THE WARREN

AT Historical Inquiry
Issue No. 2

/'wɒr.ən/
noun

a series of connecting
underground passages
in which rabbits live

Follow us down
the rabbit hole
for this year's
theme:
IDEOLOGICAL
EXTREMISM



Welcome to the AT History Class Magazine!

Each year in AT Historical Inquiry we are given the opportunity to select topics and themes that are meaningful to us. This year we chose Ideological Extremism. Once we settled on our theme, all classes worked together to build out our syllabus with engaging and meaningful content.

We began by learning about theories of radicalization and extremism in the Middle East, looking specifically at ISIS. This included reading *ISIS: State of Terror*, by Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, and podcasts such as Rukmini Callimachi's now-infamous *Caliphate*. With insight into the history behind the terrorist group's formation, we delved deeper into patterns of extremism, including a focus on recent events in the United States.

After learning as a class, each of us selected a contemporary issue relating to extremism and conducted extensive research to write an op-ed article and draw our own political cartoon. Working together to create a magazine layout was an additional engaging but significant challenge.

The pages ahead showcase each student's article and their cartoon. Enjoy!

- Sofia Camez and Dhruv Mathur, AT History Class of 2021

Original Cover Art By Karu Kumar and Olivia Wong

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The problem with Chinese Nationalism

Enoch Cohen



On the 4th of June, 1989, at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, nothing remarkable happened. At least this is what you'd be led to believe if you **were taught in the Chinese education system. But most know that's not the entire truth. In reality, hundreds of peaceful demonstrators** were massacred by the People's Liberation Army as they rallied to demand more rights. As outsiders, we learn of the atrocities that occurred during those protests; but most people in China are unaware. This is not an accident, it is just one of the things done intentionally by the Chinese government in order to gloss over controversial parts of its history and rewrite the narrative. It shows the extent to which China is ready to go to create a strong sense of nationalism, even at the expense of human rights, peace, and diplomatic relations.

Today nationalism has undeniably become a major part of the Chinese identity. On the surface, it seems easy to understand why this is happening. China is one of the world's fastest growing economies, it has one of the strongest militaries in the world, and the largest population. However, China's nationalism is not only built on the country's accomplishments, it is also fuelled by suppression of the truth and the promotion of anti-foreign sentiment.

First, we need to understand what form nationalism takes in China and how it has managed to spread so quickly. Beginning with censorship and propaganda. The "Great Firewall" allows the government to heavily restrict the internet by censoring information which challenges the official dogma or criticizes government positions. The government adopts a similar approach with education, television, and publications which are either self-censored or forcefully censored. Historical censorship is not a new concept in China, but it's becoming more and more frequent, which is why most young Chinese today have never even heard of events like the Tiananmen Square protests. Secondly, China has begun a campaign to demonize the rest of the world, specifically, it's ideological rivals. This is done through the propagation of a revanchist mentality and more recently, "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy". China continues to place a strong emphasis on "the Century of Humiliation", a period between the 19th and 20th century when actions by Western powers in China led to several wars. These resulted in treaties which forced China to cede territory and accept imports of opium. While the Opium Wars are old history, putting a spotlight on these events creates resentment among the public, further strengthening nationalism.Wolf Warrior diplomacy, which refers to the aggressive stance that Chinese diplomats take in order to defend Chinese interests, actively spreads misinformation, much of it on social media. The latest example is a Chinese diplomat posting a fabricated image of an Australian soldier holding a knife to the throat of an Afghan child. But it is not just words that make up Chinese nationalism. China currently pursues claims over various territories including the South China Sea, Taiwan, and the Himalayas.

There are two main reasons why China has gone to such extremes to instill nationalism in its people. The first concerns the legitimacy of an unelected government. German sociologist Max Weber defined three types of political legitimacy, traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. Chinese leadership doesn't fit in any of these categories, so to build legitimacy, they create an association between the party and the achievements of China. Implying that as long as China is successful economically and gains strength, the Communist Party has a legitimate claim on power. The second reason is distracting the population from the failures of the nation. With all the success that China has achieved over the past few decades, it is not without its problems. Economic growth has slowed, inequality has increased, and corruption is rampant. By playing up nationalism, attention is directed away from the issues in China which could challenge the legitimacy of the ruling party. The implications of China's aggressive nationalism have the potential to affect all parts of the world. Over the past several years, Beijing has made it clear that they will continue their agenda despite criticism from the international community. This creates two potential risks.

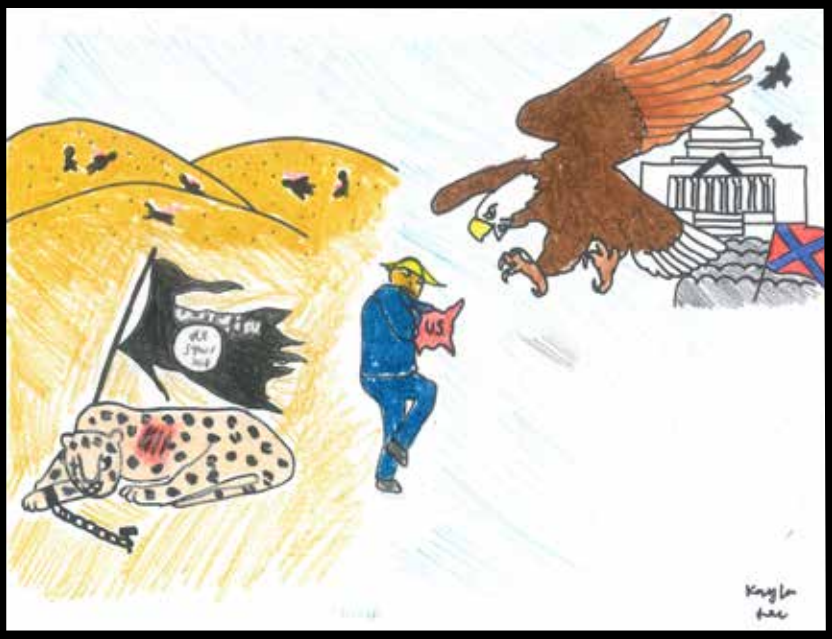
By challenging many countries in the world, China may reach a point where it no longer has workable ties with global powers, which would effectively isolate them. Evidence that China is concerned by this can be seen in its efforts to grow its domestic economy to be less dependent on foreign trade and investment. Regions that used to manufacture goods for export have shifted to R&D and innovation, and the government is encouraging domestic consumption.

More importantly, the government may find itself in a situation where popular pressure forces it into a conflict. With such a highly indoctrinated population, the government may no longer have the ability to peacefully resolve conflicts. In fact, this almost happened in 1999. During the Balkans war, the United States bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, claiming it to be an accident. The event caused an outrage among the Chinese public and violent protests erupted across China for the following days. Although they managed to defuse the protests at the time, it is unlikely that they would be able to control such a situation today. It's not farfetched to imagine China stumbling into a war on account of their own citizens.

FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISTS POSE AN ALARMING THREAT

By Kayla Lee

On October 8, 2020, the FBI announced the arrests of 13 suspects on charges of plotting to kidnap Gretchen Whitmer, the Governor of Michigan. Most of these suspects are part of a right-wing militia group called the Wolverine Watchmen, who conspired to protest Governor Whitmer's Covid-19 regulations. White supremacist groups, such as this one, have terrorized the United States, recently exceeding other national matters, as the most lethal threat to the US.



The Wolverine Watchmen appears as a minor violent group but does not seem to be of the same magnitude of danger as terrorists. The word "terrorist" invokes pictures of an Islamic soldier holding a machine gun, the burning Twin Towers, or the black ISIS flag. This image of terrorists depicts jihadists, violent Islamic radicals. The public perception of terrorists, however, must shift from jihadists to white supremacist terrorists as the rising threat of white supremacists surpasses the dwindling danger of jihadist groups. The universal image of terrorists can only change if the United States government recognizes white supremacists as a more severe threat.

Although jihadist terrorists have intimidated the American public in the past through large-scale and extreme attacks such as 9/11, right-wing terror groups more effectively express and deliver their messages due to a more significant influence and more violent tactics. Thus, it is imperative that the US government focuses on eradicating far-right extremism in the country.

One of the most efficient methods white supremacists exert their power is by exercising political influence. The concept of white supremacy has reached individuals who can govern, such as Stephen Miller. Miller, the senior advisor for policy and chief speechwriter for Donald Trump, has been consistently linked to white supremacism. Though he had denied such allegations, the Southern Poverty Law Center's Hatewatch exposed 900 emails written by Miller before the 2016 presidential election. In these emails, Miller's support of white supremacism, such as endorsing the "great replacement" theory, was prominent (Clark, Simon). As the advisory to the president on immigration, Miller has instituted the Trump administrations' controversial immigration policies ("Stephen Miller's Influence on Immigration Policy"). Jihadists failed to make a heavy impact on American politics, but the idea of white supremacy has penetrated American politics.

While political influence is a well-structured method of delivering white supremacist messages, physical violence is another way of doing this. White supremacists have caused more casualties in the U.S. than any other terrorist group (Cai, Weiyi). Therefore, their impact is more substantial, especially compared to those of jihadists. Congress found that terrorists inspired by far-right ideologies committed 38 murders in 2019, 76% of all extremist murders. The terrorists were individuals inspired by Nazi, misogynistic, racist, and anti-immigrant ideas. For instance, on June 15, 2020, a white supremacist gunman killed nine black churchgoers during a prayer service in Charleston to protest his hate of minority races. This incident is merely among the few dozen attacks by white supremacists during the 21st century. (Cai, Weiyi)

The number of deaths caused by white supremacists surpasses the number of deaths caused by jihadists. White supremacists can more strongly assert their ideologies through their capability to injure and kill more people.

Jihadists have posed a more significant threat because they massacre civilians, such as in the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings and the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting. These attacks do not seem to target any specific cohort of people or any enclaves but aim to strike a big impression by murdering as many civilians as possible. This method of violence contrasts the more deliberate, distinguishing attacks of white supremacist terrorists. Though the jihadist's method of violence seems to have a longer-lasting impact, their sporadic attacks are less influential because random attacks fail to strengthen their message. The public will fail to understand the jihadists' beliefs because jihadist's irregularly conducted mass murders appear too arbitrary to have an intention other than to kill people. Because white supremacists prey on specific demographics of people, they can communicate their extremist ideologies precisely.

White supremacist terrorism is a less explored area of terrorism. Thus, to eradicate the growing threat of right-wing terrorism, the US government must recognize the right-wing as a legitimate threat and move to effectively counter their growing sentiments by obtaining more accurate and reliable information. Congress should move forward with legislation to establish right-wing terrorism as a security threat that requires long-term examination. Moreover, the public has been falsely assured of the safety of far-right terrorists from a racist rhetoric and exaggerated information. With the danger of white supremacist intensifying, it is vital that the public understands the true threat to their country and democracy. Congress must ensure that lawmakers and the public can access information on terrorism confirmed by the law. With the danger of white supremacist intensifying, it is vital that the public understands the true threat to their country.

The United States has been too engrossed in the threat jihadist terrorists pose to their country that they have failed to notice and acknowledge the danger white supremacists place in their own communities. For the safety and security of the American people, action must be taken to eradicate domestic far-right terrorism.



‘BOTH SIDES’ DOESN’T WORK HERE

By Declan Sheehan

On the morning of August 3rd, 2019, Patrick Crusius walked through the glass doors of a Walmart in El Paso, Texas. Without saying a word, he lifted his WASR-10 rifle and started firing at families shopping for school supplies, killing children and parents in response to what he called the “Hispanic invasion of Texas.” Six minutes later, when the first responders arrived, 23 innocent people had been killed and another 23 were injured.

Unfortunately, this event was only one in a long series of attacks inspired by right-wing ideologies. Crusius was inspired by a right-wing shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand, and he in turn inspired a white nationalist to attack a synagogue in Norway. These attacks are only the tip of a massive radical conservative iceberg, easily the USA’s top domestic security threat. Despite this, many Republican figures argue that left-wing extremism is a greater threat than anything from the right. Right-wing and left-wing terrorism should not be treated as two sides of the same coin; right-wing terrorism is a far greater threat to the USA today.

According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), right-wing terrorism has accounted for the majority of all terrorist attacks in the US over the past 26 years, including over 90% of attacks in 2019. Right-wing extremists are, broadly speaking, people who believe in far-right ideologies such as neo-Nazism, ethnocentrism, and white nationalism. Right-wing terrorists believe in the same things but use violence to achieve their goals and have been responsible for attacks around the world against religious or ethnic minorities.

This violence is likely to increase in the near future, in response to both the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests around the country and the 2020 presidential election. CSIS data shows that, since 1994, right-wing terrorism has caused at least 335 deaths in the USA, a worrying trend given that these acts of terrorism have increased by around 320% over the past five years. In contrast, left-wing terrorism is exceptionally rare and almost always nonviolent. The same CSIS article found that only 22 people were killed by left-wing radicals in the same time, less than one-fifteenth of the aforementioned number killed by right-wingers. Additionally, most events classified as left-wing terrorism in the past 26 years have been ecoterrorist events, which have never resulted in any fatalities and mainly caused minor property damage.

Brushing aside this clear disparity between left-wing and right-wing violence, conservative figures often claim that we are ignoring the real terrorists: left wing organizers and protestors. On Murdoch-owned Sky News Australia, anchors have branded the BLM movement as “a de-facto terrorist organization,” despite BLM being explicitly against violence of any kind. In another case, Republican Senator Mike Lee claimed that since the 2020 election “the only violence I’m aware of has occurred in connection with Antifa,” conveniently forgetting the two right-wingers who attempted to open fire on a Philadelphia polling center just days earlier.

These allegations that the left is more dangerous than the right misrepresent the issue. Firstly, there is no evidence to back up these arguments. The FBI, who after 9/11 marked eco-activists as the main domestic threat to the USA, recently declared that right-wing terrorism is now America’s number one threat. The conservative assertion—that left-wing terrorism is more prevalent—is even more dangerous because it rationalizes further violence.

By creating a mindset that left-wing violence is destroying America, many conservatives prompt Republicans to hope for some sort of response, which eventually drives some on the right to become terrorists themselves and carry out killings in response to perceived attacks from the left. When these right-wing terrorist events are then condemned by mainstream media, conservative figures again argue that Americans are ignoring the real threat of left-wing violence, and the cycle continues. By allowing conservatives to continue these baseless assertions, we perpetuate a process that has already killed far too many. This is not an issue of partisanship, it is an issue of life and death for the hundreds targeted by radicals on the right wing.

Ultimately, it’s clear that right-wing terrorism is the most dangerous domestic threat to the USA at this time. Experts predict that this menace will only increase, and we must make sure that we recognize the dangers of right-wing extremism. We must not allow ourselves to be distracted by other, less dangerous domestic issues. Our intelligence and security agencies have finite time and resources; if they are directed to continue addressing threats from the right wing and left wing with the same effort, we will be ignoring the cycle of right-wing hatred and violence that represents the greatest current domestic threat to America.

RSS:

RISKY SANS SECULARISM

BY MEERA PATEL

Imagine a nation where the dominant political organization actively violates the constitution. That is exactly what has and is happening in India.

India's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is a paramilitary, right-wing, and Hindu nationalist organization that was created in 1925 in order to combat British colonialism. Hindu nationalism, or Hindutva, is an extremist, anti-secular ideology that a true Indian is "Hindu" in their religious, cultural, and national identity.

According to RSS, "Hinduness" is a social and political ideology—a cultural construct, not a religious one. The RSS website states that "Hindu culture is the life-breath of Hindustan [India]," and "if Hindusthan is to be protected, we should first nourish the Hindu culture." Yet, "Hindu culture" jeopardizes the identity of India's minority of around 150 million Muslims, who must consider themselves part of RSS' Hindu culture. By dehumanizing minorities, the rise of RSS and its Hindutva ideology threatens Indian secularism.

RSS' ideology contradicts India's Constitution. The Preamble asserts that India is a secular nation: the Constitution does not permit the conjoining of religion and state power. Ironically, RSS's overarching goal is to establish a "Hindu Rashtra" or nation representing unified Hinduism. When the Constitution, an established law of the land, is violated, India's secularism is threatened.

After the creation of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) coalition government in 1999, India saw the political rise of Hindu majoritarianism. BJP is a political party acting as "the front organization" of RSS according to the Harvard International Review. Today, BJP remains the ruling political party in India. BJP's political dominance over the years has heightened RSS' platform—a clear threat to secularism given RSS' extremist ideology.

Prime Minister Modi, one of RSS' members, uses strong Hindutva rhetoric, a dangerous support to the continuation of RSS' ideology. NPR's podcast "Savarkar's India" mentions how Modi has a "willingness to tolerate, even encourage, the Hindu hard-lines in his own party [BJP]." In an instance where the BJP president, Amit Shah, insulted undocumented Muslim migrants from Bangladesh by calling them "termites", Modi didn't correct Shah, showing his support for this discrimination. Modi has and continues to actively demonize Muslims and support BJP's anti-Muslim initiatives.

He has defended a Hindu mob that murdered a Muslim man in 2015 for eating beef or and encouraged policies like the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 by the Indian Parliament that excluded Muslim minorities fleeing religious persecution from attaining citizenship in India as quickly as other religious minorities. Such Hindu nationalist rhetoric coming from a Prime Minister is alarming, which only furthers RSS's goals of creating a Hindu nation instead of a secular one.

Furthermore, RSS incites a harmful majority-minority complex by fostering fear and encouraging violence over the years, especially against Muslims and lower castes. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi's assassination by Godse, an ex-RSS member, and the September 2008 motorcycle bomb explosion during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan that killed 6 people. The Muslim minority and lower-castes in India are killed for the purposes of RSS' vision of achieving a Hindu state. Recently, BJP decided to construct a Hindu temple at what is believed to be the birthplace of Rama, an important Hindu deity. Yet, that very location was where the 1992 Babri Masjid Ayodhya incident occurred where RSS members and other Hindu nationalists destroyed a 400-year old mosque and killed thousands of Muslims in riots. Still, Modi is committed to building the Hindu temple, despite atrocities of discrediting Islam and favoring Hindus.

Frankly, India may never perfectly follow its Constitution; there will constantly be threats to Indian secularism given the struggles of India's minorities. Members claim that RSS was created to unite all Indians against colonialism and that they stand as a symbol of unity through the Sangh Parivar or "RSS family". The unity created through RSS may have been valid back in 1925 to fight against the British rule, but today, its extremist ideology attacks minorities and threatens their lives in India—inherently creating disunity across the country.

The later we realize the threat of RSS on Indian secularism, the more jeopardized India's democracy, economy, domestic and global credibility will become given its contradictions to the Constitution. Alongside this, minority lives are being oppressed. Right now, however, Indians are turning a blind eye.

We all benefit from secularism. But, we often don't quite realize the magnitude of its benefits. Secularism gives us the choice to practice any religion without government restriction, and it is even more imperative in a pluralistic society like India. The sooner we realize the benefits of secularism, which countries like India threaten due to power hungry religious nationalists, the sooner we can preserve it.





THE DANGERS OF THE SILENT MINORITY

By Sofia Camez

The notorious ink-black, toothbrush moustache. His face plastered all over Germany. Führer of a nation. But, how many people actually supported Adolf Hitler?

According to German national polls, he received a mere 30.1 percent of the national vote, followed by 36.8 percent in the subsequent election. Yet, Hitler was still appointed chancellor.

Now let's look at the US presidential elections in 2016. Donald Trump lost the popular vote by a difference of 2.86 million, but won with 306 votes in the Electoral College.

Both voted in by the minority, successfully elected despite vast disapproval of their citizens. Two distinct positions of power, but both became the faces of their nation.

Their supporters received certain benefits, in exchange for their unwavering support. As a result, these citizens were blinded by the actions of these leaders, ignoring the consequences of their vote.

What exactly did people receive from supporting them? Despite Hitler's widespread unpopularity, he had a devoted supporter base.

Labeled a "feel good dictator", he provided tax breaks and social benefits for his people, offering them more than "double the salaries that American and British families received", says German historian Goetz Aly.

In the aftermath of WWII, people were starving, unemployed, and living in pure misery. Hitler knew this, acknowledged the struggles of his people, and improved their lives.

What about Trump? Some supporters claim that he embodies the "frustration and rage of the white middle class", or that, unlike Obama, he truly "loves" America and will "fight" for it. He lets certain people feel seen and fosters the belief that he truly will "Make America Great Again".

Politicians may not be favorable to everyone, but they are often intelligent. They know how to reach their audience, how to be heard. Hitler used propaganda, Trump uses Twitter.

In Hitler's propaganda, his face was always depicted in a glorifying manner, portraying an invincible strength. Or as several painters put it, portrayed as 'healer' of Germany.

The citizens were vulnerable, and his propaganda took advantage of this. He created a sense of security and protection, presenting himself like a solution, a way out.

Even his speeches presented this facade of a fearless leader. Impassioned with fury, he raised deafening cheers through his renowned oratory skills. He knew exactly how to speak to his people.

Trump also masters the media. His polarizing language defines "his perspective of the world for his followers" with absolutely no filter, as he speaks his mind for better or worse, says Maurice Hall. This results in a very divisive perspective in his supporters' minds.

His way of speaking, incoherent thoughts, and incomplete sentences are effective. "He knows his audience can finish his sentences for him," Lakoff, a linguist at UC Berkeley says. That because he speaks in such a conversational manner, it is more intimate, which is exactly why it resonates so much with his supporters.

Different tactics, but the same effect. Citizens listened to them, many with unwavering support that seemed to drown out the action of these very leaders.

So, what about the others? Those who do not receive these benefits? Those who were targeted, persecuted, or killed? In Germany, money, jobs, and a seemingly calm life were much better than acknowledging the murder of millions. Or the economy and Trump being the "American Dream" seemed to block the separation of hundreds of families. Almost like the actions of these leaders were insignificant, or simply unacknowledged.

This is exactly when supporting these individuals becomes dangerous. Because not all their followers realize the consequences of their support, that their benefits may only apply to one group.

However, not all supporters are blind to their vote. They may simply not know or realize what their candidate is doing.

The Nazi party controlled the media, or as the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels put it, "the whole influence over public opinion [is] in our hands." They only included what they wanted their people to know.

Or take the Black community that voted for Trump. That despite his former "segregationist practices of his and his father's real-estate properties" or name-calling of several Black public figures, some claim that he has actually done more for them than any other president writes John McWhorter, professor at Columbia University.

Hitler and Trump represent vastly different ideas, but a blaring danger of their leadership is the blindness of some of their followers. It's easy to do nothing: to vote for someone based on the benefits they present to you. But, there could be others who are dying, persecuted or discriminated against and you may not even know.

So, it is your responsibility to recognize who your leader is and what you are supporting. You must be completely objective when placing your vote for the next leader of your nation.

The Labelmaker: A Threat to American Democracy

By Aryanna Ram

Two girls sit at the top of the high-school hierarchy, whispering among themselves, although they have no intention of being discreet. Their allegations of person X being a 'nerd,' 'weirdo,' 'creep,' cascade down the popularity pyramid. Their peers spread these labels until this image is accepted as truth. Those who hold a different impression of this reality are alienated, even villainized by the in-group.

This is no trivial matter. This stereotypical high-school paradigm plays out in the annals of politics. Swap the two girls for Senator McCarthy or President Trump, the labels 'nerd,' 'weirdo,' 'creep,' for 'communist' or 'crooked,' their peers for the press, and you can see McCarthy and Trump's political strategy in action. Both these men, Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s and Donald Trump today, united many. But their 'unity' is fragile and divisive, relying on untrue, sweeping generalisations. By using labels to simplify the complexities of life into a black and white narrative, they push their personal agendas onto the public as 'fact'. They exemplify how labels are the greatest threat to American democracy.

Labels, when used as a political tool, prey on existing fears and deviously influence the public into aligning with a certain political agenda.

"We are engaged in a final, all-out battle [against] communistic atheism," proclaims Senator McCarthy in his eminent speech 'Enemies from Within,' "And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down." In the context of the Cold War, his statements, urgent and decisive, amplified brewing fears of communism. According to historian Margaret Brennan, McCarthy changed his number of alleged communists that infiltrated the government with each successive speech, from 57 to 205 to 81. Yet, despite the fact that his allegations were biased and untrue, McCarthy grew a prominent, whistleblowing presence in politics."After decades of lies and scandal, Crooked Hillary's corruption is closing in. #DrainTheSwamp!" tweets Donald Trump on November 3rd, 2016. Trump's labels simplified Hillary Clinton's persona, solidifying the sentiment of her untrustworthiness in the American consciousness. With this, like McCarthy, Trump becomes an alternative, people's politician. Simultaneously appealing to authenticity and discrediting his competition, labels helped propel Trump to victory in the 2016 US election. To the US at the time, they were unlike other politicians, bringing America the truth. In reality, McCarthy and Trump fed America her fears and prejudices, indoctrinating support into the minds of the public.

This is dangerous as it infringes on the democratic process.

Although they were heralded as defenders of democracy, McCarthy and Trump's use of labels exposes their authoritative tendencies. Both politicians exclusively believed their version of simplified reality, and used it in their pursuit of power. For example, Trump refused to condemn white supremacists in the first 2020 presidential debate, likely since they devoutly supported him. When American journalist Marvin Kalb writes "communists, Marxists, and liberals (all were the same for him)," he reveals that it was not just about capturing communists to McCarthy, but discrediting all who deviated from McCarthy's political ideology. Pushed to their extreme, a label-using demagogue discredits democratic institutions. The International Political Science Review states that "Presidential… regimes [eg. US] are more prone to democratic collapse… [because of] the possibility of conflict between the executive and legislative branches."

According to Pew Research Center, Trump appointed 194 federal appeals court judges, who serve for life, more than any president since Carter. Conversely, McCarthy attacks the executive branch in 'Enemies from Within': "President Truman at once issued a presidential directive ordering all government agencies to refuse to turn over any information whatsoever in regard to the communist activities of any government employee to a congressional committee." Attempting to control and launching attacks on the other branches of governments, a label-using demagogue gradually tips the balance of power in their favour. Democracy crumbles when the faith in democratic institutions erodes.

Many argue it is the nature of politicians to push their personal agendas at the expense of ethics; however, America must ensure that this behavior is not indulged.



Demagogues "pursue a two-step strategy for undermining democracy: first, scapegoat and demonize vulnerable minorities to build popular support; then, weaken the checks and balances on government power needed to preserve… the rule of law," explains Human Rights Watch. It is every US citizen's obligation to be aware of these. Individually, citizens must surround themselves with diversity, both off and online, to prevent the social ramifications of label-users and prejudice. Citizens must verify the credibility of the news they consume, checking for evidence and cross-referencing opinions against counter personalities. Collectively, to avoid label-usage's fiscal ramifications, citizens must support the independence of democratic institutions. The strength of democracy lies within its ability to call out label-using demagogues. This depends on legal, social, and cultural institutions, specifically the judiciary, media, and civic groups.

American sociologist Irving Louis Horowitz captures it best: "The legacy of McCarthyism is two-fold: one side opposes democracy in politics and freedom in culture; the other inspires successful resistance to such constraints."

Hitler Rising Again?

Joyce Jiayue Yang



Wouldn't it be terrifying walking into a room to see German army soldiers singing Nazi lyrics and raising their right arms? On the night of 2017, 70 KSK soldiers (The Kommando Spezialkräfte), special german operations soldiers, were discovered doing this exact thing.

On May 13th 2020, a raid into a former KSK Sergeant Major's house led police officers from the Dresden State to discover weapons including an assault rifle and plastic explosives.

Forty-eight thousand rounds of ammunition and sixty-two kg worth of explosives have also gone missing from the special forces, said Gen. Eberhard Zorn, inspector general of the armed forces. Yet these events were only the tip of the iceberg to the far right extremism in Germany.

The past denial to investigate and lack of enforcement in the German security system is the main reason why far right extremism is an urgent issue in Germany right now.

Christoph Gramm, the president of military counterintelligence, said his agency is currently investigating 600 soldiers across elite military units. Not only is this happening in the army, but police forces as well. There are more than 370 suspected cases of right-wing extremism in police and security agencies.

According to the Berlin Police, 29 officers of North Rhine-Westphalia were suspended for sharing extremist images, including pictures of Adolf Hitler. 25 officers for being part of a chat group that shared racist jokes and far-right discussion. Why are there suddenly so many clusters of cases of far right extremism in the army and police forces? The true depth of the problem lies in the German security system.

You would expect, after the memorable history Germany had with far right extremism they would be putting extra care in their security systems, making sure history won't repeat itself. Yet the military counterintelligence service had failed in its mission to monitor and detect extremism in recent years.

For example when Saskia Esken, a leader of the center-left Social Democratic Party, suggested in June 2020 that there might be "latent racism" in the police force, she faced fierce backlash, even among members of her own party.

Another case is when Interior Minister Horst Seehofe, rejected accusations that there was a "structural racism" problem in the police. He resisted repeated calls to order a nationwide study on racism in the police forces.

For years, German politicians and security chiefs rejected any suggestion that the security services had been infiltrated by the far right, acknowledging only "individual cases." The idea of networks was routinely dismissed.

The reason behind this can be explained by Joachim Kersten, senior research professor of the German Police University. "Germany has not addressed the issue because of a "kind of pathological shame. If shame just leads to covering up things and denying and looking the other way, it creates this kind of problem."

The raid of the Sergeant Major was a wakeup call for them to realize how these cases are all interconnected. And how dangerous it is to have suspected cases in professions like army and police officers (having access to weapons at all times).

While we must acknowledge that the suspected cases in the army and police forces are only 1%. These people are supposed to be the ones who protect Germany from harm and give their citizens peace. Excuses should not be tolerated and shouldn't be used in defense of the lack of investigation and denial of racism activities done in past years.

Recently, military leaders and politicians have rolled out a flurry of initiatives. New legislation was passed to make it easier to fire far-right soldiers. A committee was formed to report back on far-right extremism in the special forces and to propose measures to combat it.

Ms. Kramp-Karrenbauer, the German defense minister, said efforts would now be intensified to determine whether recent and older cases of extremism were part of a network.

We should start emphasizing the importance of security systems in every country to ensure there is no infiltration and clusters of extremists. We shouldn't be shameful of our history but should learn from it to ensure safety among citizens.

What you can be doing is to keep up with these situations with social media and inform others around you. For example, GIRDS, a twitter account that gives daily updates on terrorism and extremism for Germany, is a great way to follow if you live in Germany. Or CARR (Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right) and JD_JournalDerad on twitter.

The security officials should notice the urgent issue before hundreds of weapons and ammunition have gone missing. Hundreds of innocent people will be victims of far right extremists if we don't enforce enough laws, investigations and notice connections in cases in a country's security system.



Rolling Stones Gather 'Mass' By Karu T.K

The violent shift in the ideological tectonic plates of America caused a threatening tsunami. The American political landscape is experiencing hyperpolarization that is causing political deadlock. The situation has become so dire that it's been dubbed the "Second Civil War". But this is not just civil war anymore, this is possibly World War III. Although American polarity seems like an internal affair, its ramifications are far greater on a global scale.



One of the defining factors of polarization in America today is trade policy. According to a study conducted by Pew Research Center, when asked about tariffs, 56% of citizens disagree that tariffs should be put in place, creating an almost even split. The root of this stark partisan divide can be traced to two divergent schools of thought; free trade and protectionism. Because the divergence is so extreme, both ends of the spectrum have become equally radicalized and more adamant about implementing their respective policies.

This "us vs them" narrative has become a catfight where each side is trying to prove the other wrong in the name of patriotism. As a result of so much emotional attachment to these polar ideologies, rational policy and decision making have been abandoned. For example, Trump's withdrawal from NAFTA originally in the interest of reducing the national trade deficit and bringing jobs back to America, adversely impacted all parties involved and cost more jobs overall in the long run.

Such policies, which have been implemented under the Trump administration, not only contribute to further segregation between the left and the right but also resulted in backlash from other trade partners.

The broader implications of this can be seen in the US-led trade war in early last year, met with retaliation from China. According to Bloomberg, the so-called 'fallout' left a $600 billion dent in US-China trade. This was the bill incurred from the dispute between the two countries alone. Furthermore, the Financial Times predicted that by 2020 tariffs already imposed or announced would shrink global GDP by 0.8%. Though that figure seems minuscule, it is equivalent to the whole economy of Switzerland.

Another consequence of this has been the marginalization of the WTO meaning that trade wars can weaken international institutions. The establishment of such an organization post-WWII signifies coming together and is crucial to sustainability. This tug of war is a dangerous game because domestic polarization in the US, manifested through such reckless economic policy has destabilized the entire international order.

Yet, there are still those who think "it's affecting the world" is an overstatement, chanting "America first" and asking "why should we care about the rest of the world?". Since leaving NAFTA, 187, 000 U.S. jobs have been lost overall. As much as these trade sanctions hurt other countries it hurts America too if not, more. The strain that trade wars put on American diplomatic relations is severe. When the US enacts trade barriers, others return fire. Thus, the simplistic notion that a trade war is somehow appropriate warranted, and effective needs to be discarded.

If this is not done, the two American rolling stones will soon converge into one giant boulder. This will only be reciprocated by another boulder from China and its allies. This is just the beginning, the result of the escalating Trade War is a looming global recession.

So, how do we fix the "political autoimmune disease" America is currently facing so that the impending tsunami doesn't become a reality?

The most urgent step that needs to be taken is finding trade policies that strike a balance between conserving and creating American jobs while allowing free trade to take place. There needs to be more nuanced policy that considers both Parties' beliefs and values. Since America is primarily a service economy, preserving service-oriented jobs is essential. Controlling immigration such that it reflects the national demographic profile can kill two birds with one stone because it encourages America to be more selective while still remaining open. Being selective saves American jobs and protects national security while remaining open helps preserve diplomatic relations. It's the best of both worlds and these kinds of middle ground policies can help partisans find common ground and decrease domestic polarization too.

But at the end of the day, there needs to be a shift in mindset. American people must understand that a trade war should never be a preferred outcome because it is incredibly counterproductive. These radical ideas only contribute to polarization and prevent the effective discourse needed to truly better the American and global economy. After all, the American public must remember that although there is a God-given right to opine, there is also an obligation to listen to one another.

THE AFGHAN DIVERSITY CURSE: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE THE TALIBAN?

By: Suzu Enomoto



The Taliban seemingly arose from thin air. The New York Times only reported this extremist group as "newspaper worthy" after months of dominant presence in Afghanistan. At the peak of their radicalization, all social classes in the Afghan society were willing to give this group a chance. Teachers, merchants, lawyers, and citizens were all promised the same thing: to restore peace and security and end conflict between rival mujahideen ethnic groups. Undermining the citizens' trust, the Taliban quickly spread. In September 1995, they captured the province of Herat, bordering Iran. One year later, they were able to capture Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. By 1998, the Taliban was in control of almost 90% of Afghanistan.

How did this extremist group grow from a small movement to one of the world's spotlights in a matter of four years? Who is to blame for the radicalization?

Afghanistan's long, shifting history is intertwined with its diversity, and various ethnic groups. Many countries thrive under diversity. However, in the context of Afghanistan and its altering alliances, it is the determinant in the Nation's collapse and the catalyst that inspired the Taliban. The curse of Afghan diversity becomes clear. According to the Washington Institute, "Afghanistan in its modern form was shaped by the nineteenth-century competition between the British, Russian, and Persian empires." Here, the internecine struggles began.

The resulting effect showed a new kingdom. A kingdom that was religiously diverse, and ethnically connected in various ways. Pashtuns "only represented 38 percent of Afghanistan's population" yet, was the largest ethnic group in the nation. The Hazaras, "represent another 19 percent." The remainder of the population belongs to other ethnic groups and within these tribes, there are also numerous sub-tribes. Countless numbers of these ethnic groups make up the Afghan society. This often caused rivalry between these varied, diverse groups. Religious diversity complicated the internal Afghan politics, but also relations with neighboring countries.

The Taliban was based in Helmand, where the population is predominantly part of the Pashtun tribe. There, Muhammed Omar, the founder of the Taliban, had enlightenment where a woman in his dream had told him: "We need your help; you must rise. You must end the chaos. Allah will help you." After this "cry for help," Omar started a movement with 50 Pashtun students. The group quickly radicalized, highlighting Pashtun nationalism and its ideologies for a "broader Afghan society." Accompanied by heady optimism, many citizens who wanted an end to the everlasting conflict between the ethnic groups in Afghanistan, supported the Taliban and were "willing to give them a chance."

Some may argue that the United States and the Soviet Union are to blame for the radicalization of the Taliban. Both unions piled Afghanistan with economic and technical support over the years. Especially with the support of the Soviet Union, the Taliban was able to extend their influence after their withdrawal in 1989. In 1953, Zahir Shah, the former prime minister sought to buy weapons from the United States but failed to come to an agreement. However, the Soviet Union was eager to supply Afghanistan to help construct a stronger military. With this in mind, in 1956 Afghanistan purchased "$25 million dollars worth in tanks, airplanes, helicopters, and small arms." This accelerated the military competition in Afghanistan and its neighboring countries. The United States provides a tremendous amount of aid to Afghanistan to this day. The Washington Institute revealed that in 2001, aid was distributed "in the wrong hands" which benefited the Taliban.

After all, money is an influence, but not the root cause.

Diversity promotes harmony. This is the case in many different countries. When a country lacks diversity the negative ramifications are clear. Singapore, an economically prosperous country, purposely creates diversity. Diversity in the context of Singapore is functional, because of the totalitarian nature of the government. Their efforts would be futile, if not disastrous if they could not control their citizens the way they can. Thus, similar efforts would be prejudicial in the context of Afghanistan. The sovereignty of nations allows them to dictate what they feel, would benefit their country and citizens the most. In turn, it is unjust for countries to judge one another.

Although we can not go back in time and prevent the rise of the Taliban, we must deal with the consequences today. As Winston Churchill once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

HOW TO UNINTENTIONALLY SABOTAGE YOUR GOVERNMENT

By Wesley Um

For centuries, the pressure to conform to societal norms set by the public has been overwhelming; some of these norms are helpful to society, but many are not. Merely disagreeing with these norms can result in being isolated and spurned by society.

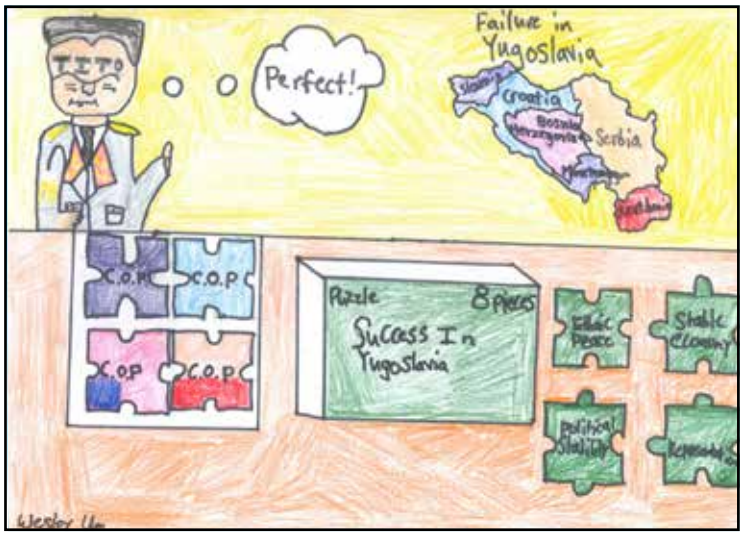
Josip Broz Tito, the dictator of Yugoslavia from 1953 to 1980, developed a cult of personality that became a defining characteristic of the Yugoslavian state. His rise to power seemed fictitious: leading the Partisans, a resistance group, against the Axis powers, mending Yugoslavia's war-torn past, spreading the message of unity to all republics within the region. At the time, Tito was seen as a hero, allowing him to effectively build a cult of personality around him. This nationwide societal support would become vital to Tito's rule to the extent that, without it, Yugoslavia would've fallen during his lifetime.

Carefully manipulating Yugoslavian citizens through means such as the national slogan "Brotherhood and Unity" and extensive use of propaganda, Tito orchestrated the creation and sustenance of a cult of personality that spread through all classes. As Yugoslavian Politician Milovan Djilas wrote, "Comrade Tito is the initiator of everything that is good in our country… Everything we have created and are creating may be expressed by a single word - Tito."

In Yugoslavia's development, Tito's methods of sustaining and nurturing this C.O.P would change. The addition of lenient foreign policies and reforms allowing economic freedom greatly improved his image, but this very move along with other pivotal mistakes would eventually be the cause of Yugoslavia's dissolution.

The economic freedom and liberal policies eroded the public's collectivist voice, forcing Tito to slow economic reforms and lead a campaign to recentralize the government, which gave back the control that Tito lost. Subsequently, the federation faced rising foreign debt, inflation, and economic inefficiencies, but Tito held his ground. To him, controlling the government and the people was more important.

These economic troubles stemmed from a fundamental contradiction within federation's ideology. The economic freedom expressed by the individuals in Yugoslavia led to a capitalistic mindset within the working force, directly contradicting the collectivist ideals of the government. Perfectly expressing this paradox is a statement from the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the LCY in 1961: "We are daily confronted by numerous harmful manifestations in economic and political life... there is also a tendency to self-enrichment and luxuriating as well as greediness and blackmail on the part of individuals who only look after their own individual interests, and forget their obligations towards the social community."



Aside from the economic sector, nationalism was an issue that was never adequately taken care of. In tandem with the Marxist-Leninist ideology, Tito believed nationalism was a result of the bourgeois class. This class would be destroyed as a result of the implementation of communism, leading Tito to assume that the issue of nationalism was addressed. Unfortunately, this was not the case, mostly because the nationalism was rooted in the conflicts between the countries in Yugoslavia, allowing for the continuous cultivation of nationalism throughout Tito's rule. Even more, the bourgeoisie would reappear as a result of the economic policies.

The leaders of Yugoslavia held strong nationalist sentiments, diminishing the common historical, ethnic, and linguistic threads that unified the country. In school, the concept of Titoism replaced the message of unity as what was holding the federation together, breeding new generations of citizens glorifying Tito. With Yugoslavia's declining economy, diminishing cultural identity, and rising nationalistic sentiments, Tito's cult of personality was the only barrier separating Yugoslavia from disintegration.

Tito's C.O.P was used to control the citizens of Yugoslavia. He convincingly held the police, army, and public in his palm, allowing him to suppress any uprising and purge anyone against him. The federal government after Tito's death was separated by ethnicity, causing conflict and destroying the sense of unity that Tito instilled in the people through the last 40 years. The argument that Yugoslavia fell because of the government after Tito can be made, but Yugoslavia was heading off a cliff way before Tito died. The government just didn't have the one thing Tito had to prevent Yugoslavia's downfall: A cult of personality.

Could the federation have been saved if Tito made the decision to properly address the nationalists or to keep pushing with the economic reforms? That, we'll never know. But what we do know is that nobody stood up to Tito's shortcomings and misjudgements. It's hard to say if anything could've been done, but Tito's cult of personality granted him free-reign over Yugoslavia without restraint. Letting yourself get sucked into a cult of personality only leaves you vulnerable to manipulation and indoctrination. Not only that, but it can also entail many possible consequences, one of which being the dissolution of a federation.

MINDLESS RADICALISTS? WHY QANON IS WORSE THAN YOU THINK

Mayuko Kobayashi



A cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles is controlling the government. They kidnap children and abuse them, extracting a life-extending chemical from their blood for Hillary Clinton and other Leftist elites to ingest. But not to fear, because the anonymous "Q" is exposing their secret, and Donald Trump is fighting them from the inside.

Despite the ludicrosity of the QAnon conspiracy, there are growing numbers of people who wholeheartedly believe in it. By spreading its influence through mainstream platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, the Guardian states there are now more than 4.5 million aggregate followers of QAnon-related content on Facebook and Instagram.

However, the current public perception of the QAnon conspiracy lacks urgency. Supporters have been arrested for threatening politicians, two kidnappings, and the murder of a mob boss in the Gambino crime family. The FBI has now marked this conspiracy group as a domestic terror threat, yet not many people are paying attention to this growing issue.

The growth of QAnon is a much larger threat than perceived, and current efforts to counter this movement are not nearly enough.

How did this conspiracy group gain such a large following in the first place?
It's because of how they use social media.

Recent radical groups often utilize social media to expand their realm of influence. This isn't new, as seen in groups such as ISIS and their presence on large platforms like YouTube in previous years.

However, QAnon uses a slightly different tactic online to gain supporters. Unlike shocking, violent advertisements in some radical groups, QAnon uses social media trends and visually appealing posts to reach their audience.

#SavetheChildren is one of the hashtags they branded to spread misinformation online. The use of a pre-existing hashtag that represented an actual charity organization allowed them to blend in, subtly influencing their audience.

According to Vox, there are over 800,000 of these posts on Instagram, most of which don't actually use real evidence to support their claim.

The result of this integration of mainstream social media with radical group ideologies is a dangerous development of radicalization through the subconscious mind.

There isn't a distinct contrast between what identifies as QAnon believers and what doesn't; the lines are blurred, because QAnon has evolved over the years to adapt to current events. Conspiracies surrounding Covid-19 and anti-vaccination groups, for example, have started to merge with QAnon beliefs. With the "big tent" of QAnon conspiracies covering a broad range of subjects, it becomes harder for people to be conscious of what exactly it is they're supporting.

Yet, people fall for it because of the normality of these posts. They look like any other infographic on social media, so why should this one be any less true?

The issue lies in the fact that many QAnon supporters don't have a fundamental desire for violence like other extremist groups, but rather empathy and fear for child sex trafficking. Because the roots of their beliefs aren't inherently evil or two-sided, it becomes harder to reject their ideology. This implicit belief paired with the aesthetics of social media posts blind them from factual evidence, and their voices become amplified through comments and shares.

Through their lack of self-awareness, their beliefs become easily integrated with their identity. And you can't reject an identity as easily as separate beliefs.

Thus, this subconscious shift to radicalization is actually more dangerous than knowing when you're about to cross the line.

However, current efforts of combatting this movement are detrimental, including forms of mockery, censoring, and deleting QAnon related posts on social media. Videos making fun of QAnon's bizarre beliefs acquire millions of views, such as the "Sitting down with QAnon Conspiracy Theorists" on The Jim Jefferies Show on YouTube.

This is absolutely ineffective, as it only deepens the notion of "us versus them" within this in-group and out-group. Social psychologist Henri Tafjel indicates that the mere existence of division into groups is enough to trigger discriminatory behavior. Therefore, it's inevitable that as the in-group of QAnon supporters begin to antagonize everyone outside of the group.

The current tactics used against this group only allows for increased polarization and anger. For real change to occur, we must object to this growing conspiracy through empathetic albeit serious discussions with indisputable evidence and reasoning.

With social media dictating our everyday lives, the gateway of slipping into the rabbit hole of radicalism is everywhere, whether we're able to realize it or not. QAnon is a prime example of a successful social media campaign, but there exists a plethora of extremist content online, boosted by algorithms suited towards your own political view.

As radical ideas from QAnon and other groups grow and change shape, we must stay aware of the media we consume, and be conscious of what message we put forth into the world.

WEAPONS, WIFI, AND WHITE SUPREMACY

By Marley Ritzer

There are some things in the world that were not meant to be mixed together. One combination, in particular, is fatal. The creation of the internet and the prevalence of guns has made far-right extremism much more dangerous in the modern era than centuries ago. Additionally, the First and Second Amendments are inhibiting possible attempts to curtail white supremacy.

According to the Smithsonian, from the end of the Civil War to 1950, nearly 2,000 Black Americans were murdered, most of which were carried out at the hands of segregationist groups. Presently, extremists can cause more severe damage because of the lethality and prevalence of firearms.

Klansmen lynched with a rope. Currently, the use of ropes is inefficient and antiquated. Fatalities caused by fatal weapons have increased rapidly, and the damage one can do with a gun is more than with a rope. Some semi-automatic rifles can shoot up to 750 bullets per minute. The lethality of this weapon is obvious, and it can have disastrous effects.

Not only have guns gotten more dangerous, but they have become much more common. The Trace states only 30 years ago, there were 125 million civilian-owned guns in the United States. That number has since, by more than 300% with (WAMU) 393 million civilian-owned firearms in circulation.

Although the KKK was revered for the terror it caused, it was a relatively secret group and thus had virtually no process of recruitment. Besides a few ineffective posters, the group didn't thoughtfully radicalize.

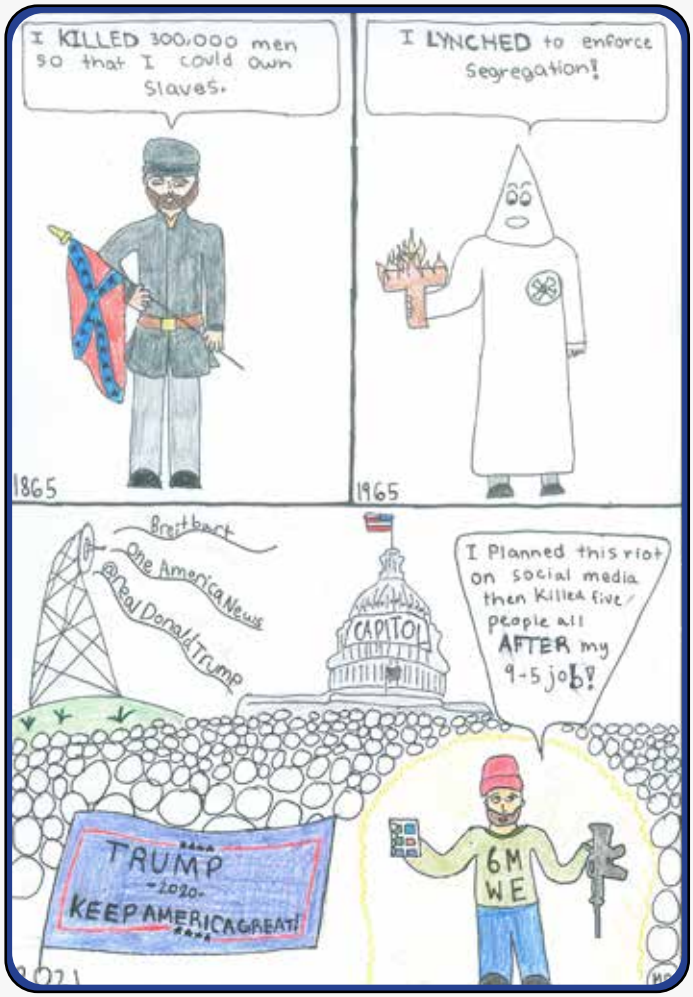
With the creation of the internet, however, white supremacists quickly turned to web platforms to share their previously hidden or obscure ideas. Internet mediums such as radio shows, short videos, and chat rooms have become incubators for reactants in possible extremists, offering something very attractive to young men in particular: fighting. Online disputations or verbal abuse is used to attract individuals to an idea or movement as a whole. Kevin Roose created a podcast called "Rabbit Hole" which studies how YouTube has converted regular viewers into far-right extremists. The podcast digs through Caleb Cain's YouTube history and it became evident that seeing far-right idealists argue and verbally 'defeat' opposing arguments and perspectives was what drew Cain to the alt-right in the first place.

This online radicalization has already had real-world consequences. On October 27th, 2018, 46-year-old Robert Bowers entered the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, shouted "all Jews must die", and opened fire. By the time police responded, 11 members of the congregation had been killed. Bowers was not raised a violent Nazi; instead, his radicalization and introduction to anti-Semitic ideas came from one place: the internet.

He entered alone, and, armed with an AR-15 rifle, caused more physical damage in a single incident than any Klansman could with a simple piece of rope.

The white piece of fabric which used to separate a Klansman from the public eye is now a crumbling facade of codes, firewalls, and passwords. A right-wing extremist can drink a coffee, log in to a chat room, and spend their morning planning acts of violence against minorities before even stepping foot out of the house. Many Americans understand this evolving threat; however, other citizens and even government officials argue that the solution cannot be worse than the problem, that regulating online hate speech and introducing more stringent safeguards surrounding firearms purchases would infringe upon the Constitutional rights of others And yet, what all of us fail to see is that every day which goes by without government action is another day closer to the moment the next Robert Bowers walks into a synagogue and opens fire.

The September 11th attacks were blamed on a failure of imagination by the American government. Right-wing violence planned and supported on the internet is not, by any means, a creative stretch. We can and must do better.



HOW SAFE ARE VACCINES REALLY?

THE PROBLEM WITH CENSORSHIP

By Young Seo Kim



According to Physicians for Informed Consent, since 2000, there have been 11 measles deaths in the US. You're 1000 times more likely to die falling out of bed than from measles. In fact, according to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), the chances of dying from the MMR vaccine is actually higher than dying from the disease itself. Why are we standing idly by as governments force us to get injections that are nothing but harmful? Is it time to stand up for our rights?

No, don't actually rebel. Physicians for Informed Consent is a group of conspiracy theorists. VAERS, although sounding scientific and scary, is not an actual 'reporting system'. These so-called statistics are pulled from multiple anti-vaccination Youtube videos and websites. Misinformation like this is on the rise, but censorship is not the solution. To stop anti-vaxxers from posing a serious threat to public health and safety, healthcare organizations and professionals must work on aggressive refutation campaigns.

By the turn of the millennium, the measles virus was essentially eradicated. According to the CDC, the near-ubiquitous immunization of children through the MMR vaccine led to the eradication of the measles virus in countries with widespread immunization programs. But in 1998, a study published by British physician Andrew Wakefield led to the comeback of the virus in the Western world. The study claimed that there is a link between the MMR vaccine and Autism in children. Not only was his study debunked and removed from scientific journals, Wakefield was also barred from practicing medicine in the UK. However, it was too late. The damage was done.

In the UK, the vaccination rate of the MMR vaccine dropped from 92% in 1996 to below 61% in 2003. Vaccination rates in the western world have been decreasing ever since, while infection rates have been increasing.

The Wakefield study may have been debunked, but it had already catalyzed the spread of the anti-vaccine sentiment. According to the Centre for Countering Digital Hate, since 2019, 'anti-vaxxers' have increased their following by 7-8 million people. Overall, 31 million people follow anti-vax Facebook pages, and 17 million people are subscribed to anti-vaccination Youtube channels. Anti-vaccine following is increasing at an alarming rate.

A recent study analyzing how Twitter images—specifically those related to vaccines—are spread found that despite the anti-vaccine movement having significantly fewer members than the pro-vaccine movement, anti-vaxxers tweeted significantly more and reached a larger audience. Anti-vaxxers were also more likely to reach the feeds of 'undecided groups'. Those unsure of whether vaccines were really safe or not were more likely to see anti-vaccine images on Twitter. In the battle for attention on people's social media feeds, anti-vax influencers are winning, and this is not acceptable. Healthcare professionals and organizations must be more proactive on social media spreading awareness.

Social media companies may be partly responsible for allowing this growth, but relying on algorithms to deplatform and censor all misinformation is not the answer. Censorship will only cause more problems.

Social media companies are trying their best to create smarter algorithms to detect misinformation, but it isn't working. Right now, multiple anti-vaccine channels have millions of views with no censorship. Censoring all misinformation might be the ideal solution, but it is not a practical one. Outright removing all misinformation is not possible, and our current approach to censorship is not working.

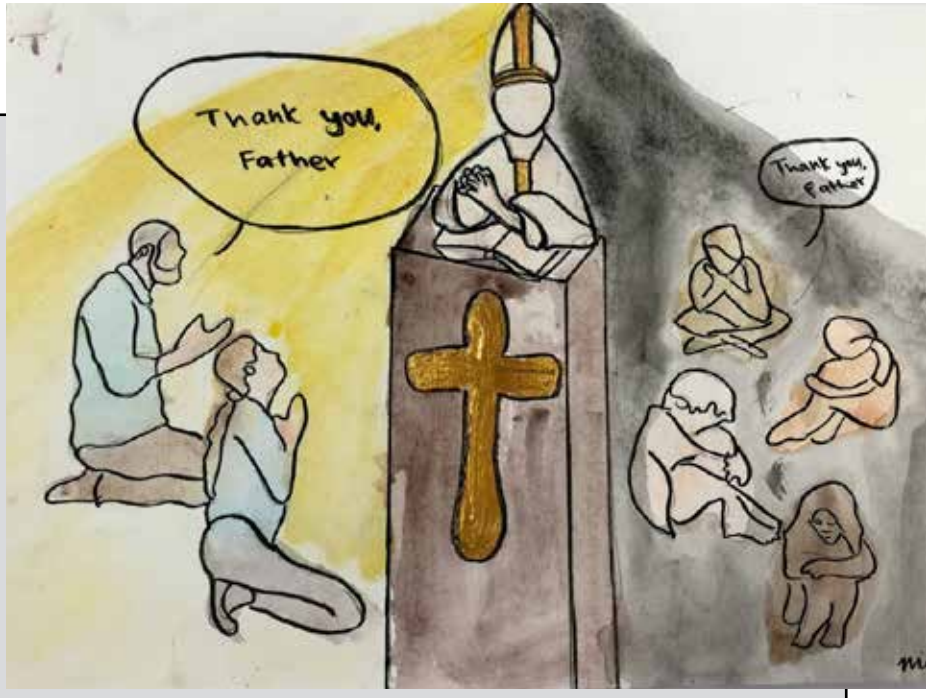
The main sentiment shared among anti-vaccine communities is that the world is against them. Deplatforming the influencers that spread anti-vaccine sentiments will only further play into the idea that those in power are oppressing those who wish to spread the truth. One of 'pull' factors of extremist views characterized by counter-terrorism researcher Erie Marie Saltman is the feeling of powerlessness; people are drawn to radical ideology when they feel that their voice is not being heard. Deplatforming and outright censoring will only exacerbate the problem. Changing people's minds must be done through informing, not censoring.

If we are to counteract the rapid spread of radical ideas on social media, it must be done through aggressive rebuttal and counter argument efforts. Informing will breed critical thinking, but censoring will breed more ignorance and hatred. The anti-vax movement is not the only crazy conspiracy theory that is spreading on the internet. Qanon, the Alt-Right, and others have capitalized on the fact that their aggressive methods of posting on social media have dominated social media feeds. Experts on the rational side need to aggressively counteract radical viewpoints; they need to stop relying on the unreliable social media algorithms and take action to post more frequently and capture the attention of those vulnerable to manipulation.

BEHIND EVERY POWERFUL MAN?

secrets, shadows, sex cults

by mihika iyer



On October 27, 2020, Keith Raniere was sentenced to 120 years of prison on counts of wire fraud, racketeering, three offenses of conspiracy, and sex trafficking. Raniere—with a once-sparkling status among celebrities for his self-improvement company, NXIVM—had his name flashed across news agencies, going down as a sex-cult leader.

In the coming days, stories upon stories of Raniere's manipulation came to light, detailing the most gruesome details of his reign of terror: his fetish for women who look like they're starving, the countless forced abortions, and photos of Raniere's initials cauterized into his followers' bodies.

The obvious question—one asked numerous times throughout the hundreds of Raniere-focused articles—was what made Raniere so powerful?

The answer is simple: Keith Raniere is a horny cult leader—one who knows that sex is the most powerful weapon when it comes to psychological manipulation.

And he is not alone. Sex has historically been a common thread among cult leaders.

Sex results in offspring—offspring that are born into cult beliefs and add to the cult population. In the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, led by prophet Warren Jeffs, Jeffs' doctrine emphasizes that sexual intercourse is only allowed when a woman is ovulating, and birth control of all types is prohibited.

This rule—although broken by many, including Jeffs on multiple occasions—confirms that sex is encouraged only to birth a child. This belief permeates every aspect of the cult, including another daunting rule: husbands are required to have at least three wives and consummate all their marriages. While sex is used as solely a reproductive mechanism in the FLDS community, cult leader Charles Manson weaponized sex as a means to distinguish his followers.

"He made you feel like you were his one and only love," Diane Lake, a former member of the Manson family.

Manson, according to a journal article published by Indiana University Press, was reported to have had sex with nearly all his followers on his routine acid trips, which ultimately strengthened Manson's psychological hold on women—one unparalleled and powerful enough to influence his "girls" to murder seven people.

The last reason why sex was so powerful was that it offered an incentive to stay in the cult. The Children of God cult, an organization still active today, now known as Family International, shows devotion as a reward for sex. Moses David's group shows that even in a religious organization—one which typically tends to frown on premarital sex—can cross all lines of morality.

David's cult group soon began to encourage "adults to teach children how to have sex."

In an interview with Larry King, Ricky Dupuy, a former member of David's cult admitted: "I was ordered to have sex with a 10-year-old by the leadership of the group." He even mentioned stories of mothers "orally copulating little boys."

The encouragement of sex with minors maintained the large following of the COG, but to what extent had ethics and familial relations been corrupted by the allowance to have sex with every and any person?

Which brings us back to our original question: what compels people to join a cult?

Cults offer community, status, and significance for people who have often been underlooked their entire lives. After recruiting, sex is used as a form of manipulation. Protective and established men are able to use intercourse as a symbol of trust, or as a means to make a girl feel special, resulting in the perfect medium to position a leader in control of a woman.

A hold on a woman to compel her to cauterize her cult-leader's initials on her pelvis. A hold on a woman to murder. A hold on a mother to have oral sex with her 20-month old infant.

These holds slowly strip the mental freedom of individuals until there's nothing left: a testament to the power of sex to the human brain.

And when psychological autonomy is completely lost, there's no way to come back.

Hey, did you NAZI this new Tweet?

Modern media's being used to radicalise the populace

By Edmund S. Gotama

"It is better to live one day as a lion than a 100 days as a sheep." In 2016, Trump was caught quoting Benito Mussolini on Twitter, from which he proved unapologetic, stating, "...it's OK to know it's Mussolini....Mussolini was Mussolini....it's a very good quote, it's a very interesting quote, and I know it." Trump and countless other politicians are consistently compared to unsavoury totalitarian figures in the past, including Hitler's National Socialists. Therefore, it's quite disconcerting that many similar tactics utilised by these regimes parallels those utilised in the modern world to manipulate the populace.

One significant manner in which the Nazis rose to and maintained power was their usage of media to influence and radicalise the populace. In an interview, high ranking Nazi minister Albert Speer stated that, "Hitler's dictatorship....made....use of all technical means for domination of its own country. Through technical devices like the radio and loudspeaker..." The Nazis knew this, and exploited it as much as possible, mass-producing cheap radios called Volksempfänger, so that, according to theholocaustexplained, over 70% of German families had one by 1939 & "that all Germany hears the Führer" as said by Phil's Radios. Unprecedented at the time, these radios and other media devices allowed the Nazis to reach out to their populace and spread "information" to an extent more far-reaching than even the most glamorous propaganda poster.

While the radio has been reduced to obsolescence, it has been succeeded in the modern-day by social media as a tool to influence the populace. Today over 3.6 billion people use social media, with the number projected to increase to 4.4 billion by 2025, according to Statista. Unlike a private radio or television, as stated by Hootsuite, "On social media, people can engage in direct dialogue with politicians.....[and] It also gives them a chance to engage back." With social media, politicians have a chance to reach out to their populace and spread "information" to a far wider extent than any TV station or radio ever could.

It's through these mediums that political figures can influence the people so quickly and easily. With the ability to communicate directly towards the populace without little filters in the way, one can exploit the opportunity heavily and spread their intended message in any way they desire with little interference. And, indeed, they do, in many different ways to support their own causes.

One common method of manipulation is directing a population's hate. The Nazis did this countless times through their vast media empire upon many of their enemies: Communists, political opponents, but most significantly Jews. Here, the Nazis created propaganda posters and broadcasts called the German to perform violence on supposed "subhumans," advocating "an atmosphere tolerant of violence against Jews," according to the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This has been occurring in contemporary times too, a notable example being seen in Donald Trump. Trump has used his social media presence to actively advocate for violent action among his supporters, such as his 'LIBERATE' tweets, telling his supporters to "liberate" specific parts of America, with NBC News saying that "Trump's tweets.... pushed many online extremist communities to....advocating for armed conflict." Like the Nazis, Trump's directing of the people's hate and violence only solidified his own base while also weakening his enemies'.

And what happens when other news outlets try to speak up and contradict a politician's claims? Well, you discredit them. With tight control over media outlets, the Nazis were able to control the flow of information, calling any rumours or news of Nazi failures as " Lügenpresse," contemporarily known as "fake news," of which "it implies hatred not only against journalists but against everyone who opposes the "will of the people" according to the Washington Post. It was through this tight control, discrediting of foreign sources, and usage of counter-propaganda that "The Nazi regime....effectively....mobilize the German population to support its wars of conquest until the very end of the regime."

Trump's calling of various news outlets "fake news" has heavily affected the American populace: discrediting those news outlets that might oppose him and making his supporter base even more radically loyal, with The Conversation stating Donald Trump's tweets "have arguably influenced the beliefs of millions of Americans," giving him an army that sees Trump himself as the sole reliable source of information. And exactly what happens when a man amasses an army radically loyal ONLY to him, rest of the nation be damned? One must only look at Mussolini's March on Rome or Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch to find the answer.

These efforts to undermine democracy have been seen before, and they're being seen now. It's therefore important that we remember the past and recognise when history's repeating itself, for if we don't, we might Nazi what comes next.





POLITICAL POLARIZATION: THE VIRUS THAT PLAGUES AMERICA

By Aaryav Saini

Since the dawn of social media, we have become increasingly polarized without even realizing it.

Political polarization continually divides the US, and without your help in reducing animosity towards the other side, our future looks incredibly bleak. We need to communicate, we need to read bipartisan sources, and we need to trust each other again.

The increasing divide amongst Republicans and Democrats is caused by social media – the simplest medium through which the ideological 'chasm' can widen.

First, it's important to define political polarization. Political polarization is a sharp contrast in the values and beliefs of Republicans and Democrats.

According to the Pew Research Center, in the past 20 years, this political divide has reached an all-time high. The median Democrat and Republican has become consistently more liberal and conservative respectively, but what has caused this increasing divide?

Part of the answer lies with authority figures who have considerable influence over the public. Partisan senators typically post politically antagonistic posts. This number peaked post-2017, when 33% of liberal congressional posts targeted conservative politicians. One instance of this was Bernie Sanders's November 2020 tweet: "Yesterday, Trump took full credit for the 30,000 Dow Jones, but took zero credit for 260,000 Americans who died from COVID, 40 million who face eviction or 26 million who don't have enough food to eat on Thanksgiving. No, Mr. President. The stock market is not the economy."

Whether or not you agree with Sanders, his post indicates political animosity. If the government is this divided, how can we expect the country to be united?

On the other hand far-right posts such as "#stopthesteal" exist, gaining popularity among radicalized talk show hosts such as Alex Jones. The movement aims to stop the election from being 'stolen' from Trump through unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud. Spreading a message about 'Dems' stealing the election spreads fear and increases civil unrest, widening the political chasm.

Thousands of posts repeat the same sentiment, further polarizing people. Witnessing disagreeable posts polarizes people as they lead people to anger. On the other hand viewing agreeable posts polarize as this reduces the amount of time spent on critically thinking about the numerous perspectives.

It's not solely the public's fault that social media is so polarizing. Social media sites are equally to blame because their algorithms are programmed to recommend posts similar to one's viewing history. Keeping people hooked on the app for longer, people only experience one viewpoint.

Wrapping people up in increasingly radical ideologies inspires hate and civil divide within the US.



The Pew Research Center states that Americans increasingly distrust the government and their fellow citizens. Distrust may facilitate violence and politically-animus posts.

This divisive issue invades almost every aspect of our lives and turns apolitical philosophies into political arguments. One example of this would be the 'political argument' of wearing a mask. Wearing a mask is a medical issue, not a political issue. The argument not to wear masks should go against science, not against the Democratic party. We must make a change in our lives. We must do better.

There are some who attribute the rise in political polarization to Trump as opposed to social media, and they use the example of the polarization post-2016, and claim that Trump's election contributed to the rise in politically opposing posts.

While Trump did play a minor role in the rise of polarization, the public radicalization was already growing after the 2000s – the advent of social media. Furthermore, Trump's use of social media as a medium was the predominant cause to his polarizing impact.

There are numerous ways you can help this issue: reading less biased news sources, fact-checking political posts, and researching Republican/Democratic policies regardless of what side you agree with.

Read more nuanced and bipartisan sources such as The Economist and The Associated Press. This decreases polarization because less biased sources typically approach a problem from multiple perspectives.

Do your research on Republican and Democratic policies. Awareness of policies and the rationale behind them is a great way to empathize with an opposing point of view.

In addition to understanding the opposing viewpoints, fact-checking political posts (with bipartisan sources) you see on social media made by non-reputable sources would be an effective solution to ensure that false information doesn't further feed into polarizing opinions. It is unreasonable to assume that you will be able to fact check every post, but you should fact check the partisan posts.

The US has benefitted from unity with crises in the past such as the Civil War, WWI, WWII, and the Great Depression. Through unity we need to advance towards a future with communication and trust, not regress to a world with anger. and despair.



STACYS, CHADS, AND EXTREMISM

By Olivia Wong

Everyone's experienced rejection. It's a natural part of life. We've all had our romantic feelings rejected by someone. But of course, people learn to move on from their pain... most of the time. Involuntary celibates, known as incels, are a predominantly male online community united by their failed romantic endeavors. They congregate on forums to sympathize with fellow incels about their shared experiences. They've even created their own jargon, describing women who reject them as 'Stacys' and the men they choose as 'Chads.' But both outsiders and insiders can recognize the misogynist and anti-feminist beliefs among incels, with members hungry to attack women.

If you look closer, you'll notice that the incel community acts as a bridge, leading members to other, more extremist, groups and ideologies. This is why we must prevent online users from delving into inceldom. Taking the incel community at face-value, we see a clear pattern of frustration, anger, and bitterness. Users talk about how women reject them solely on their inherent 'ugliness.' And incels often encourage one another to exact revenge. For example, in 2014, Elliot Rodger attacked and killed six people in Isla Vista. Shortly before his attack, Elliot published his manifesto, in which he wrote, "I will arm myself with deadly weapons and wage a war against all women and the men they are attracted to." In the wake of his shooting, incels celebrated Elliot. They published videos praising him, treated him as a martyr and even declared him 'Supreme Gentleman.'Alek Minassian, a Canadian inspired by Ellito Rodger's actions, drove a van into a crowd of pedestrians in 2018. Just moments before his attack, he tweeted out: "The Incel Rebellion has already begun! We will overthrow all the Chads and Stacys! All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!"

But where did this culture of violence come from? Why do some incels follow such a violent ideology?
In an honors thesis published by the University of Vermont, the authors note that many incels on Reddit have ties to other extremist forums. The thesis details how many incels not only comment on incel subreddits, but also frequented "subreddits culturally known for their connection to alt-right movement." The thesis continues, stating "some Incels show more activity in other extremist-humor subreddits, which suggests that there is a relationship between Incels and other radical movements." If this is the case, incels already connected to radical groups can radicalize fellow incels, leading them to join extremist groups. Many far-right groups are appealing to incels because of their shared ideology. Both far-right groups and incels perceive women as inferior and feel attacked by feminism. In an article written by Vox, a Reddit user detailed how he was lured to alt-right forums. He says he "had been drawn to the movement's anti-feminist message, feeling resentment for the way feminism seemed to be blaming white men for everything."

Furthermore, in a document published by WIIS (Women in International Security), they notice how "incels who argue for an armed insurrection often use similar terminology to white supremacists." This in itself is a product of the shared ties between incels and white supremastist and alt-right groups.

We must acknowledge that the general incel community is not with the alt-right or white supremacy, and that many users find acceptance in inceldom, where they could not find it in the real world. And that's okay. It's okay for people to discuss their lack of a relationship, to crave intimacy, to wallow about their hardships to others who can empathize. What's not okay is the creation of a culture that so closely resembles that of multiple extremist groups.Because as easy as it is to ignore the violent, misogynistic members of incel forums, both incels and outside lookers must acknowledge how this culture of violence has made itself integral to the character of the incel community. This pattern of calling for violence and hate-speech-like rhetoric, has made it all the easier for users to slide from inceldom to the alt-right. This is why we need to prevent people from entering the incel community.

We can do this by pushing ourselves to understand what draws people to the incel community and tailoring our outreach strategies to better connect to incels. Instead of demeaning incels and their struggles, we need to connect to them in an empathetic way. Understand that incels are looking for a community to be accepted into. If we help them recognize their worth regardless of romantic relationship status, create healthy connections, and integrate them into non-violent communities, we can pull them out of the deep pit that is inceldom.

THE OVERLOOKED THREAT OF RADICALISATION AMONGST `REFUGEES

Emma Lines



Imagine living in a place where the pungent stench of the sewers oozes from every crevice and crack. A place with harsh winters where all you have to warm yourself with is garbage and clothing scraps. There's no escape and no one willing to help.

This is the unfortunate reality for the thousands of refugees stuck at Turkey's border. These refugees have no other choice but to live in such inhumane conditions or face death, explaining why many are forced to turn towards radical ideas that give them something to believe in. I f sustained assistance targeted towards the protection of refugees is not provided, the number of radicalised groups will grow.

In Syria, refugees are at an increased risk of radicalisation from others due to a combination of factors such as feeling a sense of homelessness, lack of security, and poor conditions for youth.

Syria's refugee crisis has been an issue since the ongoing civil war which started in 2011. In hopes of escaping the pervasive conflict and the country's oppressive government, thousands of civilians fled from Syria to Turkey; however, in 2015, Turkey decisively closed its border, leaving swarms of displaced civilians trapped.

The conditions faced by these refugees are barbaric. A shortage of tents and shelter in combination with Syria's extreme weather conditions has contributed to the exponential rise of illnesses and deaths. According to Christian Vianna De Azevedo in Perspectives on Terrorism, there is also no sewage system, central hospital, medical care, food delivery, or potable water.

With a lack of long term solutions implemented to help these refugees, according to Aljazeera one refugee describes feeling "tired and helpless." On behalf of the thousands of refugees he continues, " We have been left alone by the world." The longer refugees are confined to camps and left with a growing sense of helplessness, the greater the risk of radicalisation.

Powerless refugees are more susceptible to turn to radical ideas that provide them a sense of hope and a feeling of belonging. When looking at radicalisation in refugees, one example we can turn to is the Al-Hawl camp, the only camp where ex-ISIS members are located. According to the Guardian, US officials describe ISIS as active inside the camp, using it as an incubator for the next generation of extremists. With around 70,000 people, it's the largest camp in Northeastern Syria.

Here, ISIS ideologies are highly embraced and guards remain outnumbered by the refugees. According to the Guardian, there has been an instance where an Azerbaijani woman smothered her 14-year-old granddaughter to death for refusing to wear the niqab, a veil part of the dress code imposed on women in ISIS. In this camp, people are forced into following ISIS ideology out of fear from being attacked.

ISIS ideology is so pervasive that videos from the camp where children pledge allegiance to ISIS in front of the group's black flag surfaced. The act of flying the ISIS flag after the Caliphate has been destroyed is an indicator of the growing strength of ISIS ideology in this camp. It could very well mean Al-Hawl has become a breeding ground for the resurgence of ISIS.

Much like the situation at Al-Hawl camp, if immediate assistance is not given to these suffering refugees, there will be a surge of refugees turning towards radical, violent ideas. The majority of refugees inherently are not violent; however, the lack of humanity and care given to them is what creates angry refugees who look towards radical ideas that provide hope instead of unfulfilled promises. How are refugees expected to have hope when they have been stripped away from their basic human needs?

It's vital to provide refugees with prolonged assistance. Globally, we are not doing enough. Humanitarian aid needs to be targeted towards protecting refugees both in terms of protection from abuse as well as protection for the safety of their future. Refugees need a reason to believe in their future again and sustained aid would reduce this chronic state of despair.

To not provide refugees with sustained protection plans, we not only put at risk the security of the lives of these people, but the risk of countries welcoming radicalised refugees in the future.

THE LAICITE FIX: AN ALL ADHESIVE GLUE TO FRENCH COUNTERROISM

by Kajsa Friberg



Crepes, cigarette smoke, and coffee aren't the only things in the French air; so is the impending threat of terrorism. One would think that a country so based in liberalism and secularism should have no issues with religion in a public forum. Yet, it's the very thing tearing the country apart.

In the pursuit of denouncing religious terrorism in France, the Republic has been falling back on the concept of laicite, the separation of public and private religious life. In the aftermath of the attack on the French cartoonist Charlie Hebdo after its controversial portrayal of Islam, President Emmanuel Macron said, "a united France is cemented by laïcité." He went further, defending the publishing of offensive cartoons and depictions of the Prophet Muhammad, leading to mass, anti-France protests around the world.

While it is nothing but true that in every liberal society, there must be an exclusion of strong divisors of the public. It is liberalism that is being attacked and the individual rights that laicite restricts: large crosses, headscarves, turbans, kippahs.

Laicite entails a very weak concept of personal freedom, implementing a very unsustainable public identity. Shoving restrictions down the throats of people of faith "in the name of neutrality", the people and country are tired of this easy fix for big problems. Instead of mending the societal gaps, a new ceiling, the country is merely gluing the divides and hoping for the best. From a strongly perceived reaction to the Bastille day attack involving a 19-tonne cargo truck driving and killing 87 civilians, another restriction the burkini ban (a modest swimsuit for women) was born. By arresting a Muslim woman on a Nice beach for wearing a burkini, the Police Nationale forced the woman to remove her clothing. Goodbye social identity, hello social separation.

In order to achieve a robust public identity, security shouldn't come at the cost of human rights, beliefs, or values. It's not one or the other and it is human rights that laicite invades.

Emmanuel Macron has repeated multiple times that France needs to fight Islamic separatism. But a local market trader in a Muslim neighborhood argues that "[Macron] is redecorating the facade of a building, but not the inside. Yes, there is crime, but what creates it? It's the lack of projects and jobs for young people...Minorities are not helped enough. Some neighborhoods are just ignored." Lachen Aderdour complains in an interview with Al Jazeera.

It's no secret that extremist armed groups build the strongest bonds through social alienation. Thanks laicite! If a country does not provide its civilians with the right to social identity in schools or work, a counter society perfectly fills these needs. Continually terrorist groups have understood that security without the cost of individual rights isn't being met and people are craving it.

Take Hezbollah, a Shia Islamist political and military group, also known as a "state within a state" has a highly developed system of social services. Found in Hezbollah's brochures in 2004, under the state's executive council, the state advertises its three main service sectors: social, Islamic health, and education. Under each unit contains services that protect every individual's needs including identity. But the thing that sticks out is how Hezbollah was able to emerge: through Lebanon's absence. After the civil war, 35 years of elections were not held, and "and the municipalities' human, financial and technical capacities deteriorated, rendering them mere skeleton institutions. In the absence of intervention by the national government, this erosion in capacity made the municipalities unable to address social needs, further aggravating social conditions." (Middle East Policy Council)

This isn't just a wake-up call to France, but to the world's approach to countering terrorism. The need for a sustainable social identity is needed now more than ever. If we really want to combat separatism, by all means, human development is obliged. Just like food security, we shouldn't wait until our food is compromised until we act. We should be pining on the goods and services that enhance the security of social identity: protecting the individual liberties of all citizens.

EDUCATION IS THE ANTIDOTE TO EXTREMISM

BY SHICHUN SHARON TANG



276 girls in a local secondary school in Chibok, Nigeria were kidnapped; 20,000 girls were abducted and used as sex slaves; 2.5 million people in the city of Chibok were forced to leave their homes by Boko Haram.

"I watched my parents being killed."

"I couldn't escape because I was already pregnant."

These were the aftermath of the attacks by Boko Haram. The extremist organization arose when Mohammad Yusuf, the man who eventually became their leader, searched for a group that prioritized Islam. As Yusuf was frustrated with the differences in scriptural interpretation in Sharia, he started preaching the idea that Western education is Quranically forbidden through abduction.

Once the girls were abducted, Yusuf forced them to convert to Islam. If girls refused to do so, they will face severe physical and psychological torture, forced labor and marriage, and sexual abuse. This abuse, stated in the National Center for Biotechnology Information, usually evoked psychological issues such as impaired memory and concentration, shock, fear, anxiety, withdrawal, PTSD, and change of personality. These detrimental psychological effects are significant, leaving many victims who escaped unable to reconnect with their family and continuing to face stigmatization from the community.

Even though the trauma is oftentimes crippling, the Nigerian government remains unwilling to take action against Boko Haram. The Nigerian government must start valuing education to weaken the radicalization from Boko Haram.

Although the Nigerian government recognizes the danger of Boko Haram and has attempted to push it out of several provinces, the corrupt government has failed to prevent Boko Haram's continued abductions and tortures. This is due to the economic and political challenges that arose after President Muhammadu Buhari was elected.

These economic and political challenges eventually made the government lack commitment, capacity, and coordination. These challenges fed into the extremist narrative, allowing Boko Haram to better frame their ideologies and improve their abduction actics. In the years after Buhari's election, Boko Haram's attacks improved from poorly planned shootings to well-coordinated suicide bombings and kidnappings.

If we allow the corrupted government to continue doing nothing, the situation will continue to aggravate as abduction tactics become more advanced. We, as a global community, need to start taking action into our own hands by promoting education within the Nigerian community. By promoting education, Nigerian society can begin to appreciate the value of peace, which will make it harder for extremists to convince people to turn on their country.

According to Mr. Jorge Sequeira, UNESCO Representative to the Counter-Terrorism Initiative Task Force stated that "extremism gains ground and flourishes when young people lack choices and meaning in their lives". Unfortunately, this is exactly what the Nigerian government is doing by neglecting citizen welfare. What this signifies is that when youths and women are not educated, they are more easily radicalized by Boko Haram, which is concerning since very few in Nigeria are currently receiving a quality education.

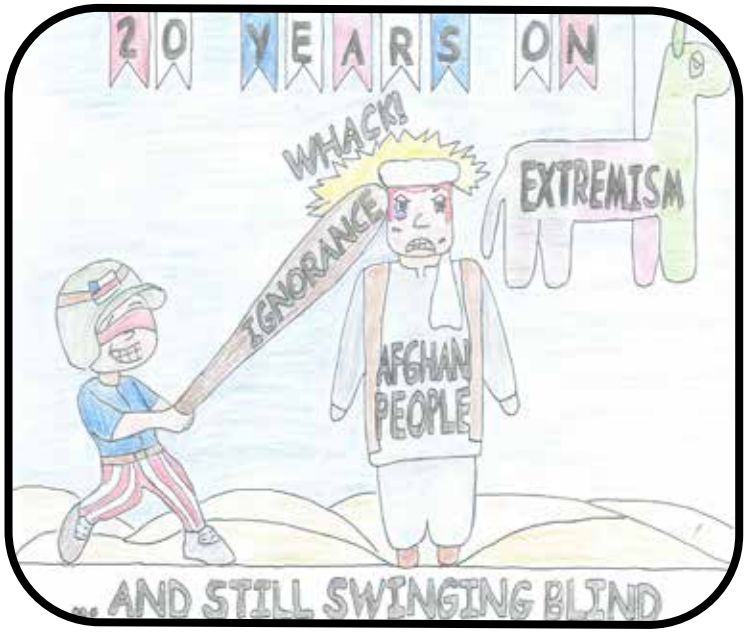
When education plays a role, mass radicalization can be fixed. Mr. Mohamed Khaled Khiari, Permanent Representative of Tunisia emphasized that to eradicate violent extremism, "attention [is needed] to ensure that [the] national education system improves access to knowledge on values of diversity, tolerance, and acceptance of other cultures." When the emphasis is put on diversity, tolerance, and cultures, the Nigerian community is better informed about what is right and wrong.

We need to start promoting the power of education. If we don't educate our society on these religious topics, then illiteracy, ignorance, and oppression will continue to allow extremists to grow their ideologies. If we make sure that educating women is a top priority, there will be a success not just in eradicating Boko Haram but also other extremist groups in other areas. If we continue to ignore this issue, stability, security, and social security will be at high risk, even at an international level.

Defeating Boko Haram depends on how the region can respond effectively. To stop the insurgency, we, as a society, need to start educatingthe Nigerian community about the danger of abduction and open them up to educational opportunities where they can foster a sense of community and learn why extremism is dangerous. If the insurgency is not controlled, Boko Haram will start to radicalize people internationally through various means. The address of insurgency needs to start now, and it begins with education.

How Not to Win the War on Terror

By Mathias Katsuya



It was midday, and the street was abuzz with activity. Figures in camouflage fatigues stood amidst hedgerows, waiting for their armored vehicle as it pushed up the suburban road. Their target was a white house containing two militants, armed and resisting attempts to negotiate. Minutes later, the men outside opened fire with machine guns and rockets, collapsing the home into a pile of rubble. Neither militant inside survived.

This is not Afghanistan or Syria, and the men involved are not Americans; instead, this raid unfolded in Chechnya, a semi-autonomous region in southern Russia gripped by conflict between ISIS-aligned fighters and the Putin-backed forces of Ramzan Kadyrov.

Such operations are the face of Chechen counterterrorism: a highly militarized campaign aimed at the total 'liquidation' of fighters.The United States, however, must learn from Chechnya's relentless fight against extremism that an understanding of cultural trends is far more effective than military force.

Nineteen years since 9/11 brought terrorism into the forefront of political discourse, the United States and Russia are increasingly adept at targeting networks of fighters for destruction. Where both countries still struggle, though, is with understanding the human terrain of conflict.

Chechen and Afghan societies are built around honor cultures. Young men growing up in Chechnya learn the names and ways in which their male ancestors died, a tradition referred to as 'seven generations'. For families involved in the insurgency, these ancestors are said to have been slain by Russian 'colonizers', reinforcing the narrative of a Chechen genocide and ingraining the need for retribution in subsequent generations.

American troops in Afghanistan face similar challenges when interacting with the Pashtuns, the largest ethnic demographic in the Taliban. Their cultural beliefs are known as Pashtunwali and include the custom of badal or revenge for a slight of one's honor. Through this, the short term gain of eliminating a Taliban fighter is quickly offset by the dishonor brought on the individual's family, requiring that badal be taken by surviving members to restore it.

In both cases, the need to take up arms is done not only to protect one's group from danger but also as a matter of familial duty. As Chechen separatist Shamil Basayev proclaimed, "I consider it an honour to fight because I must continue what my father and ancestors began."

Still, there remain those who reaffirm the commitment of meeting terrorism with force. The desire to respond with violence or, as President Putin declared, to "chase terrorists everywhere [and] rub them out" is tempting. And yet, two decades since that promise was made, concrete signs of progress are few and far between for one reason - the cultural narratives allowing for continued violence remain deeply entrenched.

Combating this requires that the United States invest in other capabilities beyond the allure of armed drones and special operations forces. Most crucial among these are psychological operations (PsyOps) which aim to provide carefully selected information in order to influence the behavior of governments, groups, or individuals.

Though largely relegated to dispensing leaflets offering money for information or broadcasting pro-government messages over the radio in Afghanistan, PsyOps offer the United States an opportunity to turn culture against their adversaries. Just as the Taliban exploits badal to foment resistance, the American military must do the same with other facets of Pashtunwali.

Kheegara, the need to act selflessly in protection of one's society, is one Pashtun tenant vulnerable to PsyOps messaging, particularly given indiscriminate attacks by the Taliban against civilian targets. By also appealing to the value of thora, bravery in the face of extreme danger, a sustained PsyOps campaign centered on culture could be far more powerful at mobilizing Pashtun support to actively combat the Taliban than monetary rewards or threats of force ever could.

The simple truth is that we cannot kill our way out of terrorism. As today's generation of servicemembers, high schoolers not even born on 9/11, fight a war they have never lived without, it appears as though we have failed to learn this lesson. When the question of a military campaign against terror is raised, America must look to Chechnya and understand that that even the harshest autocratic regime, with a penchant for demolishing homes and taking no prisoners, still confronts terrorism in its streets.

Ultimately, our success in this conflict rests not on replicating "Zero Dark Thirty" but on navigating the cultural landscape of the adversary. In this regard, America is losing.

Why America is Losing the War on Terror By Dev Varshney

19 years ago, on September 11, the world was forever changed. As planes crashed into symbols of American prosperity and power, Americans everywhere awoke to a new reality, one in which combating terror would define the age. The gut wrenching sting of American weakness was matched with steely resolve to combat this new menace. In this grief stricken rage, Americans everywhere rushed off to war to end the humiliation, but that was not to be. Instead, according to the Department of Veterans affairs, America has lost more than 7000 soldiers in this war. America need to reduce this violent footprint, expand extradition treaties, and if needed, enforce punitive sanctions against regimes that sponser terrorism, to make a serious dent in the war on terror.

Firstly, America must reduce the violent footprint of American counter-terror operations. According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 11 airstrikes alone have killed 117 civilians in Afghanistan, including an airstrike that had killed 11 children and their mother, documented by an NYT investigation. Violence against civilians only erodes our credibility and enshrines the terrorists as legitimate defenders against oppression, strengthening their credibility with the people and furthering their goal of reshaping society as they wish. We see this with Afghanistan's resistance to the Soviet Union, and more recently with the American intervention and more. Thus America needs to reduce the violent footprint of our counter-terrorist operations. This means a severe withdrawal of U.S. ground forces, a decreased number of airstrikes, and an open commitment to investigate and punish past culprits for the deaths of civilians. America needs to repair our broken credibility in the Middle East to have any chance at eradicating terrorists from the civilian population.

Some may argue that the American intervention is very effective, for it was the Military's intervention that ultimately drove ISIS out of Iraq and Syria. Furthermore, it was a raid conducted by the Navy Seals that killed Osama bin Laden. Yet ISIS flourished under the destabilizing effects of American intervention, and though ISIS no longer holds territory in Iraq and Syria, they are still affiliated with groups as far off as the Philippines and Libya, and thus still pose a real threat. The intervention has only provided a temporary reprieve. Furthermore, the intervention alienated Pakistan, a critical ally. Perhaps if the CIA had worked with Pakistan to extradite Bin Laden, America would enjoy increased Pakistani support.

America needs to also better leverage legal and political pressures to deal with terrorism through extradtion. Extradition works because it allows the aggrieved country to adequately punish the terrorists by bringing them to justice. America needs to further pursue extradition, according to the Department of State, currently the U.S. has no extradition treaties with Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen or Oman, all terrorist hotspots. America needs to reach out and establish such extradition to ensure terrorists are brought to justice, for without these treaties America will forever be stuck with counter productive, violent intervention as their sole recourse.

A potential method to deal with obstant regimes who refuse to cooperate with extradition is sanctions. Sanctions need to hurt, and hurt the leadership. America needs to prevent the flow of liquid cash into such regimes, while still allowing shipments of essentials such as food, water and fuel. American leadership here is severely lacking, and needs to be addressed. For instance, in the wake of the Lockerbie bombing, the U.N, with strong American support, imposed sanctions on Libya. Unfortunately, the UN did not embargo oil sales from Libya, and instead France signed a billion dollar oil deal with Libya, rendering the sanctions moot. America thus needs to better leverage its political and legal influence to ensure complete compliance with sanctions and expand extradition treaties to better fight the war on terror.

To conclude, America needs to redirect its counter terrorism efforts from the Military to political and economic pressures, as relying on the Military has destablized the Middle East, ushed in a power vacum that allowed terrorists to flourish and provoked a decade long civil war in Syria. America needs to pivot to extradition and sanctions, for they allow America to bring terrorists to justice, and America needs to deal with obstant regimes without destabilizing the region and provoking violence. If America follows this course of action, it's possible to save many lives, promote peace and prosperity in the Middle East, and most importantly, strike a deadly blow to the terrorists.



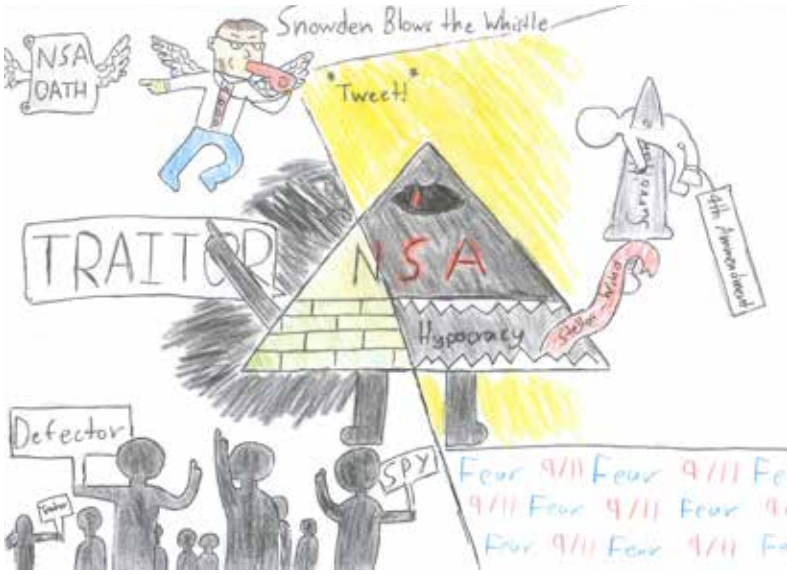
Edward Snowden : Exiled Patriot

Why Edward Snowden deserves a pardon for his actions

BY RYAN KOH

Every second of every day, you are being watched.

Your conversations, relationships, and actions are all recorded and stored. When you sleep, laugh, or have lunch, they know. You haven't done anything wrong or even anything suspicious. You just happen to be a blip on the radar of American intelligence agencies, just like the hundreds of millions on US soil just like you with their lives on hard drives.



This scenario was the world under the National Security Agency's StellarWind program, a mass surveillance effort authorized by the Bush administration shortly after 9/11, with the directive of gathering intelligence from phone calls, the internet, and other forms of assets to suppress terrorists in the United States. StellarWind continued until 2013 when Edward Snowden, a National Security Agency subcontractor, leaked various incriminating documents detailing the program's vast nature and other similar initiatives to the public. To this day, he remains exiled in Moscow out of fear of retribution.

Now is an imperative opportunity to have Snowden pardoned for exposing the infringement of 4th amendment right s and various privacy laws. For the last stretch of his term, President Trump has been pardoning people he deems to have already served appropriate retribution, or didn't deserve punishment at all; criteria very applicable to Snowden. Considering current espionage laws, and despite leaking classified information, Edward Snowden should receive one of these pardons from Trump for exposing major violations of privacy, thereby fulfilling his constitutional duties.

Concerning an appeal to Trump, in 2013 and 2014, he was very vocal about his distaste for Snowden leaking classified information, calling him "a traitor and a disgrace" on Twitter. But, more recently, he has begun to consider pardoning Snowden and remains on the fence about that decision. However, people who argue for Snowden to face punishment cite Trump changing his stance on the issue as a reckless decision if he were to grant Snowden a pardon and might even encourage other national security members to commit espionage. This claim doesn't address the fact that for the past 7 years, Snowden has been under a lot more scrutiny than he deserves. His actions were not for the sake of leaking information to foreign nations but to defend the constitution. If anything, his actions and a pardon would encourage more American people to hold their own government accountable, which both parties can agree is a good thing to have when handling modern forms of information.

Since the rise of new mediums such as the internet, the current laws surrounding espionage and treason are extremely outdated for the current environment of modern intelligence gathering. Laws that Snowden was charged for during the Obama administration. The United States' Espionage Act was enacted in 1917, its last amendment being in 1961, and the most recent law pertaining to espionage, The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, was signed in 1978. Both being decades too old to have any proper adjudication of a scenario. In general, enforced policies including these new mediums of data are not as prevalent and up to date as they should be in plausible scenarios such as espionage. Thus, claims made in the earlier Obama administration to have Snowden on trial in accordance with these laws and other due processes were incredibly reasonable to reject.

In addition to the underwhelming laws he was charged for, Snowden shouldn't have had to stand trial or face charges in the first place. Under the oath he took as a member of the NSA, it states, "I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States." He undeniably fulfilled the oath when he exposed a breach in the rights of the 4th Amendment. . Through the duties he carried out as a member of the NSA, Snowden validates the claim that his actions more resemble that of a patriot rather than a traitor. If Snowden does not get a pardon, that will show that the Obama, Trump, and the soon Biden administration, genuinely think that someone who single-handedly defended 4th amendment rights should face punishment and defamation as opposed to being praised, or even forgiven for that matter.

Ultimately, Snowden leaked classified information and intentionally evaded punishment from incompatible charges for his actions. However, this does not make him a traitor, spy, or any label he receives due to his actions. Snowden should be known as a member of the NSA, who saw a violation of the constitution that his nation was built upon. He leaked the documents under oath and duty that would finally hold his government accountable for the breach in their own laws. At the bare minimum, after 7 years of living in exile, a whistleblower, a patriot, and a citizen of the United States deserves to come home.



ECOTERRORISM: IT'S NOT TERRORISM

Samantha Milliken

You've probably heard of ISIS and Al-Qaeda--two of the most destructive terrorist groups the world has ever seen. But have you heard of The Earth Liberation Front (ELF)? EarthFirst!? Greenpeace? The FBI defines these "radical" environmental groups as "eco-terrorists." They are known for acts of ecotage: tree-sits and tree spiking, forms of peaceful protest to prevent the destruction of nature, and arson of environmentally destructive industrial sites. Defined as criminal acts, their goals are "to educate the public on the atrocities committed against the Earth and all species that populate it... and to take all necessary precautions against harming any animal: human and non-human," states Emily Kumpel for Greenhaven Press.

'Terrorism' is a culturally loaded term, associated with extreme violence that targets human lives. Affiliating these environmental groups with such a word is entirely misleading. The acts of violence these eco-activists commit are justified as they are specifically intended to prevent the harm of all living beings and are a driving force in creating real environmental change.
The beliefs of these more extreme eco-defense groups are strongly rooted in deep ecology, the idea that humans have no superiority in nature and that we are now responsible for "righting our wrongs," as described by Kumpel. Deep ecology condones sacrificing the well-being of individuals for the well-being of the whole, which is both the strongest criticism of the movement and the greatest support for ecotage.

One of the strongest defenses of eco-activism is defined by Aldo Leopold, considered to be the father of wildlife ecology: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Progressive environmentalist movements serve to protect nature, so most methods of ecotage destroy any infringement by humans that would disrupt our ecosystem's natural beauty and stability. Considering this, non-violent criminal acts, committed by these environmental groups, such as tree-spiking and freeing animals from fur farms, are justified because they protect those values.

This fight is for the good of all human beings, these activists believe that the safety of the human race lies within protecting all life forms; life our society is destroying. Eco-activists aim to protect this biodiversity through the destruction of man-made destruction devices, and although it is through criminal action–from slashing tires to the arson of buildings–their worst crimes are merely property damage. The EarthFirst! Journal claims this is done as

"a means of striking at the Earth's destroyers where they commit their crimes and hitting them where they feel it most—in their profit margins."

Traditional environmentalists do not agree with this approach as it simply "isn't pragmatic" in today's society, as stated by Felicity James for Gale. She argues that "attacks are dangerous stunts that make environmentalists seem irrational and dangerous." These traditionalists rely on approaches like lobbying Congress and protesting timber sales, however, ELF regards these mainstream groups as 'sell-outs' and 'corporate puppets', and eco-activist groups continue to see these techniques fail time and time again. Eco-activists' methods can only cause environmental groups to lose credibility due to the 'terrorist' descriptor bestowed upon them by the FBI and their definition of 'criminal acts.' Environmental groups are a driving force of change environmentalists are seeking today because of their initiative to create action.



These groups stick to a few main methods, including survey stakes and tree spiking. Kris Brown for Claremont Mckenna University informed that "[Survey] stake removal can delay a project indefinitely" and "delays development projects until increased costs outweigh the costs of construction, and the projects are eventually canceled." This makes survey stakes an extremely effective–and non-violent–method of activism.

Tree spiking is another popular option for the same reason: economic damage. Timber companies spend vast amounts of time and resources removing undiscovered tree spikes that cause heavy damage to equipment. The burden of the financial costs of this extra time and resource, or the costs of repairing broken saws in their mills, is a decision these companies are faced with. Eventually, tree spiking causes timber projects to become economically inviable, Brown claims. Paul Watson for EarthFirst! attempted tree-spiking in 1982 at the Grouse Mountain Ski Resort, British Columbia, Canada, after contacting an arborist asking "how to spike a tree without harming the tree..or the sawmill worker." The lumber company ceased the operation, saving hundreds of trees.

These reformist environmental groups are unlike all others. Unlike infamous terror organizations, they don't use violence that physically harms human beings. In fact, their motivation to protect all life forms is why their chosen methods for activism are justified.
Although their tactics seem extreme, it's difficult to maintain faith in our ability to overcome environmental problems with 'baby steps'–minor lifestyle changes and recycling. As a vegan, I understand the destruction our society has caused to our planet, and these are the groups that make the world understand what needs to change. 'Ecoterrorism' challenges the way we think about the industrial system–the change we need to make and how we can take action against the system.

STOP STRIKING SOMALIA: IT'S NOT WORKING

By Renee Phan

Donald Trump once said, "When it comes to terrorism, we will do whatever is necessary to protect our nation." So when the insurgent threat from an al-Qaeda faction in Somalia threatened Americans' safety in East Africa, President Trump issued orders to do what was necessary – through airstrikes.

Somalia, a nation off the Horn of Africa, has a long-drawn history targeting the al-Shabaab insurgent group. Historically, the group has taken advantage of the politically unstable government since the overthrow of President Siad Barre's military regime in 1991, using anarchy to expand their member base and control territories in the region, prompting international assistance from countries like the United States.

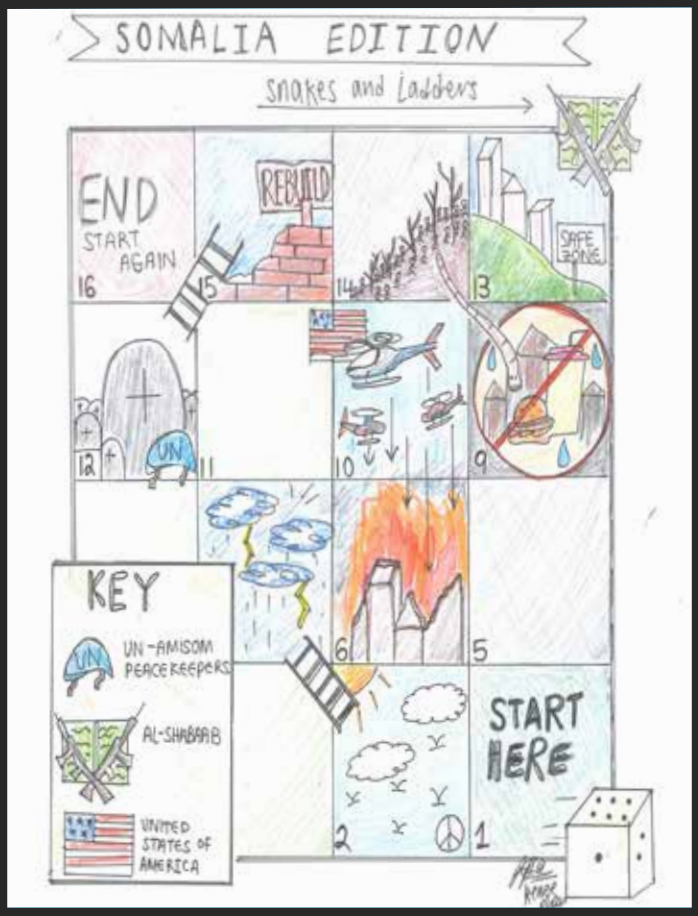
According to the New York Times, both the Bush and Obama administrations have adopted airstrikes to eradicate al-Shabaab, so this practice is not new for Trump. In fact, Trump has remained firm in his belief that adopting airstrikes is the best counterterrorism tactic in Somalia, even though the Bush and Obama administrations discovered that employing proxy forces such as the military sector of UN-backed peacekeeping group African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) to target operations on the ground would be a more feasible solution. Furthermore, The Council of Foreign Relations reports that the number of bombings under the Trump administration spiked to more than 130 since 2016 - significantly larger than both the Obama and Bush administrations combined.

Airstrikes in Somalia by the United States do not effectively combat al-Shabaab's long-term terrorist threat. Rather than resorting to airstrikes, the U.S.should focus on improving diplomatic channels by recognizing Somalia's upcoming elections.

Bombing another nation, even with consent from its government, has little effect in mitigating the growth of the Jihadist movement that al-Shabaab works to foster, often through violent means. Shabaab militants employ various guerrilla warfare and terror tactics to counter the Somali government and internationally-backed proxy forces.

In a U.S. Defense Department report issued earlier this year, AMISOM acknowledged that al-Shabaab has continued their trademark "hit-and-run attacks, ambushes, suicide bombings, and improvised explosive device operations." They remain "adaptive, resilient, and capable of attacking U.S. partner interests in Somalia and East Africa." Also, in interviews conducted by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, former Shabaab operatives show that they have reorganized themselves. Over time, they have learned to separate themselves to ensure other factions can regroup and complete their missions should an airstrike take a faction down, , thus proving airstrikes to be ineffective.

The greatest danger is that al-Shabaab controlled territories are also dense civilian populations. Many bombings occur within civilian areas to draw the Shabaab out, resulting in many deaths. This year, there have been roughly 47 airstrikes on al-Shabaab asylums, each killing approximately five to ten civilians reported by Amnesty International. Moreover, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism notes that the lowest estimated number of deaths of Somali citizens, proxy soldiers, and Shabaab militants from 2016 to 2019 amounts to 1,060.



While there is a risk of a large loss of troops if the U.S. increases on-the-ground proxy warfare, the government must consider the overwhelming number of airstrikes during the Trump administration. The collateral damage from airstrikes is extensive, and the losses from these strikes take away the true value of American troop sacrifice on the ground.

Unfortunately, loss of life is not the most significant difficulty the U.S. faces with its botched counterterrorism strategy. American airstrikes in Somalia have barely setback al-Shabaab, who looks to regain long-term power by taking advantage of Somalia's uncertain political state. Even if the U.S. government halting airstrikes may seem like providing an opportunity for al-Shabaab to gain even more power, taking the diplomatic front is an initiative that generates a lot of traction internationally. By stopping airstrikes and thus supporting the upcoming Somali election, other nations follow America's lead in doing the same. This recognition will solidify the country as an established nation across the world and boost domestic confidence.

With Somalia's population's safety assured, more citizens will be able to direct their priorities in career and economic advancements instead of fearing for their lives at the hands of al-Shabaab. The window for non-state actors such as al-Shabaab to regain power in the region will close, and the nation can focus on alleviating their humanitarian crisis.

As the world enters a Biden transition, we must reevaluate America's counterterrorism strategies. While airstrikes hinder al-Shabaab's operations from time to time, more Jihad cells will eventually materialize and re-affirm their power. Most of all, these airstrikes serve as a quick fix for an increasingly war-weary public and blind the world to the real cost of this conflict. Counterterrorism operations are not worth American lives. There will be more stars on the CIA memorial if this continues, and it won't change the fact that al-Shabaab is as strong as ever. The U.S. must take the diplomatic pathway to effectively deliver significant blows to the day-to-day operations of al-Shabaab in Somalia.

HOW TO CHANGE THE WEATHER

By Laney Curnett

The left campaigns for change in the United States. They protest against typical racial stereotypes and decisions made by the government, and they use violence to do so. In the 1960s, anti-Vietnam War protestors used bombs at the Capitol and Pentagon to send their message, and now, the Black Lives Matter movement thinks that the only way to get their point across is by destroying property and hurting people.

At least, that is what the government and media will lead you to believe.

In the United States, a pattern has arisen where small bits of violence in left-leaning revolutions tend to overshadow the groups' most important messages. The government and media need to take action to draw attention to the dangers of the violence while still maintaining the group's most important messages.

This was especially evident in the anti-Vietnam War protests during the 60s and 70s. One of the most notable groups formed within this movement was the Students for a Democratic Society (the SDS), which aimed to use political protests and campaigns to get US troops pulled out of Vietnam. Eventually, a smaller subset of the SDS called the Weathermen (or the Weather Underground Organisation/ WUO) broke off from the main group and started to believe that more violent measures needed to be taken to get their message across. The Weathermen ended up setting off 17 bombs, including at the Pentagon and Capitol, never hurting any people, but always damaging property.

Before their group disbanded because an accidental explosion killed three of their own men, the Weathermen caused a lot of fear in the American people. An ABC broadcast of the WUO's bomb at the capital reported a 'violent explosion' with 'serious damage' and there could 'still [be] other bombs hidden', along with a report that linked this explosion to 'left-wing terrorists'. This report, similar to many other news agencies at the time, was able to use this strong language to correlate danger and violence to the entire anti-Vietnam War movements at the time. The Weathermen often received backlash for their actions. Not only were they looked down upon because of the violence, danger, and fear they caused, but they were also accused of giving "all activists, both militant and more mainstream, a bad name," according to PBS.

This small bit of violence that the Weathermen caused was then blown up by the media and caused a blackspot on the anti-Vietnam War movement as a whole. A Gallup poll taken in 1965 reported that 99% of Americans said they had not participated in an anti-Vietnam War rally, and of that, only 9% said they wanted to. It is likely that if the media reacted differently, these polls would have been different. Moreover, this is shown in a separate Gallup poll that said 50% of Americans approved of the way Chicago police reacted in an anti-war protest where several hundred protesters were arrested or injured. Only 31% disapproved.

If the media had taken more time to focus on the important message of the movement, and if law enforcement didn't answer the people's protests with violence, more people could have wanted to join the movement. If the media continues to do this, less people will want to fight for great causes like this one.

And the media hasn't stopped.

Even now, in the modern Black Lives Matter protests, there seems to be an overwhelming amount of coverage on the riots that occurred as opposed to the peaceful protests. People focus on the 6 people killed, the businesses that were robbed, and the property that was damaged. While this is reprehensible to take place in protests, the information that is spread is incredibly misleading. Of the 7,350 protests that took place, 96.3% of the protests had no property damage or police injuries. It is insane to think that the media has manipulated these peaceful groups' image and caused people to see the whole movement as dangerous. It is ignorant.

It is important; however, to pay attention to this violence. The government does need to take action and condone those who are violent. The six people killed in BLM protests and the numerous amount of property damage that was made by the Weathermen cannot go unnoticed. But by the way the government and media speaks about these movements, it overshadows the message with violence; it hinders the groups' agendas.

If the government and various media sources start to pay more attention to the importance of anti-war and anti-racism movements, more people will want to be a part of the change, not be afraid of it. In order for these left-wing movements to gain traction, there needs to be less violence, but there also needs to be more actions by the government and the media to not make violence the most notable feature of peaceful movements.



WHAT IS THE LINE BETWEEN TORTURE AND ENHANCED INTERROGATION?

A 2016 census found that two-thirds of the American public believe that torture against suspected terrorists is justified. This torture was carried out at Abu Ghraib. From 2003 to 2006, the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq held suspected terrorists during the war on terror. In 2004, gruesome photos of soldiers' inhumane treatment of prisoners were leaked to the public—images ranged from soldiers stacking naked prisoners in human pyramids to kicking and punching inmates—revealing just a fraction of the horrendous crimes committed against suspected terrorists. Yet, many Americans believed these inhumane acts to be justified.

Due to the ambiguity in protocol of enhanced interrogation tactics, American soldiers were given the power to torture the inmates, leading to false confessions during interrogations as well as permanent mental and physical scars. Although the perpetrators faced punishments at their trials, the sentences do not appropriately reflect the severity of their actions.

To guarantee that the atrocities of Abu Ghraib do not repeat themselves, it is crucial that the rules for enhanced interrogation are unequivocal to minimize false confessions and ensure just punishment for the torturers.

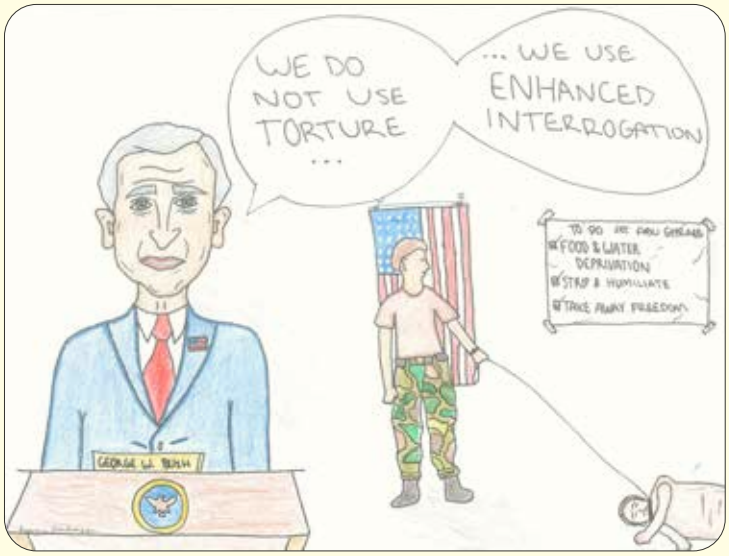
One of the methods most correlated with false confessions is sleep deprivation. Eric Fair, an interrogator at Abu Ghraib, revealed that "you let [the detainees] sleep for 15 or 20 minutes and then wake them up, they have no idea how long they've been asleep... in the course of an hour or two, you can make them think they've lived three or four days. And they lose all sense of time, and they lose all sense of hope".

When inmates undergo this abuse, they experience "irritability and uncooperative attitude, memory lapses, and difficulty concentrating" along with hallucinations and "delusional episodes," said the Psychiatric Times.

A 2016 study from the National Academy of Sciences found that people under interrogation who have been awake for 24 hours are 4.5 times more likely to sign a false confession than those who have had at least eight hours of sleep. Since false confessions "account for approximately 15–25% of wrongful convictions in the United States", the number of false confessions occurring given the harsher conditions at Abu Ghraib is much higher.

If the tactics taught in training were more explicit, for example setting a number to the hours of sleep deprivation allowed, the tactics would be controlled and lead to fewer false confessions.

After new protocols were enforced for military training in 2004, interrogators began using a new set of enhanced interrogation tactics including prolonged isolation, prolonged sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation, waterboarding, and sexual humiliation.



The lack of specificity in the protocols does not accurately provide the extent to which an interrogator can use the techniques. This led to extensive debate regarding who to convict and the sentence one should serve for the abuse committed to the detainees at Abu Ghraib. However, what sentence do you give to someone when the protocols set in place are so vague?

Eleven U.S. soldiers were convicted of crimes stemming from detainee abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison. Charles Graner, who prosecutors described as the ringleader of the mistreatment from guards, was sentenced to ten years in prison for assault, battery, conspiracy, maltreatment, indecent acts, and dereliction of duty. This was the harshest conviction out of the eleven.

Not once was there a conviction of torture.

Yet, Section 2340A of Title 18, United States Code prohibits torture and states: "Torture is defined to include acts specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering. (It does not include such pain or suffering incidental to lawful sanctions)".

The soldiers were protected by the loophole in the code. Since the interrogation rules at Abu Ghraib were so broad, the soldiers were allowed under law to commit this torture.

In almost all of these cases, the defense argued that the soldiers believe they were following orders, which made sense given the rules. But justice was not served—the conviction for torture from the U.S. Department of Justice states that the torturer "shall be punished by death, or imprisoned for any term of years or for life."

As the War on Terror continues, many Americans remain fearful. Their fear is illustrated in the surprising statistic that two-thirds of Americans believe that torture is justified. They want answers and someone to be held accountable for the terrorism affecting America. Although wanting answers is justified, torture is not. Not only do the enhanced interrogation tactics produce false confessions and lead to unclear sentencing, but they also violate the human rights that everyone is entitled to. The way to obtain these answers in a more reliable and humane way is through a distinguished set of protocols and rules.

Emma Anderson



INJUSTICE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM:

The death penalty should be abolished as a form of retribution for all terrorist acts in India

Kayla Entwistle

In the 53 countries that have legalized the death penalty, what kind of crime mandates the punishment of death continues to be a matter of both civil and judicial debate. Despite tension, a trend in public opinion is appearing: capital punishment charges recieve less resistance when given to terrorists as compared to perpetrators of "lesser" crimes such as murder and rape.

This debate is particularly relevant in India. In 2015, the Law Commission of India recommended that the death penalty be abolished for all crimes "other than terrorism-related offences and waging war against the State"; however, public support for the death penalty remains at 90% (Roy, 2020).

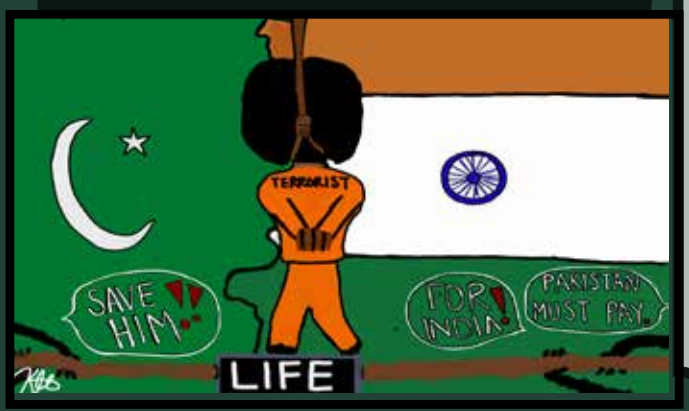
While capital punishment might slightly deter fear of terrorism among the public, the death penalty should be abolished as a form of retribution for all terrorist acts in India.

In November of 2008, terrorists attacked six locations in Mumbai, India. During thea 3-day siege, 167 people were killed by 10 men associated with Lashkar-e-Taiba, a radical Pakistani terror group. Explained by Ajmal Kasab, one of the ten perpetrators and "lone surviving gunman", the attack was conducted in alignment with "Pakistan's sustained anti-India campaign" (Rath, 2010).

After he was taken into custody, the court held that Ajmal Kasab was guilty of "waging war against the Government of India" and was sentenced to death and five counts of life imprisonment (Alam, 2012). Kasab's trial was swift, his execution occurring just four years after the attack.

This is unprecedented in India's legal system.

In the 15 years prior, India had only carried out one execution. This took place 13 years after the inmate's conviction. The comparative hastiness of Kasab's trial reveals a political motive – in this case to retaliate against Pakistan. Deven Bharti, a senior police officer involved with the investigation of the attacks, claimed that his team was " very satisfied" and that he hoped the sentence would "be a deterrent for Pakistan so they will stop exporting terrorists across the border" (Al Jazeera Staff, 2010).



With politics playing into his sentencing, Kasab was denied a fair trial. In order to ensure justice for all parties, criminal cases must be exempt from outside influences – a trial must be based solely on an individual and their actions. No person's body should be sacrificed with political intent.

Concerns around the mental state of terrorists further complicates the degree to which Kasab was deserving of the death sentence.

In 2019, India joined the league of nations that outlawed executions for mentally ill convicts. Reasoning behind the outlawing included the belief that mental illness makes an offender less culpable for his actions, as mental incapac- components of terrorist cases that directly resemble cases involving a defendant who is mentally ill.

Kasab's defense attorney, Mr. Raju Ramachandran, claimed that once Kasab was "trapped" by Lashkar-e-Taiba, he "was completely brain-washed and became a tool in their hand... hardly in control of his own mind" (Alam, 2012). The court ultimately brushed this argument off, though they lacked concrete evidence that challenged Ramachandran's claims.

By sentencing Kasab to the death penalty without fully considering his mental state, the court denied him protection from cruel and unusual punishment. When mental health is in question, capital punishment should never be used. Doing so is highly immoral.

Advocates for capital punishment claim that it is essential to maintain order and peace in society, and yet the efficacy of such a sentence is questionable. The very objective of capital punishment is to deter the "most serious crimes"; however, the death penalty has proven largely ineffective in acting as detterence for future acts of terrorism (PRI, 2014).

Around the world, capital punishment has failed to deter terrorist attacks (Tayler, 2020). In fact, the usage of the death penalty in terrorism cases is associated, to some degree, with higher rates of attacks. One explanation for this is that terrorists, under some ideologies, commit a crime to achieve martyrdom as well as to inspire future martyrs; thus, a defendant sentenced to death is seen by compatriots as the ultimate sacrifice: dying for the group's cause. This does not deter any future crimes that are similar in nature.

As the death penalty continues to be used in nations like India, nationalistic incentives, disregard for mental illness, and the inefficacy of capital punishment as a detterence to future crimes should be considered when sentencing terrorists. There is a fine line between justice and injustice, and with the numerous moral concerns that it raises, capital punishment leans toward the latter – even when it comes to the ultimate crime of terrorism. In order to preserve the name of the justice system, retributive sentences must be carefully considered and highly justifiable, for all.



IS INDIA'S MELTING POT BOILING OVER?

By: Dhruv Mathur

At approximately 6:46 pm on December 15th, 2019, twenty police officers forcefully entered the central library at the Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi. With shields in one hand and batons in another, they charged at the students who, in the process of organizing an anti-government protest for the next day, were tear-gassed and beaten.

Hours later, news channels across India broadcasted angered students being arrested and dragged into prison vans.

Why would the world's largest democracy turn on its own citizens?

A few days before the crackdown, India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) passed a revised version of the Indian Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which fundamentally divided the country along religious lines. The CAA stated that illegal immigrants "belonging to minority communities in Bangladesh and Pakistan, namely Hindus, who were compelled to seek shelter in India due to religious persecution" would be able to get citizenship through a fast-tracked process. Notably absent from the list were Muslims, nearly 200 million of India's 1.3 billion people.

This religious favoritism is not what India was founded upon. In a conversation with American journalist Norman Cousins in 1961, then-Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru stated that "democracy is not only political, but something of the mind; a certain tolerance of others and others' opinions." Nehru believed in a secular India, free from religious persecution; however, since Hindu nationalistic leader Narendra Modi took power in 2014, Nehru's vision of democracy is in danger.

This is unacceptable. We need to learn from the 1984 Sikh Massacre and cannot allow the Modi government to polarize our country along religious lines as this will lead to Hindu extremism and long term violence. We need to stop thinking that Indian culture is coterminous with Hinduism and need to affirm our commitment to safeguard religious harmony.

For decades, India proudly stood as the beacon of religious coexistence, a bastion of relative peace in a region gripped by sectarian conflict. In fact, the Dalai Lama stated in 1975 that "India's treasure is that all major religious traditions coexist in harmony."

This "treasure," however, slowly disappeared in the 1980s.

On October 31st, 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards, who were angered by the government's desire to kill Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a religious preacher who the Indian government believed was converting Hindus to Sikhism.

Hours later, anti-Sikh riots broke out in more than forty cities across India. Hindu mobs with iron rods, swords, and kerosene were seen breaking into shops and homes. For four days, there were a series of mass rapes, onslaught, and mob attacks. Nirpreet Kaur "watched people pouring kerosene over her husband and two sons, and their bodies being set alight." A Hindu mob did not kill Nirpreet's husband due to his actions but merely because he was a Sikh living in a majority Hindu state. Such an environment, where Hindu vigilantes feel empowered and minority groups defenceless, can no longer define India's political climate. Indians must overlook religious divisions and cannot allow the BJP to continue its divisive political leadership.
The riots killed over 17,000 Sikhs, and displaced more than 50,000 in just four days. However, the most shocking event was how the Indian government reacted during this time.

Government officials were seen meeting "with local supporters to distribute money and weapons." Sajjan Kumar, a senior party leader, was seen telling mobs of supporters, "whoever kills the sons of the snakes, I will reward them. You can collect these prizes on November 3rd from my assistant." Jagmeet Singh Dhaliwal, a Canadian MP who has widely advocated for the Sikh riots to be deemed as a mass genocide, stated that "the police commissioner did not deploy police forces around the city, and let the rioters continue killing innocent Sikhs." Instead of controlling the violence, the authorities continued to incite barbarism by encouraging mobsters to attack Sikh families. A government's primary role should be to maintain peace and order, and not operate as a de facto autocracy.

Today, it seems like India has still not learned from the 1984 Sikh Massacre. Three weeks ago, New Delhi saw the worst communal riots in decades. Trouble began between the Hindus and Muslims over the controversial CAA bill. Over 53,000 people died, and thousands of homes were set alight.

History does not repeat, but it rhymes.

With the events in New Delhi, it has become increasingly clear that India's melting pot, once a global treasure of religious co-existence, is on the verge of boiling over. All societies, from Myanmar's extreme preference for Buddhism to the oppression of Uighur Muslims in China, confront this issue. Combating this requires that we alter society's fundamental beliefs and revert to Nehru's founding principle—a creedal global identity that transcends religious borders by unifying, and not dividing, the state.

DON'T FOLLOW THE FALUN

By Zhitong Xu



This year marks the 21st year since Falun Gong, a religious campaign that blends meditation and traditional qigong with a moral philosophy, was banned in China after a massive peaceful protest outside the Beijing government headquarters.

Subsequently, the Chinese government has been hunting down, and reportedly persecuting, Falun Gong practitioners in the form of incarceration, reeducation and torture. And despite the threats, the Falun Gong movement launched an ongoing campaign against the Chinese authorities, focused in Western countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

Over years, the campaign has become increasingly ineffective in increasing the influence of its philosophies. While we need to support the human rights of oppressed groups, such as the Uygher Muslims in Xinjiang, we shouldn't apply the same standard to Falun Gong practitioners.

Falun Gong is founded upon unscientific principles. Many Chinese people, especially of the rural areas where Falun Gong most appealed to the people, gradually realized the absurdity of the sacred text, Zhuan Falun (The Revolving Dharma Wheel) by movement founder Li Hongzhi. In this scripture, Li emphasized that practitioners burn off karma, which is a cumulative debt of unethical behaviors, through suffering.

Any form of meditation, thus, was against the doctrine because it would alleviate suffering and slow down the "burning off" process. The idea of cleansing practitioners' moral sins for physical well being is a clear appeal of supernatural power.

Such appeal was widely popular in the underdeveloped areas of China as an alternative to proper medication due to high medical costs during the late 1990s. The sharp rise in the Falun movement's followers paralleled the increase in the price of medicament. In 1990, the average medical spending per capita was 14.41 Chinese Yuan (CNY). In 1999, when a massive protest on Tiananmen Square took place, this number raised to 51.65 CNY, according to Baidu Baike. Since proper medication was unaffordable, many people turned their head to Falun Gong's healing philosophies.

But in the past decade, The National Healthcare Security Administration of China actively pushed for health insurance coverage of the rural communities, reducing more than half of the medical costs. Currently, 95% of the Chinese population are under the coverage. Economical and pervasive healthcare has been making medication both easily accessible and desirable.

As a result, Falun Gong no longer serves as a refuge for health for the rural population. Simultaneously, people began to see the irony of Falun Gong's call for "truthfulness" when it encouraged a belief in paranormalcy. By supporting Falun Gong's campaign, we will be advocating for fallacies rather than human rights.

After Falun Gong lost a majority of the followers in mainland China, its influence moved overseas. However, the movement has transformed from a religious and philosophical practice to simply a crusade against the Communist regime.

The Falun Dafa Information Center, the official press office for Falun Gong, explicitly states that it "does not seek to promote the teachings or practice of Falun Gong." Instead, its work aims to "document human rights abuses specific to Falun Gong in China, as well as coercive tactics and intimidation by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) directed at Falun Gong elsewhere around the world" and "advocate for the rights of Falun Gong adherents inside China, particularly under the continued circumstance in which they are denied legal representation or fair trials."

When a religious organization prioritizes resistance over its teachings, it very clearly positions itself as an operation that appeals to the masses by political, rather than religious, motives. The pure anti-CCP sentiment out of religious context only strengthened the Chinese government's determination to ban and censor Falun Gong. In an article posted by the Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Gothenburg, Falun Gong was compared to the Peoples Temple sect which committed the infamous Jonestown Massacre, and Branch Davidians, who were under siege at Waco, Texas.

Yet until today, many Western voices still side with the Falun Gong movement. In July 2020, U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo called on the Chinese government to immediately end "twenty-one years of persecution of Falun Gong practitioners" since the infamous 1999 protest.

By supporting Falun Gong protests agianst the Communist party, we are only helping the party to furtehr justify its approach to oppress the dissidents.

Just like Falun Gong practitioners, protesters around the world increasingly begin to appeal to Western countries for their liberal stances. The next time you come across well-organized protests for great causes, stop and think before you show your support. Do you really know the background and belief of the organization you are supporting? A righteous movement that is rooted in an absurd fallacy will only be seen as exaggerated and not serve its purpose.


Declan
Sleeban
Kayla
Lauren
Thanks
for reading!
- M Hughes
+AT History '21
Jee
E. Lines
Joyce
Aryanna.

Credits

Special Thanks To:

Matt Hughes

Evan Resnick

Amos Ong

Front/Back Cover:

Karu K. Olivia W. Aaryav S. Suzu E.

Editing Team:

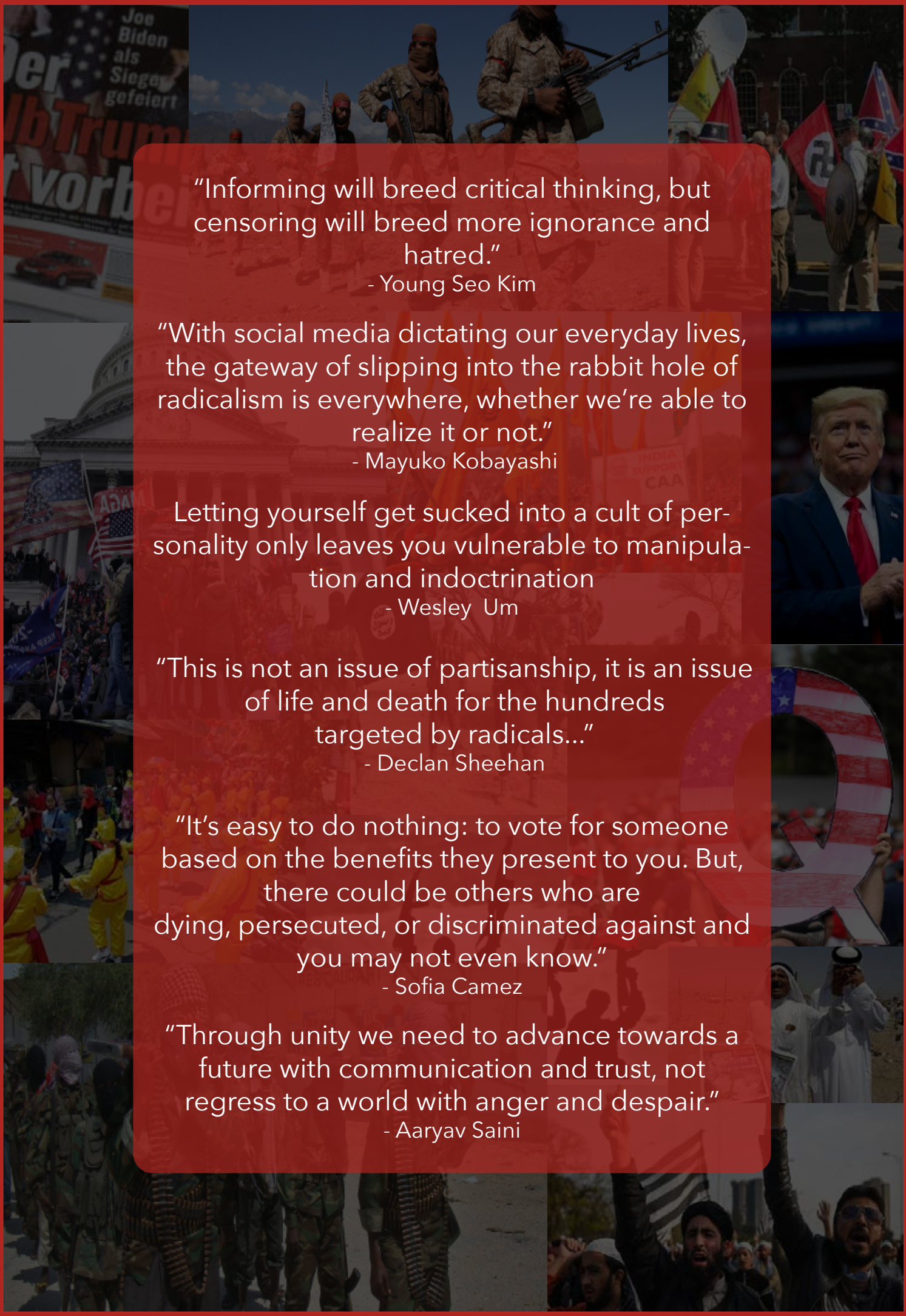
Dhruv M. Meera P. Mihika I. Kayla L. Edmund G. Wesley U. Mathias K. Marley R. Dev V. Aryanna R. Renee P. Kayla E. Young Seo K. Declan S.

Layout Team:

Emma A. Laney C. Kajsa F. Ryan K. Enoch C. Samantha M. Mayuko K.

Front/Back Inside Cover:

Sofia C. Zhitong X. Sharon T. Emma L. Joyce Y.



"Informing will breed critical thinking, but censoring will breed more ignorance and hatred."
- Young Seo Kim

"With social media dictating our everyday lives, the gateway of slipping into the rabbit hole of radicalism is everywhere, whether we're able to realize it or not."
- Mayuko Kobayashi

Letting yourself get sucked into a cult of personality only leaves you vulnerable to manipulation and indoctrination
- Wesley Um

"This is not an issue of partisanship, it is an issue of life and death for the hundreds targeted by radicals..."
- Declan Sheehan

"It's easy to do nothing: to vote for someone based on the benefits they present to you. But, there could be others who are dying, persecuted, or discriminated against and you may not even know."
- Sofia Camez

"Through unity we need to advance towards a future with communication and trust, not regress to a world with anger and despair."
- Aaryav Saini