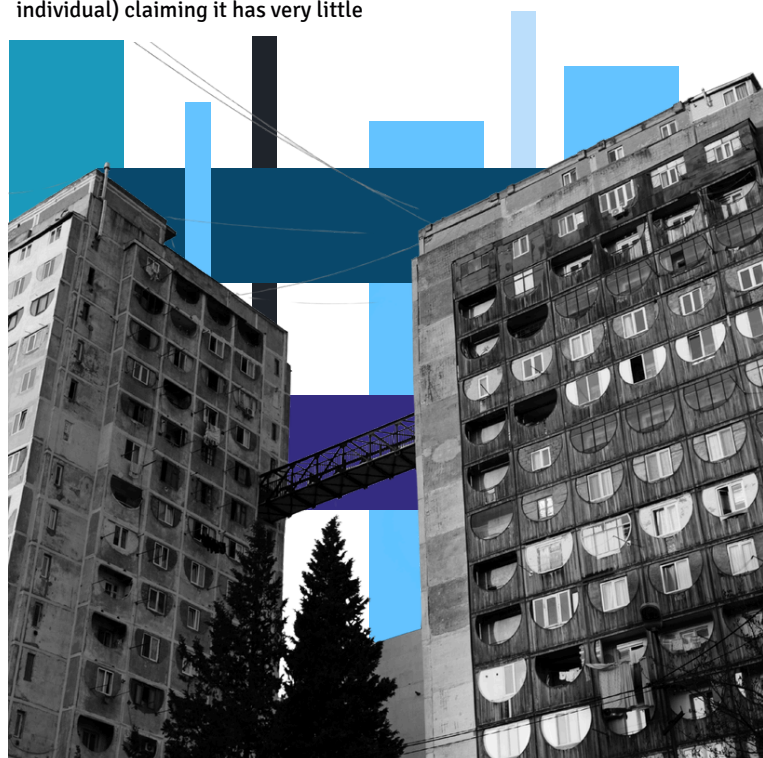
The National Socialists used economic inequality to deepen identity based divisions, propagating myths and driving resentment with the goal of building national unity against the entente powers and scapegoating minorities such as Jews. Dr Bartulin also explores similar concepts through his focus on central European/Croatian race theories.

Can the Cycle Be Broken?

Breaking the cycle is significantly challenging, but it is possible to tackle this issue depending on what side of politics you are on.

The right (economic liberals) would emphasize lowering taxes, particularly on businesses and higher earners can stimulate economic growth and job creation. Right wing economists argue that such measures can result in a trickle down effect that lifts all, improving standards of living for the most disadvantaged groups.

Other policies include deregulation and suggesting market forces should



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drive the allocation of resources. Liberals encourage competing in the market to reduce inequality and put greater emphasis on individual responsibility.

They also encourage private charities and voluntary contributions should play a dominant role in welfare reducing the burden on state institutions.

However the left argues that uneven economic benefits, lack of safety nets and failure of the market to provide services as major flaws in their strategy.

On the left (social democrats) would include policies such as progressive taxation where wealthier individuals and corporations pay a larger share of income or profits, in return funding government programs such as welfare, health and other services which aim to reduce inequality.

Developing social welfare and public investment reduces disparities in access to resources, left wing economists would argue this is a critical step in tackling horizontal inequality. Social democrats also advocate for greater labor rights and union support to provide greater protections and benefits aimed at reducing inequality on a class level.

Other policies include affirmative action (called “positive discrimination” on the right) where historically marginalized identity groups receive target support to address disparities; however these are classed as equality of outcome.

The right claims that a overreliance on state intervention can lead to government inefficiency and dependency culture, higher tax burdens disincentivise investment and affirmative action conflicting their beliefs in meritocracy.

A Complex Challenge

Ultimately, breaking the cycle of economic inequality and political violence requires multi-faceted solutions that incorporate both economic and social strategies.

Whether through market-driven growth or redistributive policies, addressing inequality at both the individual and group levels is essential. However, no single policy can solve the problem entirely.

The intersection of economic hardship, identity-based inequality, and political violence requires careful consideration of the historical, social, and political factors that drive division and unrest.

By adopting comprehensive policies tailored to the unique conditions of each society, there is a possibility to break the cycle—but only if there is a clear commitment to reducing both economic and identity-based inequalities.



THE TOP 1%, WHAT THEY'RE WORTH TODAY

ELON MUSK - \$324B

MARK ZUCKERBERG - \$216B

JEFF BEZOS - \$215B

LARRY ELSON - \$192B

BERNARD ARNAULT - \$178B

WARREN BUFFET - \$154B

LARRY PAGE - \$144B

SERGEY BRIN - \$138B

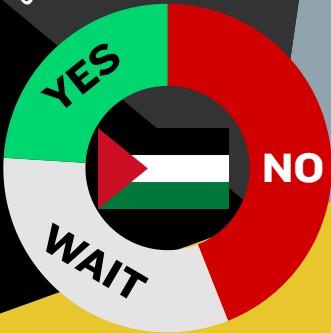


THIS MONTH IN NUMBERS

1 In 3
American students believe political violence to stop a speaker is acceptable

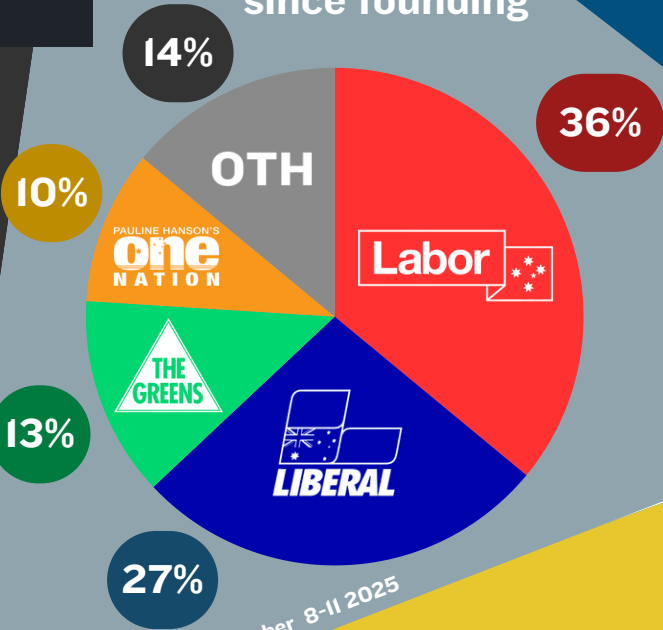
Source: Resolve Political Monitor, August 2025

4 In 5
Australians Believe now is not the right time to recognise Palestine



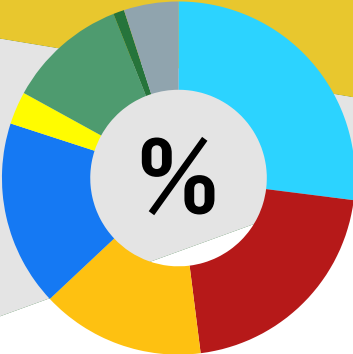
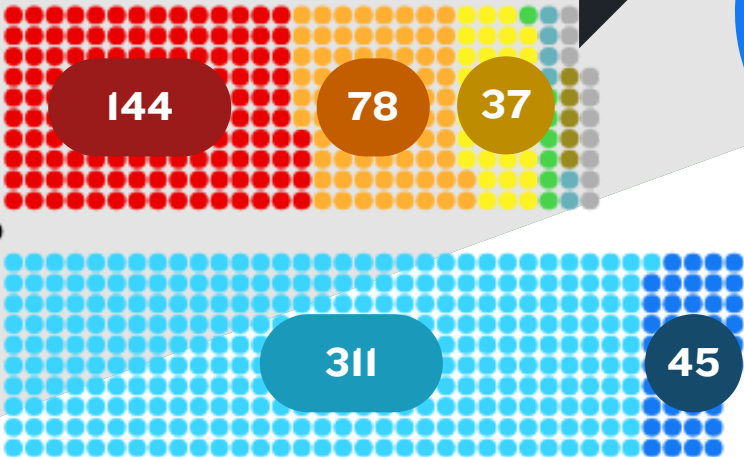
Source: Newspoll, September 8-11 2025

The Coalition faces lowest primary vote rankings since founding



≈ \$39B in US Tariff Revenue Collected This September

REFORM UK PROJECTED LARGEST PARTY



THE PUSH FOR "GREATER ISRAEL"

HEATH CLARK

PUBLISHER

@_HESHUATASSIE_



September 2025, Jerusalem — Israel's territorial ambitions, particularly regarding the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights, continue to shape the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The term "Greater Israel," often used by proponents of territorial expansion, refers to a belief in reclaiming land they consider divinely promised. Historically, this vision extended to parts of Lebanon, Syria, and the Sinai Peninsula, but today, Israel's focus is largely on the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel has recently launched a military offensive aimed at capturing Gaza City, signaling the potential for a broader Israeli operation to take full control of Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated that Israel does not intend to maintain long-term control over Gaza, but the lack of clarity on plans for the aftermath raises questions about Israel's long-term intentions.

The Gaza Strip, home to over 2 million Palestinians, has been under Israeli blockade since 2007, and violent confrontations between Israel and Palestinian factions have been frequent. The latest offensive has reignited fears of further instability in the region.

The West Bank, occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War, remains central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the Oslo Accords of the 1990s granted limited Palestinian self-government in urban areas, Israel continues to maintain control over much of the territory. Over 3 million Palestinians live in the West Bank alongside 600,000 Jewish settlers, whose settlements are considered illegal under international law.

Israel's settlement expansion has been a point of contention, with the recent approval of the E1 settlement project raising alarm. E1 would create a new settlement corridor deep into the West Bank, cutting off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and effectively isolating Palestinian communities. Critics argue that this project threatens the possibility of a future Palestinian state.

Bezalel Smotrich, Israel's finance minister, has proposed annexing 82% of the West Bank, leaving Palestinians in isolated enclaves. His proposal to "bury the idea of a Palestinian state" has been supported by Israel's far-right factions.

In July, the Israeli Knesset passed a symbolic motion calling for the annexation of Gaza and the West Bank, signaling growing political momentum for territorial expansion.



However, the government has since backed away from formal annexation, mindful of the potential diplomatic fallout, especially from the UAE, which warned that such moves would be a "red line" for their relationship with Israel.

The Golan Heights, captured from Syria in 1967 and annexed in 1981, is another area of strategic importance to Israel. In recent years, Israel has strengthened its control over the region, especially following the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria.

Israeli forces have taken up positions on Mount Hermon, which overlooks Damascus, and the military has stated that it is prepared to remain in the Golan "for an unlimited amount of time" to protect northern Israel.

Despite international criticism of its settlement policies and expansion plans, Israel remains largely unconstrained by foreign pressure. The United States, Israel's key ally, continues to support Israel's sovereignty.

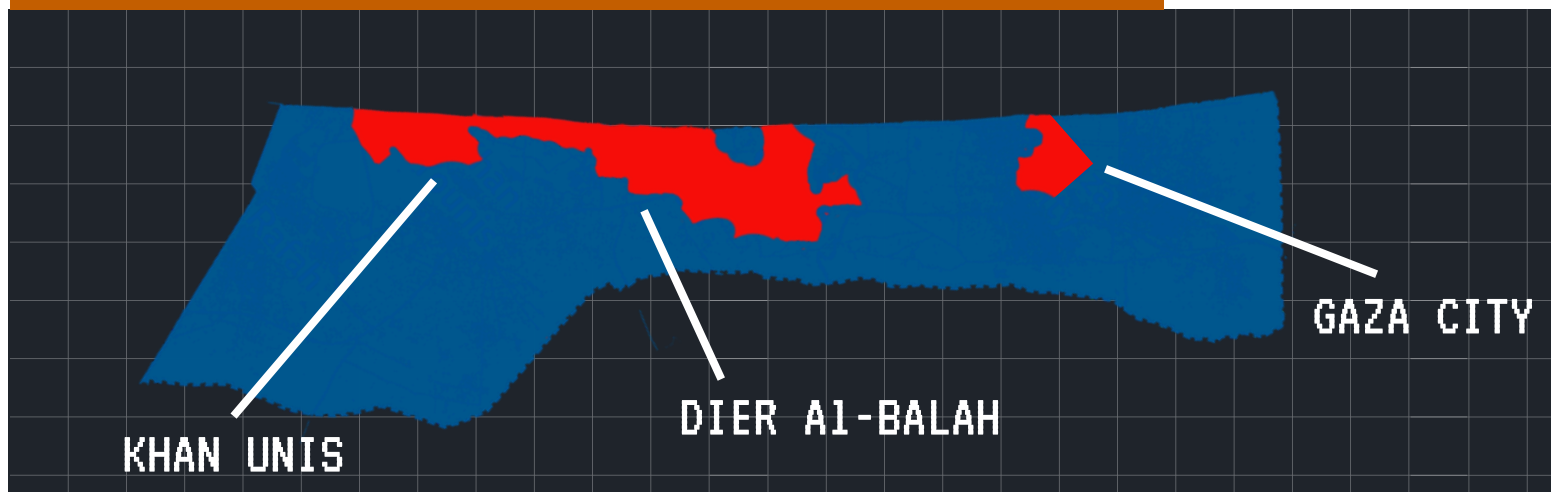
US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee recently reiterated, "We respect Israel as a sovereign nation and will not tell Israel what to do." This stance reflects the US's ongoing support, even as Israel faces growing international scrutiny.

As Israel moves forward with its territorial plans, the future of Palestinian territories remains uncertain. With mounting tensions and little international intervention, the region faces the prospect of further conflict, casting doubt on the prospects for peace.

GAZA STRIP
2.14 Million People

WEST BANK
4.02 Million People

GOLAN HEIGHTS
50 Thousand People





HINDU NATIONALISM THREATENS INDIA'S SECULAR FOUNDATIONS

RA BILKSLAGER
REPORTER



Udud, a country full of multiculturalism, home to more than 120 languages, the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, and host to the second-largest Muslim population globally. India is rich with diversity and values its secular foundations; declaring religious freedom as an essential right in the Indian constitution.

However, as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) maintains its political influence, having come to power in 2014, and with the rise of the BJP's parent organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Hindutva ideology, the embedded secularism of India is under threat.

What is the BJP and how do they relate to the rise of Hindu Nationalism?

Hindu nationalism, also known as Hindutva, it is a right-wing ethno-nationalist political ideology, that claims to advocate for India's significant Hindu-majority population and desires to make India an overtly Hindu nation-state.

Hindu nationalism is now closely linked to the BJP – a major political party in India founded in the 1980s –emerging from the Bharatiya Jana Sangh Party which opposed the ideals of the Indian National Congress. In 2014, the general election saw prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi claim

victory and secure a majority government for the BJP.

Since then, the BJP has continued to secure its majority government, gaining a total of 240 seats in the 2024 general elections, and having Narendra Modi take the oath as Prime Minister of Bharat; ultimately allowing him to lead for the third time. While they continue to gain political favour, the BJP also works to uphold their party's traditions and ideals of non-appeasement and Hindu nationalism.

How Hindu Nationalism threatens secularism?

Whilst the BJP formally claims to value and contribute to the maintaining of secularism, the policies and actions of the party have often demonstrated strong Hindu Nationalist ideologies, aiding the marginalising of religious minorities in India, such as Muslims, Christians and Judaists.

The 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act is just one example of this. The Act created exceptions to citizenship eligibility and processes for members of certain religious groups, including Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians, if they were from Pakistan, Afghanistan, or Bangladesh.

This Amendment created a lot of controversy as "faith cannot be made a condition of citizenship" and it was criticised for prioritising non-muslim refugees from muslim-majority countries; violating the constitutional

laws that protect religious freedoms and prohibit religious discrimination.

Other examples include the Uniform Civil Code, the Waqf (Amendment Act), and the continuous use of Anti-Muslim and Christian speech by members of the BJP, especially Narendra Modi, all of which increase the severity of the ongoing threat Hindu Nationalism has to secularism in India.

Socially, India has witnessed a sharp rise in violence and rhetoric against Christians and other minority religions since the 2014 general elections, intensifying after the 2024 polls. In the first 75 days of 2024 alone, 161 incidents were reported, and in August at least 28 attacks resulted 12 Muslim men and a Christian woman dead.

More recently in March 2025, Hindu Nationalist groups made violent demands to demolish the tomb of 17th century Muslim ruler Aurangzeb, the outcome of which injured several individuals and further fuelled the threatening divide between Hindu and Muslim communities.

What can be said for the future?

Just as with most of the other contemporary divisions and conflicts around the world the only way to know what the outcomes will be for certain is to wait for them to happen - hindsight. Although, and call me an optimist if you like, there is always hope if there are people willing to create action.

Instead of waiting around for events to unfold, or running in circles with 'what-ifs', ask yourself 'what can be done right now to help?'. Ideally, in order for India to continue to flourish in multiculturalism and for it to maintain its secular foundations, India's government needs to commit to representing and protecting diverse groups within the country's laws and policies.

But on an individualistic level, answering the question 'what can I do right now to help?' could be working to actively respect all identities, creating peace amongst religion and fighting for cultural unity.

Hindu Nationalism and the rise of ideology-based violence and rhetoric is not contained only to the borders of India.

It remains unsaid to what means and lengths Hindu nationalists will continue to go, and to what ends; but it is clear that their actions and ideology pose an extreme threat to India's secular foundations and are already creating a global impact





THE LONELINESS EPIDEMIC – CAN SOCIAL ISOLATION LEAD TO RADICALISATION?

**LJ
SCANDELLI**

CONTENT EDITOR



Recently, the news has been filled with stories of extremist groups crawling out from internet echo chambers and into our society. Concern is growing as we examine the social and cultural conditions that allow these groups to flourish.

Community is a cornerstone in our lives. We rely on it every day, especially in times of extreme stress and change. Deprivation of social interaction can have detrimental effects on our psyche, with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) linking social isolation to poor health behaviours. The AIHW also estimated in 2023 that 15% of Australians aged 15 and over experienced social isolation, with rates of 17% among males and 13% among females.

Loneliness and social isolation were concerns for health professionals before the COVID-19 pandemic, but the lockdowns that followed only exacerbated this issue. Since then, most age groups have reported lower levels in both loneliness and social isolation. In 2025, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recognised loneliness as a global issue, with it affecting 1 in 6 people worldwide. The WHO also recognised higher rates of loneliness in young people and in low-income countries.

The increasing number of young people experiencing social isolation has coincided with a rise in youth radicalisation and young people falling down radicalisation pipelines. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation said in 2024 that 20%

of its priority counterterrorism cases involved people under the age of 18. Furthermore, the ASIO and the AFP have investigated 35 young Australians for violent extremism since 2017, with the youngest offender being 12 years old.

Young people are already a vulnerable group in society, and rising feelings of loneliness and social deprivation make them more at risk of radicalisation. In the article *How Social Exclusion Makes Radicalism Flourish* the writers examined multiple experimental studies that exemplify how the effects of social deprivation on one's mental health can result in extreme behaviour.

They note how the world has undergone significant turmoil in the past decade, marked by increased financial stress, environmental crises, and the global pandemic. Thus, young people may turn to the internet to try to rationalise both real and perceived grievance, ultimately leading them down extremist pipelines.

"We've seen the world undergo a period of profound stress and upheaval over the past two decades... We've also seen profound changes to our society through internet and communications technologies that have had a number of ill-effects, including the growth of disinformation, the fracturing of consensus reality, diminished agency and privacy, among many disruptions and harms." – Parliament of Australia in *Pathways to Radicalisation*

It is also worth noting how algorithms work on apps such as TikTok and Instagram, which may contribute to the growing radicalisation among youth. One simple search or like on a video with the smallest seed of radical ideology can incite the algorithm to feed more videos like this until it is the only information they are receiving. The further an individual falls down the "pipeline" the harder it is to intervene.

Pipelines such as the "Incel (or Involuntary Celibate) pipeline" or the manosphere have demonstrated this

link between social deprivation and radicalisation. These communities are made up of predominantly young men who end up having aggressive, misogynistic and anti-feminist views.

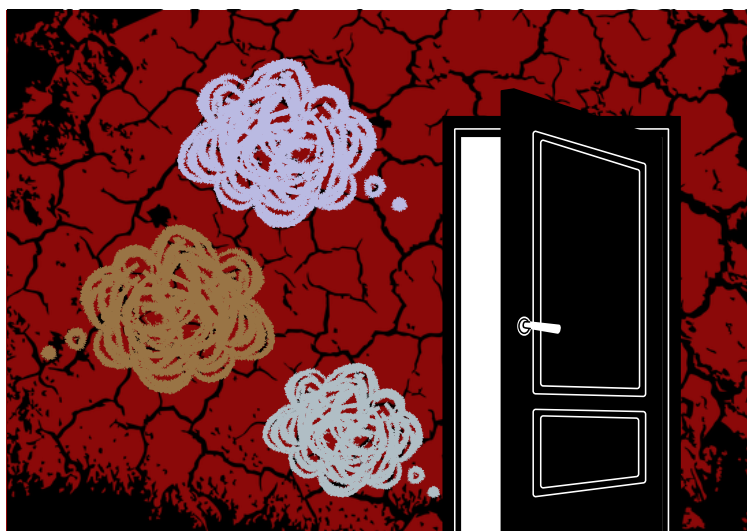
Young men may turn to these communities in the face of social isolation, with a lack of sexual intimacy being a central theme in these online forums. The experience of loneliness also extends to a lack of friendships and other critical social relationships, such as those with family. What begins as sharing feelings of loneliness with other men becomes scapegoating and holding increasingly egregious and violent views of women, which are echoed and sometimes carried out.

Intervention for young people is crucial in reducing radicalisation and the harm it causes. In an article published by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Henry Campbell discusses the importance of early intervention as opposed to reactive law enforcement. Noticing the signs of radicalisation for people who may be experiencing these thoughts and feelings is essential in defusing the spark that has allowed communities like these to burn in the past. He also expresses the importance of schools and families playing a more proactive role in supporting at-risk youth so they don't turn to these online communities for validation.

Furthermore, in Brad Stulberg's *Times* article, titled *Loneliness Can Make You Vulnerable to Extremism*, he discusses how raising awareness about how the "attention economy" is actually disconnecting us from others, rather than acting as a way to connect. This awareness may also serve as a preventive measure for young people at risk.

The rise of young people engaging in political radicalism highlights the need to understand the factors that connect vulnerable individuals to radical groups. Social isolation often drives young people to these groups for a sense of community and to rationalize uncertainty. The internet, with its algorithms, makes it easier to find and be continuously exposed to radical content,

leading individuals into a "pipeline." Recognizing these conditions helps communities intervene early and identify those at risk of radicalization.

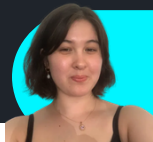




FILTER BUBBLES AND REAL WORLD EXTREMISM: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA MAKES US INTOLERANT OF DIFFERENCE

AKIRA KERR

REPORTER



If you feel like lately the world is more polarised than usual, well, that's because it might be. In Australia alone we've been seeing at best anti-immigration sentiment, and at worst, Neo-Nazis parading the streets of our major cities.

Over in the US, a notable right wing conservative propagandist has been shot and killed by someone who disagreed with his views. Upon his death he became a martyr and a topic of heated debate.

So, what brings about these visceral shows of hate and intolerance of the 'other side'? How does sentiment that only exists in fringe chatrooms at murky websites end up on our streets threatening to hurt people?

Two words: Filter bubbles.

I'm hedging a guess that your social media feed is exactly how you want it to be. You see posts that align with your interests, news from sources that you tend to agree with, and just the right amount of cat videos to keep you happy to spend time on the apps.

And this makes sense, you follow a bunch of accounts that you like (or begrudgingly followed back, hey grandma!), and so your feed should reflect that.

But what about your 'For You' page on TikTok, or your 'Discover' page on Instagram? Well, obviously there's a certain level of pushing content that's similar to that of accounts you already follow.

But there's also a deeper, more complicated system at play that guesses and preselects content for you, keeping you on the app for as long as it can.

FOCUS

According to Ermelinda Rodillosso, the key function at play when it comes to filter bubbles is Recommender Systems (RS) which is a type of Machine Learning Algorithm. RS is a software tool that tries to recommend suitable products and services to a user.

It is specific; data on preferences, behaviour and historical actions are used to inform its recommendations. This is designed to increase engagement by meeting the users needs and interests. This system, which doesn't just exist on social media, also aims to assist the user in simplifying their experience on any given site.

It might be when you're shopping for skincare and the website suggests a good pairing for a product you're looking at, or asks you if you need to restock something you bought six months ago. It uses both implicit and explicit feedback – a 'like' on a particular post, versus your browsing history.

This seems pretty harmless at face value, but where it becomes an issue is when a user unknowingly faces epistemic isolation and gets trapped in a filter bubble.

RS only shows us what we want to see, meaning that our views and opinions are constantly gratified and we become intolerant of anything else.

Mix that with meeting or seeing content from people who also exist in the same filter bubble, it becomes a group of people who, to themselves, are always in the right and never in the wrong.

A clear example of this, which has been permeating our culture for a while now, is the effect of Andrew Tate and the 'Manosphere'. It has



BLINDSPOT NEWS

become a key topic of cultural conversation, so much so that the Netflix mini-series Adolescence was based around this issue.

Recently, and though it's a lighthearted case study, a TikTok openly discussed how he had fallen into the manosphere and was unknowingly consuming content that 'radicalised' him. Flynn Martin had detailed in a TikTok that when he took a date to Yochi, she made it a very expensive affair for him as she swirled yoghurt into her cup like there was no tomorrow.

He faced a lot of backlash, where mostly women in the comment section were cheering on the girl who took advantage of a free frozen sweet treat, calling out his 'straight white male behaviour' to which he had a very manospheric response.

Amongst other things, he asked his female audience who is going to protect them when a man assaults them and said 'What's wrong with being fit, healthy [and] not gay?... without people like me, you don't reproduce'. After this and undoubtedly a lot of unfollows and

reprimand in his comment section, he appeared on a podcast saying that he had subconsciously taken on some of the ideas that Tate talked about in his videos and had been trapped in a filter bubble of toxic masculinity.

So while the case of Flynn Martin ended up just being an internet moment for the archives, the filter bubble entrapment to real life violence pipeline happens all too quickly and intensely. The paradox of extreme connectedness with people who align with our views, and extreme disconnectedness with those that oppose them, threatens to dismantle our already teetering social cohesion.

So while the case of Flynn Martin ended up just being an internet moment for the archives, the filter bubble entrapment to real life violence pipeline happens all too quickly and intensely. The paradox of extreme connectedness with people who align with our views, and extreme disconnectedness with those that oppose them, threatens to dismantle our already teetering social cohesion.

Groups such as Stormfront, The Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, The Nationalist Socialist Network are all such groups that came together through shared far-right extremist beliefs and have caused notable violence and terrorism in public spaces. The perception that everyone thinks the same way as them is emboldening, and sometimes leads to ill-conceived notions of untouchability in the eyes of law.

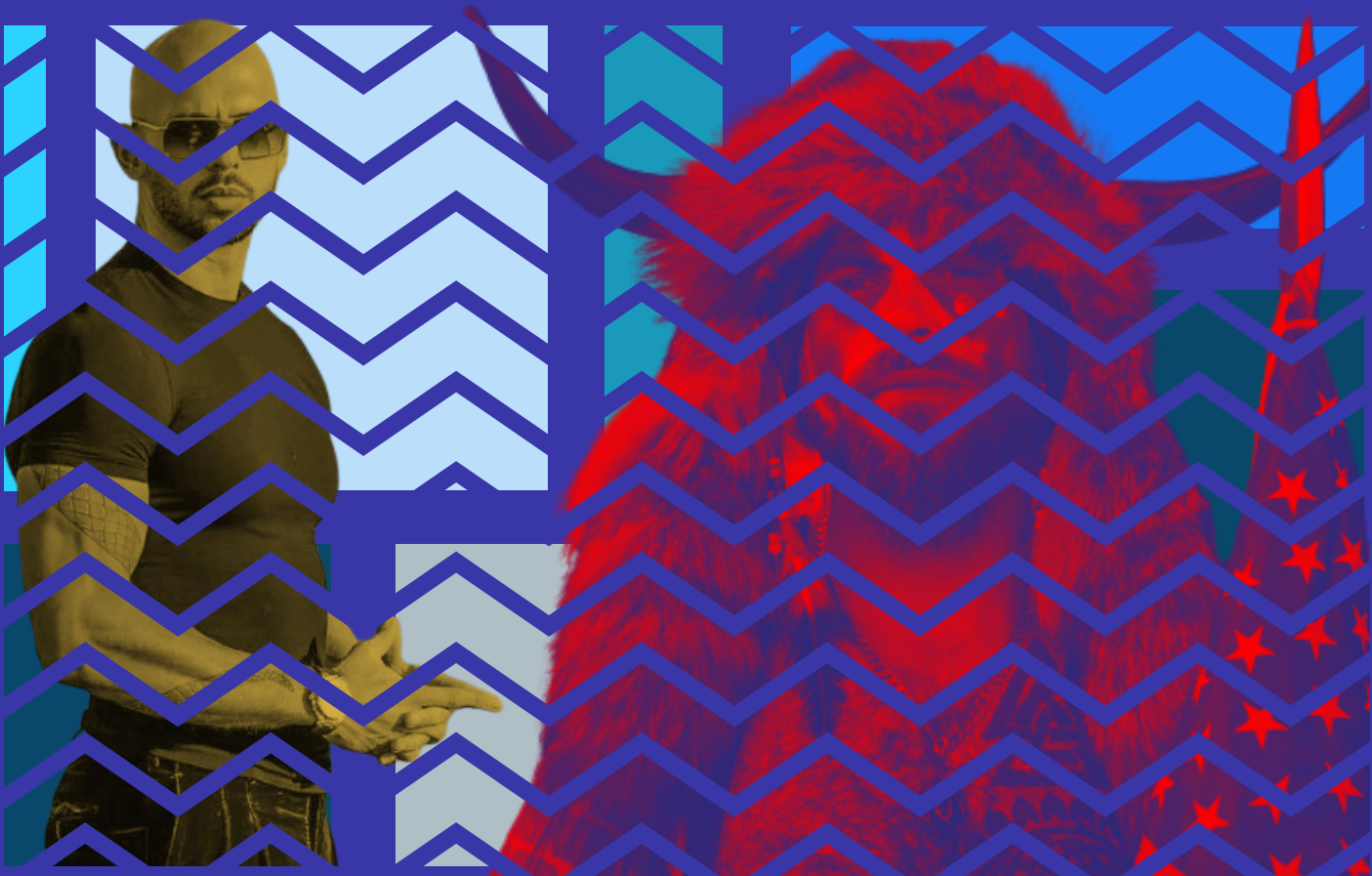
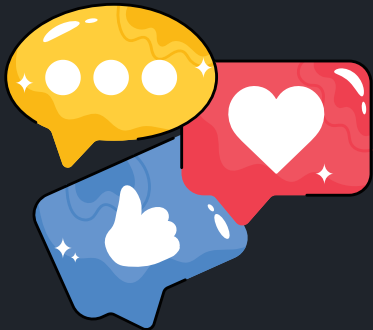
Drawing you back to the 6th January 2021, the Capitol of the United States was attacked by a mass of Donald Trump supporters who believed that the election that decided Joe Biden's incoming presidency was rigged. Taking it upon themselves to restore Trump to his position as president they stormed the white house where many were killed or injured.

The dangerous threat to democracy was conspired by leaders of the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, Enrique Tarrio and Stewart Rhodes respectively, who both were convicted of seditious conspiracy, amongst other things.

No matter what side or area of ideology, an online group that goes unchecked, unquestioned and believes themselves to be unequivocally correct will always develop an unbearable sensitivity to difference.

Social media plays an important part in community building, but like-mindedness without experiencing opposing views can fester into a dangerous place of extremism and violence.

So next time you bristle at seeing a post that goes against your world-view, think 'am I in a filter bubble?'.





UNIVERSITY PROTESTS UNDER FIRE FROM FREE SPEECH RESTRICTIONS AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

CHIARA REID

WRITER



Protesting has played a significant role in civil rights movements throughout history, often serving as a catalyst for social and political change. Universities have frequently been sites of this activism, with students contributing to major reform efforts. However, while protest is a recognised form of democratic expression, it can often lead to conflict or be met with resistance.

In recent years peaceful university protests have increasingly escalated into threats and political violence. In 2025, many students who believed they were exercising their rights to free speech found themselves facing suppression and intimidation from the institutions they thought would protect them.

In the U.S., President Donald Trump has cracked down on universities where pro-Palestinian protests have been a focus of many students. He has targeted 60 universities across the country for federal investigation as a part of an effort to fight antisemitism (though reasoning for this fight is based on allegations), threatening them with slashed federal research funding if they are believed to be failing in efforts to protect Jewish students.

Many universities have warned their students to mind their behaviour and cautioned international students in particular, as they have been threatened with deportation for protest participation. More than 6000 visas were revoked from international students from when Trump took office and August, with

many cases citing their participation in pro-Palestinian protests.

Columbia University has been particularly under scrutiny, being accused of caving to the demands of the Trump administration such as tougher student discipline, limiting areas that students were allowed to protest. Columbia sanctioned over 70 students in July, with around 80% receiving suspensions, expulsions, or degree revocations.

Similar issues and debates with free speech in universities have occurred in other countries such as the UK and Australia. Last August in the UK, the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 came into practice, aimed at preventing universities from censoring controversial or unpopular ideas, which has been the previous practice. However, some critics argue that this may still leave vulnerable groups without enough protection.

Meanwhile in Australia, some Universities have taken a more Trump-like approach to free speech, but without the government threats.

The University of Melbourne for example, has restricted pro-Palestinian protests lead by their students, banning indoor protests and threatening enrolment terminations to staff and students who engage in peaceful sit-ins or protests viewed as 'disruptive'.

The University also permits the surveillance of people on their Wi-Fi network, where they can track and locate staff and students and monitor their activities

Universities are increasingly becoming flashpoints for political violence and free speech clashes due to their role as traditional hubs of activism, combined with heightened global tensions and shifting institutional responses.

Recent demonstrations around the war in Gaza have triggered aggressive crackdowns, with students across the U.S, UK, and Australia facing disciplinary action, surveillance, and even visa revocations for participating in peaceful protests. Government pressure in the U.S, new legislation in the UK, and restrictive policies

from educational institutions in Australia signal an increasing trend of universities tightening control over protest activity, often in the name of safety or neutrality.

As universities navigate this volatile terrain, the challenge remains: how to uphold free expression without compromising safety, privacy, or the integrity of academic life?





MARCH FOR AUSTRALIA: HOW NEO-NAZI EXTREMISTS HIJACKED A NATIONAL PROTEST

LINDA PODBURY
EDITOR IN CHIEF



While organisers of the "March for Australia" rallies promised a mainstream protest, they delivered a platform for extremist violence and neo-Nazi symbolism.

Evidence from police, court proceedings, and independent reporting shows a coordinated effort by far-right actors to capitalise on the events, drawing thousands of otherwise non-extremist Australians into their optics.

In the week before the rallies, ABC News found the campaign's website promoted "remigration"—a white-nationalist term for mass deportations—before quickly scrubbing the reference. Researchers also documented organisers sharing white-supremacist material online.

The extremist presence was not incidental. In Melbourne, National Socialist Network leader Thomas Sewell addressed rally-goers on the steps of Parliament. Hours later, a black-clad group using sticks and flagpoles attacked Camp Sovereignty, an Indigenous protest site.

Victoria's police minister confirmed that counter-terrorism police would assist the investigation. Eyewitness accounts described men damaging signage and assaulting activists, leaving multiple people injured and prompting Indigenous leaders to call for hate-crime charges.

Across Australia, the signals were just as clear. In Perth, members of a neo-Nazi group were filmed chanting "heil Australia." While WA Police described the chant as "distasteful," they confirmed it did not breach state hate-speech laws – an assessment that highlights both the boldness of =

the participants and the limits of current legislation. National coverage recorded neo-Nazis and right-wing politicians among the crowds in several capitals, with police deploying pepper spray to prevent clashes in Melbourne.

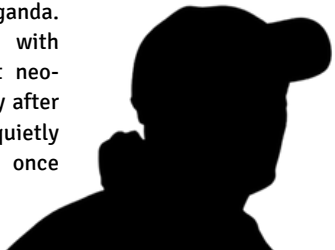
It would be a mistake to assume every person in the crowd was an extremist. Many attendees likely came with genuine concerns about housing shortages, the cost of living, and migration levels. But this exact mix of motivations is what made the rallies so exploitable.

Extremist groups used the visuals of a mass movement to normalise their presence and generate propaganda. This reality directly clashed with organisers' public claims that neo-Nazis played no role, especially after the term "remigration" quietly vanished from their website once scrutiny intensified.

For policymakers, the lesson is not to caricature every attendee, but to recognise how easily broad-based anger can be hijacked.

The attack on Camp Sovereignty demonstrates how street-level violence can materialise at the edges of events framed as "mainstream." While law enforcement is taking the threat seriously, incidents like the Perth chant reveal legal gaps that extremists are adept at exploiting.

The result is a predictable pattern: mainstream grievances provide the crowd, extremists provide the violence, and vulnerable communities bear the consequences.



'CAN'T HAPPEN HERE?': THE DATA BEHIND RISING POLITICAL EXTREMISM IN AUSTRALIA

MAX MCLEOD
PODCAST HOST
@MAXMCLEODPUBLIC



Much of the recent discussion on politically motivated violence has focused on the United States. That is understandable, considering recent events. A more pertinent discussion for Australians to have, however, is one focused on the nature of political extremism in our own country.

ASIO, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, is our country's domestic intelligence agency responsible for protecting against threats including terrorism, espionage, and foreign interference. It is also tasked with monitoring and preventing politically motivated violence.

In August 2024, it made the much-publicised decision to raise the national terrorism threat level back to 'probable'. This indicates that 'a terrorist attack is probable and the government has concerns of a plausible threat'. It is the third level of a five-level scale.

According to the Organisation, the enduring threats facing Australia are broken down into four categories..

Offshore actors attacking our citizens overseas and inspiring attacks domestically; religiously motivated violent extremism, especially from groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda; ideologically motivated violent extremism, particularly white nationalist groups; and high-risk terrorist offenders already in custody, who would pose a threat to the community were they released.

Especially since the COVID pandemic, trust in governments, institutions, and democracy itself has been in decline across the western world. Political polarisation has surged, debates are becoming more hostile, and protests have turned increasingly violent.

Conspiracy theories have also thrived in this vacuum of institutional trust. Further, overseas conflicts are creating divisions or stoking pre-existing ones.

Amid this backdrop, ASIO observes that Australians are adopting a wider range of extreme ideologies, and are more willing to use violence to further their political goals.

Currently, right-wing extremism constitutes the largest threat to Australia when it comes to politically motivated violence.



In March 2021, Victoria Police reported that 40% of extremists currently monitored in the state were deemed to be right-wing. In 2024, the majority of ASIO investigations into potential terrorist matters involved mixed ideologies or nationalist and racist ideologies, with religiously motivated extremism constituting a minority of cases.

Right-wing extremism has historically centred on white nationalism, but since 9/11 it has also broadened to include opposition to Islam.

According to Associate Professor Debra Smith, Dr. Julian Droogan, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal and Lise Waldek, right-wing extremists are attempting to hijack conservative political

narratives to increase their legitimacy. Dr. John Byron of QUT claims that they use free speech as a tool to silence more moderate conservative voices. For example, casting critiques of their extremist ideas as attempts to silence them or curtail their freedom of speech. This is part of a broader effort to mainstream their ideology and expand their movement.

Burgess also notes a continuing escalation in anti-Semitic attacks since the start of war in the Middle East in October 2023. Specifically, he mentioned the conflation of Jewish Australians and the State of Israel by some members of the pro-Palestine movement, and the expansion of narratives concerning "freeing Palestine" to include incitements to "kill the Jews".





'CAN'T HAPPEN HERE?': THE DATA BEHIND RISING POLITICAL EXTREMISM IN AUSTRALIA

ASIO is noticing that unique personal grievances are now becoming a more central feature of radicalisation. Rather than adopting a coherent, widely-recognisable ideology, individuals' ideological motivations are rapidly changing, hybrid, and unclear. This makes it difficult for law enforcement to identify extremists, and for deradicalisation programs to be effective.

Another concerning aspect of violent extremism is the prevalence of minors embracing it. This is a problem both in Australia and overseas.

In 2024, almost all of the potential terrorist matters ASIO investigated involved minors. The median age at which minors were first subject to investigation was 15. All were lone actors or small groups, and almost all were previously unknown to law enforcement.

Social media plays a significant role in radicalisation. Algorithms are designed to hold users' attention by showing them more of what they already like, which includes their political beliefs.

There is a financial incentive for platforms to create echo chambers. It is also difficult to contain the volume and spread of extremist content, especially now with the prevalence of AI.

Youths are especially vulnerable to radicalisation as they attempt to make sense of the world while undergoing emotional, physical, and social changes. They also have limited power over their own lives or society. This makes them prime targets for recruitment by extremists, who often promise they will become heroes or lions of a cause greater than themselves.

ASIO expects politically motivated violence to remain an 'elevated concern' through to the end of this decade. Further, Mr. Burgess anticipates that the national terrorism threat level will not be lowered for the foreseeable future. He advocates a whole-of-society approach to tackling the issue, stressing that we cannot arrest ourselves out of politically motivated violence.

The lesson for all Australians who care about peaceful politics is to have the courage to critique extremist and violent ideologies wherever they are prevalent, be wary of the effect social media use has on our tolerance of others, and build strong community bonds to support others in times of personal crisis.



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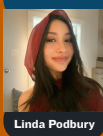
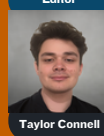
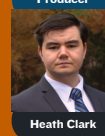
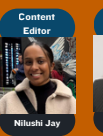
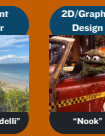
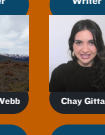
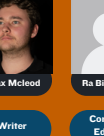
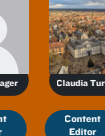
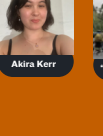
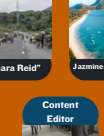
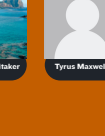
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