



FAITH MATTERS  
WORKING GLOBALLY. IMPACTING LOCALLY

Copyright © 2019 Faith Matters  
London, United Kingdom  
All rights reserved

For further information please contact Faith Matters  
+44 (0) 2027 935 5593  
[info@faith-matters.org](mailto:info@faith-matters.org)

Research by: Rabbil Sikdar

# Rebel Media

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Who are they? .....	1
Who is their founder? .....	2
What are their aims and who are their targeted market?.....	4
White Nationalism .....	5
Political Correctness .....	7
Islam .....	9
Key figures associated with Rebel Media .....	11
Lauren Southern .....	11
Katie Hopkins .....	12
Tommy Robinson .....	15
Faith Goldy .....	18
How are they funded? .....	21
How much of a risk to social cohesion are Rebel Media? .....	23

## Introduction

We live in a world of fake news and conspiracies where the proliferation of alternative news sites has given oxygen to extreme views. Far-right views regarding groups such as Muslims, immigrants and refugees hold little regard for nuanced, objective reporting but instead exploit fear through sensationalist content. This has particularly been an issue facing Muslims in western societies who have often found news sites stoking prejudice and suspicion towards them with deeply inflammatory and misleading headlines.

With the success of Donald Trump and Brexit, it is clear that across several western societies the far-right are on the march. Claiming that a politically correct liberal establishment was silencing views of ordinary white people, the far-right have made grounds across numerous countries and created social divisions. This report will investigate how, Rebel Media has grown in a market for far-right audiences and come to dominate it.

## Who are they?

Rebel Media is an alt-right news website that originated in 2015, founded by Ezra Levant and Brian Lilley, following the closure of the Sun News Network.<sup>1</sup> The website is said to have been inspired by the alt-right site Breitbart, as well as influenced by American conservative Glenn Beck's own website, Blaze.

The styling of the website in its presentation of opinions dissecting current affairs was certainly lifted from the pages of Breitbart, Glen Beck and others. The project for the website swiftly generated \$100,000 through crowdfunding and other personalities from the Sun News Network, including Faith Goldy and Patrick Moore, joined. Levant hoped this model would attract around 40,000 viewers to the website. By January 2019 they have 1,135,227 subscribers on YouTube, 159,000 followers on Twitter and 166,000 likes on Facebook. On this very point alone, they have far exceeded early expectations.

They have had notable contributors including the founder of EDL and notorious far-right activist Tommy Robinson, the former TV personality Katie Hopkins, Paul Joseph Watson, Lauren Southern and others.

The size of Rebel Media and the probability of their following only continuing to grow makes them a website worth keeping an eye on and being wary of.

They have succeeded in normalising harmful debates around Muslims, immigrants and women, under the guise of being a news platform serving commentary of a political and social nature. This report will look into who they are, the key beliefs they are comprised of, their leading figures and sources of funding.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gerson, Jen "Former Sun News host Ezra Levant launching his own conservative website following network's demise" *National Post*, 2015



## Who is their founder?

Ezra Levant was born to a Jewish family in Alberta, 1972. He holds a commercial degree from the University of Calgary, and a law degree from the University of Alberta. As a teenager he was a supporter of the Reform Party of Canada, which he joined in university. During his time at university, he garnered controversy, notably for criticising affirmative action during *The Globe and Mail's* profile on young conservatives. Subsequently, the assistant dean advised him of the university's non-academic code of conduct and defamation laws.

However, Levant continued as a controversial figure at university and as head of the university's speakers committee organised a debate between Doug Christie, a lawyer who advocates for the defence of Holocaust deniers and accused Nazi war criminals, and Thomas Kuttner, a Jewish lawyer from the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission.

In 1995, Levant worked for the Fraser Institute and wrote *Youthquake*, which argued for limited government involvement in the economy, including the privatisation of the Canada Pension Plan. Levant described the 'youthquake' as the rising political consciousness of his generation.<sup>2</sup> However, contrary to the civil rights movement of the 1960s which was occupied with racism, he argued that the 'youthquake' was "enslaved by debt" and liberation from this personal financial struggle could only be attained by dismantling elements such as the minimum wage, trade unions, universal healthcare, subsidised tuition and public pension plans – ideas that much of society had seen as important buffers against poverty and total destitution.<sup>3</sup>

Levant had built a reputation for courting controversy with a series of remarks perceived to be racist. This included slurring Roma people and the use of the obscene Spanish epithet "chinga tu madre" during a televised conversation against a Chiquita executive who opposed the oil sands. This comment roughly translated to telling the executive to have sexual intercourse with his own mother.<sup>4</sup>

He has often been drawn into disputes over free speech and political correctness in the past, notably around Islam. In 2008, he republished a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad on his website amidst a hearing involving the magazine *Western Standard's* decision to do the same.<sup>5</sup>

Levant has been involved in numerous libel cases, including being threatened with action by George Soros, after accusing him of funding a group lobbying to stop Sun Media gaining a license for Sun TV News Channel. During this he fiercely assaulted Soros' character and was threatened with a libel suit in return. Following this, Sun News apologised to Soros.<sup>6</sup>

In September 1998, Ezra Levant wrote a fundraising letter on behalf of then-Reform MP Rob Anders, in which he attacked Conservative Senator Ron Ghitter as a man who hated his home province. "Ghitter is embarrassed by Albertans," the letter asserted. "He thinks our home is a

<sup>2</sup> Klein, Naomi "It's the 'Youth for Fraser Institute' movement", *Toronto Star*, 1995

<sup>3</sup> Ezra Levant "Youthquake" *Fraser Institute*, 1995  
<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/Youthquake.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ladurantaye, Steve "Defiant Levant stands by Spanish slur" *The Globe and Mail*, 2012

<sup>5</sup> Bonnell, Keith "Defiant Levant republishes cartoons" *National Post*, 2008

<sup>6</sup> "Billionaire Soros threatening to sue Sun Media", *The Globe and Mail*, 2010

'backwater.' But that hasn't stopped him from taking every last cent of his huge pay cheque that he collects for being one of Alberta's unelected, unaccountable ... senators."<sup>7</sup>

He was also successfully sued by the lawyer Khurrum Awan after insulting him and labelling him an anti-Semite and a perjurer.<sup>8</sup> Throughout this Levant aligned himself as the defender of free speech and later went on to defend himself by saying: "If this ruling is allowed to stand, it will be open season on anyone who campaigns against anti-Semitism — any Jewish group, any pro-Israel group, even anyone who criticizes radical Islam." Levant insisted that Awan had an Islamist agenda and was using western principles of human rights, legal defence and free speech to impose it.<sup>9</sup>

Levant attracted even more controversy after that when on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012, he broadcasted a commentary that he titled "The Jews vs. the Gypsies" on the Source. In this he accused the Romani people of being rapists, murderers, thugs and drug dealers. He said: "These are gypsies, a culture synonymous with swindlers. The phrase gypsy and cheater have been so interchangeable historically that the word has entered the English language as a verb: he gyped me. Gypsies are not a race. They're a shiftless group of hobos. They rob people blind. Their chief economy is theft and begging. For centuries these roving highway gangs have mocked the law and robbed their way across Europe."<sup>10</sup> This drew a huge backlash, leading to Sun News apologising and influential figures from the Jewish and Romani communities fiercely condemning Levant.

Levant also has experience in political activism and in 1996 collaborated with other political commentators to encourage the Reform Party of Canada and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada to merge so that the political right in Canada could be united. However, this was unsuccessful.

As a student at university, he supported the Reform Party and in 1997 became a parliamentary aide to their party leader Preston Manning. He has written multiple books, often on the theme of attacking Canadian governments for supposedly bolstering human rights at the expense of their democracy.

Levant's views have been stridently right-wing across a range of issues. He favoured Quebec sovereignty and in 1995 voted yes in the Quebec referendum, believing that it would allow them to reject multiculturalism.<sup>11</sup> Levant also maintained that the departure of Quebec from the Canadian federation would embolden the Canadian government to be aggressive against special interest groups, such as First Nations and environmentalists.

In 2012, he supported Mitt Romney during the US Presidential Election, arguing that Obama had changed and weakened America.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Kay, Jonathan: The weirdest thing about Ezra Levant is that he still thinks he's right" *National Post*, 2014

<sup>8</sup> Brean Joseph: "'Exceedingly political' libel case pits free speech advocate Ezra Levant against 'master of lawfare'" *National Post*, 2013

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.standwiththezra.ca/khurrum\\_awan\\_beat\\_me\\_in\\_court\\_today\\_and\\_now\\_he\\_s\\_suing\\_a\\_77\\_year\\_old\\_catholic\\_granny](https://www.standwiththezra.ca/khurrum_awan_beat_me_in_court_today_and_now_he_s_suing_a_77_year_old_catholic_granny)

<sup>10</sup> Farber, Bernie, et al "Hating the Jew, hating the 'gypsy'" *National Post*, 2012

<sup>11</sup> Andre, Harvie, "Party organizer's views don't exemplify tolerance" *Financial Post*, 1997

<sup>12</sup> Levant, Ezra "Obama's weak vision," *Toronto Sun*, 2012

On 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015, three days after the Sun News Network terminated, Levant created the Rebel Media, which offered online political and social commentary with a visibly far-right slant.

In 2018, Levant filmed inside the Old Bailey during EDL founder Tommy Robinson's hearing, bringing him into possible contempt of court.<sup>13</sup> It is illegal to take pictures or film inside courts in England and Wales, and ironically Robinson himself was convicted of this offence the year before. Levant had been crowdfunding Robinson's case since he was jailed at Leeds Crown Court in May and was travelling to London to 'report' the case.

## What are their aims and who are their targeted market?

Rebel Media is regarded as a global platform for alt-right views that takes a stance against immigration, feminism, environmentalism and what it might regard as political correctness created by the campus culture. Central, however, to Rebel's narrative, is its platforming of the far-right ideology many would identify as 'counter-Jihad'. The website takes a vociferously cynical stance towards Islam and Muslims, regarding immigration from the Muslim world as a threat on western values and society.<sup>14</sup> The platform is a manifestation of Levant's views, unchecked and not fettered by a hierarchy of directors and advertisers concerned with how rhetoric might affect ratings.

Rebel Media's audience is targeted primarily at those disillusioned by a combination of issues regarding what they see as the overreach of governments and the imposition of socially liberal values on modern society. This includes acceptance of Islam, celebration of mass migration, stifling of free speech on issues of race, gender, sexuality and other social issues in what they see as political correctness, and the perceived growth in anti-white race politics. This has attracted a wide legion of support from sympathisers, not least prominent figures who believe conservative positions on gender, race and Islam are being snuffed out by political correctness.<sup>15</sup>

These feelings, it must be stressed, are subjective to those who follow Rebel Media and are not necessarily an objective reality. However, the breadth of their online support suggest that they have found a targeted market of mostly conservative-minded people who are extremely uneasy and critical regarding social liberal issues of gender, race, migration and Islam.<sup>16</sup> The very name of Rebel conceptualises the notion of suppressed views, ordained by a combination of elitist institutions, ranging from governments to media platforms and universities. Thus, the name lends the news platform a hue of anti-establishment and anti-liberal

---

<sup>13</sup> Dearden, Lizzie "Tommy Robinson's former employer investigated by police over potential contempt of court on at Old Bailey" *Independent*, 2018

<sup>14</sup> Laszlo, Victor "Muslim Brotherhood's 'soft Jihad' is advancing Islam in America" *Rebel Media*, 2018

<sup>15</sup> Ruddick, Graham "Katie Hopkins joins far-right Canadian website Rebel Media" *Guardian*, 2018

<sup>16</sup> Levant, Ezra "Commemorate the Rebel reaching one million subscribers" *Rebel Media*, 2017/18

anger, that is currently resonant in the West, particularly for those who view the criticising men and white people to be the normalised custom in politics.

The nature of their targeted audience combined with the content they are putting out has partly explained their journalistic style. This has taken on the extremes of tabloid writing through a combination of sensationalist headlines and content heavy on rhetoric but often with little analytical content to supplement it.<sup>17</sup>

The anti-fascist researcher and author, Reid Ross, described them as “linking up with transnational alt-right commentators who play in the interstices between fascism and the radical right”.<sup>18</sup> Like all who exist on the radical ends of the political spectrum, defining what they oppose is easier than constructing an image of what they support and what their vision for society is.

Broadly speaking, there are three heavily emphasised themes underpinning Rebel Media as a far-right news platform. The first is white nationalism which rails against identity politics, regards mass migration as facilitating white genocide and rallies itself around far-right politicians that it believes supports their ideals. The second theme is its rejection of political correctness and what it regards as the pervasion of university institutions upholding free speech and reason. There is a sub-column titled “Campus Unmasked” which dedicates itself to exploring and critiquing what it sees as the proliferation of postmodern social liberal norms within universities. The final theme, and arguably its biggest bait and hook, is its criticisms of Islam which has led to many commentators believing the Rebel Media to be the platform for the counter-Jihad ideology.<sup>19</sup>

### *White Nationalism*

A focal tenet of Rebel Media's narrative is that the modern world is oppressing the white man and his identity. Although they might object to being seen as a white nationalist website, they have platformed, amongst many, individuals such as Katie Hopkins, Tommy Robinson and Faith Goldy who do espouse such views. The central argument for Rebel Media is that white people are under attack through a variety of ways, be it the perceived decline in public spaces for white people through to calls for increased representation of minorities in key industries, and the sense that white people are being violently repressed.<sup>20</sup>

The global prominence of this opinion during a time of increased rights for minorities and women means that there is a large untapped and underground market of viewers and followers for Rebel Media to exploit. Furthermore, that this is a particularly strong aspect of their website's narrative, is accentuated by the views of their founder Ezra Levant who previously regarded multiculturalism as a bad thing for the people of Quebec, and a threat to the native western society. This research will highlight multiple articles which evoke a white nationalist

---

<sup>17</sup> “17 times Erza Levant's alt-right Rebel Media went completely off the rails in 2017” *PressProgress* 2017

<sup>18</sup> Wilson, Jason “Mark Latham is working with Rebel Media. Can he also work at the Daily Telegraph?” *Guardian*, 2018

<sup>19</sup> Ling, Justin “Follow the money” *VICE*, 2017

<sup>20</sup> Hopkins, Katie “Plaasmoorde: The Killing fields: Katie Hopkins' documentary about South Africa” *YouTube*, 2018  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQHtY59PuuE&index=3&t=0s&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_GMgJl mMxwulE9Xj9TMzKQ\\_](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQHtY59PuuE&index=3&t=0s&list=PL2HWRRSziC_GMgJl mMxwulE9Xj9TMzKQ_)



sentiment. At its heart is a powerful disdain for identity politics and immigration, both of which it regards as eroding white people as a group and their cultural spaces.

Rebel Media have displayed on numerous occasions that they believe the push for racial and gender equality, often termed when in union as “intersectionalism” is racist and violent towards white people.<sup>21</sup> As society has sought greater social equality, this has led to a feeling of disenfranchisement and resentment, and a sense that liberal legislations and the new culture of preached tolerance is somehow subliminally an attack on white people. This is a theme that Rebel Media support and promote through finding stories to articulate a sense of racism being used as a weapon against white people.<sup>22</sup>

A particularly clever trait on Rebel's part is finding brazen language used by liberals regarding white groups and portraying that as the new racism in society and, the new social norm.<sup>23</sup> This then works in persuading, or reinforcing, the idea that the politics of countering racism and other forms of prejudice are really just veiled attacks on white people. The content works in appealing to socially conservative whites that their demographic is threatened of its place by social liberals who will use every lever of the state to advance other groups ahead of the now left-behind white group. This includes the capacity for violence to forcibly usher in a culture of liberal tolerance.<sup>24</sup> Alongside the disdain for identity politics is the exploitation of people's concerns regarding immigration. In a world unsettled by fast-paced immigration, automation, industrial decline and increasing bouts of terrorist atrocities, there is unease with immigration, and concerns with what it means for pre-existing community values. The editorial stances of Rebel Media have often been to negatively cast immigrants as threats to western communities, and to the values and ways of life that white groups have endeavoured to maintain. This culminated in Faith Goldy at Rebel creating a documentary that effectively likened immigration to causing and hastening white genocide in Canada.<sup>25</sup>

Why is this effective? Arguments of a 'white genocide' taking place within Canada, is not based on objective reality but often a subjective view rooted in poorly contextualised data of the distant future. For example, a poll might suggest that the future demographic of Mexicans and all Spanish-speaking minorities in America will rise. This coupled with the overt liberal push to be more racially inclusive in job sectors and the arts industry, can create a fear of being erased amongst local whites. Groups such as Rebel Media have successfully tapped into this wellspring of discontent and unease, ramping up the fears that white people are facing a rapid decline managed by elitist institutions on the side of minorities and homosexuals, using immigration as a weapon against white people.<sup>26</sup>

An integral feature of their argument that white people are under attack is the notion that mainstream politicians are assisting the demise of white people. The platform adopts the alt-right view that socially liberal values are being forcibly transplanted onto mainstream societies and those that pushback against this are deemed to be bigots from a bygone era. Rebel have

---

<sup>21</sup> Levant, Ezra “Andrew Klavan: identity politics and intersectionality are ‘racist’” *Rebel Media*, 2018

<sup>22</sup> Shimshock, Rob “College paper: white DNA is ‘an abomination’” *Rebel Media*, 2017

<sup>23</sup> Shimshock, Rob “Georgia TA says ‘some white people may have to die’” *Rebel Media*, 2019

<sup>24</sup> Shimshock, Rob “Fighting white people: TA won't rule out violence against ‘oppressors’” *Rebel Media*, 2019

<sup>25</sup> Coaston, Jane “Steve King endorses a bona fide white supremacist for Toronto mayor” *Vox*, 2018

<sup>26</sup> Balkissoon, Denise “Faith Goldy doesn't want to be mayor of Toronto” *The Globe and Mail*, 2018

targeted multiple politicians who they deem to be pushing a liberal agenda and particularly aimed a large bulk of their criticisms towards the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, believing that he is relegating national interests for policies only desired by groups that are now being privileged over mainstream white society.<sup>27</sup> Rebel believe that Trudeau has actively participated in the advancement of social liberalism in mainstream society.<sup>28</sup>

How effective is this? Politics today is rife with an erosion in trust between policymakers and voters. The discord is fuelled by the sense that voters' concerns over globalisation, capitalism, terrorism and other issues are just ignored. This, to some, would be the politicians of liberal elitist centrism who espouse warm views on immigration, race, feminism and Islam. Those of socially conservative leanings might feel excluded from the discourse and believe that they are not being heard. This is likely to fuel a feeling of disenfranchisement and think that to be a white person is to be subjugated in some way. This leaves a large market across several Western countries that Rebel Media can ruthlessly dominate.

### *Political Correctness*

The name Rebel Media is not a coincidence. It implies a revolt against the establishment which they see as being a hegemonic force both culturally and politically. Rebel Media regards the elite as a bundle of institutions dedicated to subordinating the interests of ordinary people to their liberal agenda. This comprises of the idea that the issues which matter to people are being relegated to advance the interests of privileged groups. Furthermore, criticisms of these groups or ideas are snuffed out in an uproar of self-righteous outrage and virtue-signalling. They believe that the liberal promotion of groups in society has cocooned them from things such as criticism and satire, meaning sensitivity and cultural relativism replace freedom of speech. This is what the political right from both the moderate to the extremes would deem as "political correctness", the notion that certain ideas, labels and views are too uncomfortable for the mainstream political discourse and censored by the deliberate sensitivity of the establishment beholden to particular groups and not ordinary people.<sup>29</sup> To be clear, this is not something specific to the far-right and mainstream right-wing politicians will talk about a culture of fear around discussing ideas. This even applies to those labelled as New Atheist liberals who believe that refusal to criticise Islam is a betrayal of liberal values. However, the far-right have applied this further, going as far to use the term to explain an establishment conspiracy in bed with Muslims and liberals that silences extreme right-wing views which they believe is held by ordinary white people.

There are two aspects to which this political correctness unfolds itself in the eyes of those on the far-right. The first is a fear of causing offence to those of different backgrounds and traditionally underprivileged groups.<sup>30</sup> The far-right believe that modern society is gripped by a fear of saying the wrong things at risk of being seen as a racist, homophobic bigot or sexist, and actively prioritises identity over the promotion of artistic liberty and freedom of speech.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Nicholas, Holly "Liberals put name calling, identity politics at heart of NAFTA negotiations" *Rebel Media*, 2017

<sup>28</sup> Levant, Ezra "Justin Trudeau plunges in the polls – so he lashes out in year-end interview" *Rebel Media*, 2018

<sup>29</sup> Levant, Ezra "The slow death of stand-up comedy in Canada claims new victim" *Rebel Media*, 2019

<sup>30</sup> "10 times schools took political correctness to the EXTREME and ABSURD" *Rebel Media*, 2016

<sup>31</sup> McInnes, Gavin "Stop making our movies politically correct" *Rebel Media*, 2017  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca4lnPwnX3E>

This, they say, is the deliberate social engineering to force people to think in a particular way by shutting down free speech and ensuring that certain opinions and views cannot exist or be given any kind of airtime. This culture of political correctness is seen as damaging as it then does not allow society to discuss the urgent issues of the day, as sensitivity is prioritised over facts and safety of the national community.

The audience that this appeals to are those disorientated by society's push for racial equality and embrace of feminism. Rebel Media's market are those who feel as though they woke up one day to find that the world had changed, and they were no longer the right kind of person, but the left behind. Worse, their views and values were seen to be from an age of prehistoric bigotry unfitting for the modern times people found themselves in. This creates a sense of resentment and fuels a pushback towards what they regard as the mainstream norms filtering through society. Rebel, by name and their editorial stances, offer a platform that ironically works as a safe space for their views where they can discuss ideas that they think would otherwise be censored, which they believe stems from the modern campus culture.<sup>32</sup> As more people believe they are being shut off from the social mainstream discourse, underground alternative media sites like Rebel swoop in. They create their audience by positioning themselves as the free-speech platform undeterred by the intellectually stifling customs of the modern liberal society in which criticisms of feminism or black culture or immigration creates a backlash in their eyes.

At the heart of their suspicions about political correctness is what they regard as the campus culture where the worst of modern liberalism festers. Within the *New York Times* it was described as "A powerful source of socialisation, even for commuting students. Students are socialized through their perception of the institution's norms, including peer norms, and their habitual participation in routine practices and communal events."<sup>33</sup> Rebel Media take issue with the prospect of the seemingly dominant idea of campus being an unchallenged brand of feminism and racial awareness which deemed any criticism of underprivileged groups to be an act of prejudice or evident use of privilege.

Rebel Media believe that university life is now engendering a culture where freedom of expression to criticise, be satirical or even adopt customs of other cultures is unofficially prohibited. This is depicted by Rebel as liberalism and external groups *changing* a set of values and way of life that once serviced white-majority groups well. Rebel Media tap into, and exploit, the undercurrents of resentment that freedom of speech is restricted by the liberal-left and use this to grow their market by essentially positioning themselves as a correction of the ills of society and the campus culture, a space where the stifled and unspoken views get given oxygen. This style of supposedly fearless and rebellious reporting, as they purport to depict it, works in appealing to those who feel their views fall out of line with that of modern liberalism.

Tied to Rebel Media's assault on what they see as political correctness woven in with the campus culture is their perception of modern feminism.<sup>34</sup> Central to their criticisms is that feminism has corroded the family unit and turned men into enemies of women and

---

<sup>32</sup> Shimshock, Rob "Prof threatens student over mascot" *Rebel Media*, 2018

<sup>33</sup> "Campus Culture or Climate" *New York Times*  
[https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll\\_aascu\\_ecculture.html](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll_aascu_ecculture.html)

<sup>34</sup> Bucky, Jack "Feminism killed 'Doctor Who'" *Rebel Media*, 2018

exaggerated the threat of rape that women face.<sup>35</sup> Rebel hold the traditionally conservative views on the rights of women on issues of abortion, gender pay and rape culture, and have been highly critical of the modern feminist discourse which they see as disparaging towards men and detaching women deliberately from the family unit.

Rebel Media believes that political correctness is dangerous, and this is the message that is often echoed by their followers: they regard the refusal to criticise ideas and groups as dangerous for society and an oppression on the rights of the indigenous to wield some control over where their societies are going. Nothing exemplifies their view on political correctness more than how they feel about Muslims and Islam.

### *Islam*

A key reason as to why Rebel Media has amassed a large base of readers and YouTube subscribers is that they regularly criticise Islam, and what they see as its dangerous encroachment on Western societies and values. The *National Post* described them as becoming a "global platform for an extreme anti-Muslim ideology known as counter-jihad. It's a far-right fringe theory founded on the belief that Muslims are deliberately invading the West, biding their time, then overtaking communities and imposing Shariah Law."<sup>36</sup> Movements that subscribe to the ideology of counter-Jihad focus on what they see as the threat of the immigrant culture of Muslims in the West, supposedly importing barbaric values and bringing with them the constant threat of violence.

The ideology is not a new phenomenon necessarily. A fear of Islam as something of a barbaric faith that mass-produces beastly and savage men has its roots in Western society dating back centuries. Literature and history are awash with western thinkers and politicians pontificating on the supposed dangers brought about by Islam. Winston Churchill is said to have held Islam in disregard. In that respect, a fear of a pervasive Islam is not a new thing to emerge in western society. However, the counter-Jihad ideology draws its strands of thought more from the anti-immigrant and racist far-right in how it applies its beliefs regarding Muslims themselves, seeing the entirety of the Islamic faith as a security and cultural threat.

This accelerated dramatically after the terrorist attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 on American soil that left just under three thousand dead, a country traumatised and a world reeling in shock. Following this, fears over Muslims exponentially grew and the growth of far-right opinions on Muslim immigration (something captured by Donald Trump's pledge to ban Muslim immigration in his election campaign for the 2016 US Presidential Election) underlined how the tide was shifting against Muslims.<sup>37</sup> Blogs such as Jihad Watch and others boomed with a transnational network of support from a plethora of writers, politicians and academics. Adding fuel to this has been social media's emergence as a platform for the proliferation of fake news, aided by online bots and image manipulation that plant seeds of social discord and perpetuate the fear of Muslims.<sup>38</sup>

It is within this space that Rebel Media has grown. They have combined the themes of white nationalist defensiveness towards immigration and terrorist attacks with the anger over a politically correct culture that supposedly abstains from levelling criticisms at groups that are

---

<sup>35</sup> McInnes, Gavin "Feminism kills women" *Rebel Media*, 2017

<sup>36</sup> Warnica, Richard "Inside Rebel Media" *National Post*, 2017

<sup>37</sup> Townsend, Mark "Anti-Muslim prejudice 'is moving to the mainstream'" *Guardian*, 2015

<sup>38</sup> Townsend, Mark "Anti-Muslim online surges driven by fake accounts" *Guardian*, 2017

undermining society with a different brand of moral values. These elements are infused often with hues of conspiratorial and sensationalist stances regarding Muslims, as well as the brazen insinuations that Muslims are inherently and morally different to other groups and thus pose a fundamentally higher security risk.<sup>39</sup>

Rebel Media essentially believe that there is an Islamist infiltration through increased numbers of Muslim migrants. This they see in the supposed Islamic influence of local legislations, halal shops, perceived proliferation of mosques and undoubtedly the biggest of them all, terrorist attacks.<sup>40</sup> Their white nationalist stances maintain that this is an attack on western society and its values, while their views around political correctness hold that politicians and society are too inhibited with fear to ask the tough questions about Muslims.<sup>41</sup> Rebel Media's audience for this is people convinced that Islam and the West are fundamentally incompatible, and that Muslims pose a risk to their communities.<sup>42</sup> Rebel's strategy regarding this has been to find innocuous stories regarding mosques, calls to prayer or even a story concerning a discrimination law to protect Muslims, and paint it as evidence that Muslims are slowly eroding the cultural life of western society, and are doing so quietly and successfully. The persistent hammering of this theme fused with the alarmist tone of the perceived nature of the threat and conspiratorial angle of deliberate political silence works in misinforming their followers with the perception of an Islamic takeover happening overnight.

This stance exists under the auspices of levelling criticism at Islam as a set of ideas. Ordinarily this would not be deemed racist and in fact might even be seen as a legitimate exercise in free speech. However, Rebel Media have applied their criticisms of Islam to dangerously miscast all Muslims as threats, primarily from their former contributor Faith Goldy (who we will discuss in depth later) and Tommy Robinson.

The aim of Rebel Media is broadly understood to be pushing back against what they see as the high volumes of Muslim numbers in Western society. They have been highly critical of Islamic immigration for opening up Western countries to Muslims and in particular they regard the refugee crisis as a major threat to Western values and women.<sup>43</sup> This appeals to a market that believes there is a combination of the soft power threat posed by Islam (through laws, media and education) and the risk of physical violence.

---

<sup>39</sup> Goldy, Faith "More Muslims = More violence" *Rebel Media*, 2017

<sup>40</sup> Menzies, David "Sharia trumps Canadian law as Muslim call to prayer rings out at Toronto City Hall" *Rebel Media*, 2018

<sup>41</sup> Goldy, Faith "The truth about the Crusades and Islam" *Rebel Media*, 2016

<sup>42</sup> Menzies, David "Before and after Sharia Law: A cautionary tale" *Rebel Media*, 2017

<sup>43</sup> Levant, Ezra "The truth about refugees: Facts every Canadian needs to know" *Rebel Media*



## Key figures associated with Rebel Media

Since Rebel Media's emergence in 2015 they have had a myriad of high-profile commentators who have used their platforms. Here are the contributors we have identified as the most dangerous both for what they say and their spheres of influence.

### *Lauren Southern*

Lauren Southern was born in 1995 and is a far-right political activist, writer, YouTube celebrity and documentary director. She studied political science at the University of the Fraser Valley, but only completed two years and left without attaining a degree. She later attributed this to thinking it was a waste of time and she could gain this knowledge in her free time without having to pay for it.

Southern has built a large online following with fifty million views on YouTube and over 600k subscribers. On Twitter she has nearly four hundred thousand followers and has approximately 290k likes on Facebook. Her rhetoric on issues of feminism, multiculturalism, rape culture and Islam has garnered her huge support and made her a key figure in the global far-right movement.<sup>44</sup>

During the 2015 Canadian Federal Election, Southern was a candidate for the Libertarian Party in the district of Langley-Aldergrove; she came last with 535 votes, which was 0.9% of the votes. Her far-right activism is what gained her prominence, spanning across a range of issues, and countries. In October 2016 she had gender legally changed to male as part of a video for Rebel Media to demonstrate the relaxed nature of Ontario's new gender ID laws.<sup>45</sup>

In January 2017, following the Quebec City mosque shooting, Lauren Southern posted inaccurate information from 4chan claiming that the attacks had been perpetrated by Syrian refugees.<sup>46</sup> She later deleted these tweets. It was a little while after this that she left Rebel Media (reasons for which will be explored later) and became an independent journalist. During that same month she gained access to White House's press briefings.

A month later she was a scheduled speaker at a Patriots' Day rally in Berkley, California. However, it was called off as riots erupted between supporters of Donald Trump and counter-protesters.<sup>47</sup>

Although Southern was becoming increasingly well known, she might have appeared like another member far-right activist with a large media profile. However, it is at this point that her actions became more openly hostile. In May 2017, she targeted NGO rescue ships that were sailing out to sea to rescue shipwrecked refugees off the shores of northern Africa. She participated in this with the far-right Generation Identity to block their passage in Sicily. After

---

<sup>44</sup> Khandaker, Tamara "The alt-right's not-so-secret weapon" *Vice*, 2017

<sup>45</sup> Southern, Lauren "Lauren Southern becomes a man!" *Rebel Media*, 2016

<sup>46</sup> Head, Tom "Who is Lauren Southern? Five facts on the far-right filmmaker" *The South African*, 2018

<sup>47</sup> Mahbubani, Rhea and Smith, Christie "Twenty people arrested as clashes break out at opposing rallies in Berkley" *NBC Bay Area*, 2017

being briefly detained, she defended her actions saying, "If the politicians won't stop the boats, we'll stop the boats."<sup>48</sup>

She praised similar action by Defend Europe and was accused of providing them with funding, which she denied.

In February 2018, Lauren Southern distributed leaflets calling Allah 'gay' around the town centre in Luton.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, she was denied entry to the UK, which she vehemently protested. Southern claimed her ban from the UK was permanent which was, according to New Zealand's immigration minister, false when her visa to New Zealand was being processed as a ban from the UK or Australia would trigger a response from them.

Southern went on an Australian tour in 2018. She arrived at Brisbane Airport with a t-shirt with the message "it's OK to be white", a message which was coined by 4Chan and has been spread by Tucker Carlson on Fox News and various neo-Nazi groups.<sup>50</sup>

During the tour, a speaking event in Melbourne garnered over a hundred protesters opposing her.<sup>51</sup>

A similar protest took place in Brisbane when she was set to speak at the Brisbane Convention Centre.<sup>52</sup>

She further stirred controversy when jokingly citing the Bible in saying Melbourne should possibly be bombed.

Southern's attempted tour in New Zealand began unsuccessfully when Auckland Council cancelled her bookings on the ground she would "stir up ethnic or religious tensions."<sup>53</sup> Their Mayor Phil Gough described her views as "repugnant", and was supported by the Green Party co-leader, Marama Davidson who received threats for backing the decision.<sup>54</sup> This cancellation did prompt a national conversation on whether Southern should have been forbidden from speaking on a public platform based on her differing views on the right of free speech.

Having failed with this, Southern sought a private venue at Auckland's music venue Powerstation but this was cancelled at the last minute as the owner made clear her views were not welcomed.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Claxton, Matthew "Former Langley Libertarian candidate detained in Italy" *The Abbotsford News*, 2017

<sup>49</sup> Southern, Lauren "Far-right activist denied entry to UK after 'distributing racist material in Luton'" *Luton Today*, 2018

<sup>50</sup> Chung, Franks "Right-wing activist Lauren Southern touches down in Brisbane wearing "it's okay to be white" t-shirt" *News.com*, 2018

<sup>51</sup> "Protesters disrupt Lauren Southern event in Melbourne" *SBS News*, 2018 <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/protesters-disrupt-lauren-southern-event-in-melbourne>

<sup>52</sup> Chirgwin, Sophie "Alt right activist Lauren Southern targeted in Brisbane" *The Courier-Mail*, 2018

<sup>53</sup> Hatton, Emma "Far-right pair banned from speaking Auckland Council venues" *RNZ Radio*, 2018

<sup>54</sup> "Green Party co-leader Marama Davidson receives death threats" *Newshub*, 2018

<sup>55</sup> Nial, Todd and Truebridge, Nick "Auckland's Powerstation owner apologises for booking controversial speakers" *Stuff*, 2018

Lauren Southern's views have consistently been antithetical to modern liberal views. She dismissed the idea of there being a rape culture in the West, labelled Black Lives Matter as a terrorist organisation responsible for more deaths in the past thirty years than the KKK, and has infamously attempted to stop a refugee boat picking up those in need of it.

### *Katie Hopkins*

Katie Hopkins is a far-right media personality and columnist who appeared on *The Apprentice* in 2007 and eventually began writing for multiple British newspapers, including the Sun and Daily Mail. She had been a presenter for the radio station LBC until she was dropped due to controversial remarks. In January 2018, she joined Rebel Media.

Katie Hopkins has developed a profile over the years for courting controversy over a range of issues, including body health, poverty, feminism, and most prominently, Islam and multiculturalism.<sup>56</sup>

Hopkins has regularly attacked Muslims and Islam, often conflating the religion and its adherents with the extremist tenets of the faith.<sup>57</sup>

In 2014, Katie Hopkins made a series of blatantly anti-Muslim statements on Twitter that were picked up by Tell MAMA.<sup>58</sup> This included suggesting that Muslims were all potential paedophiles.<sup>59</sup>

In 2015 she claimed that the religious act of throwing stones at pillars during Hajj was "target practice for Sharia".<sup>60</sup> This was after Karen Danczuk publicly questioned as to what sort of message God was sending Muslims following a stampede during Hajj that left hundreds dead.<sup>61</sup>

In December 2015 Katie Hopkins falsely linked a family to extremism in an article for Mail Online, which led to the paper being forced to pay £150,000 in compensation to the family. The family in question had been prevented from travelling to Los Angeles for a trip to Disneyland, and Hopkins claimed that two of the men in the family had links to Al Qaeda.<sup>62</sup>

The controversial far-right media personality stirred huge backlash after an article in the Sun claimed gunships should be sent to the seas to deal with refugees, referring to them as cockroaches.<sup>63</sup> However, the press regulator IPSO, rejected complaints regarding the article on the grounds that it did not refer to any specific individual.

In an article for the Sun, she expressed her anger at a halal-only Subway: **"I am outraged that my country is changing, and Great Britain is looking less great. I am also sick of holding my tongue. Enough. The simple fact is that nearly half of Muslims in the UK**

---

<sup>56</sup> <https://twitter.com/kthopkins/status/484438102384340994?lang=en>

<sup>57</sup> <https://twitter.com/kthopkins/status/1003147055437664256?lang=en>

<sup>58</sup> "Katie Hopkins accused of making more anti-Muslim statements" *Tell MAMA*, 2014

<sup>59</sup> "Katie Hopkins suggests Muslims are potential pedophiles and spouts spurious claims about halal meat" *Tell MAMA*, 2014

<sup>60</sup> "Katie Hopkins: Muslim Hajjis practice Sharia stoning" *Tell MAMA*, 2015

<sup>61</sup> "People die, Karen Danczuk ponders what message Allah sends Muslims" *Tell MAMA*, 2015

<sup>62</sup> Jackson, Jasper "Mail pays out £150,000 to Muslim family over Katie Hopkins column" *Guardian*, 2016

<sup>63</sup> Jones, Sam "UN human rights chief denounces Sun over Katie Hopkins 'cockroach' column" *Guardian*, 2015

**think that the bearded loons who spout violence against the West are pretty much in line with mainstream Muslim opinion. According to a BBC poll, almost half – 45% – believe that extremist clerics who preach violence against the West are “not out of touch.” Do you hear that? 45% of Muslims in the UK think that the hooked preacher of hate was dead on the money. There are bearded fanatics ranting in the street encouraging ‘their brothers’ to machete the heads of white boys and not approvingly as they saunter off to Sainsbury’s. When I heard the BBC celebrating that the majority of British Muslims are opposed against those who want to fight against British interests, I wanted to yank my radio from the wall and hurl it through the window of the nearest Halal only Subway.”<sup>64</sup>**

In 2016 she claimed Islam taught Muslim men to rape white women and called for their deportation.<sup>65</sup> Later that year in July, she wrote an article that called Ramadan the season of bombers and dehydrated Uber drivers, claiming it wasn't safe to have them delivering services whilst they were fasting.<sup>66</sup>

That was not the last time Hopkins has made remarks about the Holy Month either; in 2017, she tweeted “Explosion in France, shooting at a German hospital, knife attack in London. And Ramadan has not yet begun. Without food these sods get nasty.”<sup>67</sup>

She left the LBC after calling for a “final solution” in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack in Manchester during Ariana Grande's concert.<sup>68</sup>

In late 2017 footage emerged revealing she had spoken at an event organised by the far-right American think tank the David Horowitz Freedom Centre, in which she attacked Muslims, saying areas of the UK were run by “Muslim mafias” and that “It's such a pleasure to be amongst people that are prepared to fight for their country. We can commit to arm ourselves, not just with the help of the NRA. Get furious and fight back.”<sup>69</sup>

She joined the Rebel Media in 2018 and continued to make deeply inflammatory remarks about Muslims. In the wake of a gas explosion in Harold Hill, she linked it to Muslims by tweeting a map of the mosques and Islamic centres close to the area of explosion, despite it later being confirmed as a gas explosion by the Metropolitan Police.<sup>70</sup>

Hopkins went to Toronto where she asked local unsuspecting Muslims about Islam and claimed to have received an unfriendly and hostile reception, despite ambushing a group of Muslims there for seemingly benign reasons.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> “Katie Hopkins felt she wanted to hurl her radio through a halal only Subway” *Tell MAMA*, 2015

<sup>65</sup> “Katie Hopkins suggests that Islam teaches men to rape white women” *Tell MAMA*, 2016

<sup>66</sup> Hopkins, Katie “’Tis the season of bombers and Uber drivers who haven't eaten for 20 hours – welcome to the Midsummer madness of Ramadan” *Daily Mail*, 2016

<sup>67</sup> Nelson, Sara “Katie Hopkins' Ramadan tweet investigated by police in wake of London terror arrest” *Huffington Post*, 2017

<sup>68</sup> Topping, Alexandra “Katie Hopkins leaves LBC radio show after ‘final solution’ tweet” *Guardian*, 2017

<sup>69</sup> Dearden, Lizzie “Katie Hopkins gives speech attacking Muslims to far-right group days before leaving the Mail Online by mutual consent” *Independent*, 2017

<sup>70</sup> “Katie Hopkins condemned for linking terrorist explosion to Muslims” *Tell MAMA*, 2018

<sup>71</sup> “Katie Hopkins asks Toronto Muslims about Islam” *Rebel Media*, 2018  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RY0FzicdYD0>

She returned to the David Horowitz Freedom Centre to deliver a speech, this time insisting that grooming gangs in the UK should not be labelled as Asian but as Muslim, despite evidence showing that these gangs also included many non-Muslims.<sup>72</sup> Adding to this, she dismissed the Muslim Community Patrol (a neighbourhood watch that received training from local police) as a religious patrol for Muslim men masquerading as police.<sup>73</sup> It must be noted, that the group is unarmed and is working with local police to function as extra set of eyes and ears, but has also received backlash from local Muslims.<sup>74</sup>

In May 2018, Katie Hopkins produced a YouTube video claiming that Sharia Law was creeping into America via the quiet installation of No-Go-Zones (areas that non-Muslims cannot enter due to it being governed by Islamic law), despite there being no evidence to support this.<sup>75</sup>

Katie Hopkins has forged a career in controversy, turning it into extremely lucrative returns. Throughout her career, she has consistently used hate speech to generate a bigger profile, using her platforms across the Mail Online, the Sun and LBC to promote extremely controversial opinions. She has regularly demonised Muslims, migrants and refugees and her extremist stances have made her a dangerous figure in the global far-right, alt-right movement.

### Tommy Robinson

Tommy Robinson (real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) is an English far-right activist serving as a political adviser to the leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP). He is also the founder of the far-right movement English Defence League (EDL) and was briefly a member of the British National Party (BNP). Tommy Robinson was a regular contributor at Rebel Media.

Robinson was jailed for assaulting a police officer who had come to the defence of his girlfriend, who he has since married, during a drunken altercation in 2005. He has also been convicted for drug offences and public order offences. In 2011, he was convicted of leading a riot between football fans in a match between Luton FC and Newport County.<sup>76</sup> He was arrested in 2012 again after illegally entering the United States using a false passport.<sup>77</sup> He was again jailed in 2014, this time for a £160,000 mortgage fraud.<sup>78</sup>

Throughout his career, Tommy Robinson has incited hate towards Muslims and migrants.<sup>79</sup> Tell MAMA found during the early part of its inception a majority of hate crime against Muslims were from followers of EDL or Britain First, with our work leading to the arrests of 21 EDL supporters and over 40 incidents reported against Tommy Robinson himself.<sup>80</sup> This profile will therefore

<sup>72</sup> "Katie Hopkins: Grooming gangs aren't 'Asian'. They're Muslim (EXCERPT)" *Rebel Media*, 2018

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBw7QdQ73hg&index=106&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_ERBmbgAZj1FMYWH5f\\_iUr](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBw7QdQ73hg&index=106&list=PL2HWRRSziC_ERBmbgAZj1FMYWH5f_iUr)

<sup>73</sup> <https://twitter.com/KTHopkins/status/1092192031198330881>

<sup>74</sup> Petri, Alexandra "Muslims form community patrol. Some neighbors say no, thanks." *New York Times*, 2019

<sup>75</sup> "Katie Hopkins: How Sharia law is creeping into the US" *Rebel Media*, 2018 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IICHm7OXRQY&t=0s&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_ERBmbgAZj1FMYWH5f\\_iUr&index=80](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IICHm7OXRQY&t=0s&list=PL2HWRRSziC_ERBmbgAZj1FMYWH5f_iUr&index=80)

<sup>76</sup> "EDL founder Stephen Lennon guilty over football brawl" *BBC News*, 2011

<sup>77</sup> "EDL leader Stephen Lennon jailed for false passport offence" *BBC News*, 2013

<sup>78</sup> "Tommy Robinson, former EDL leader, jailed for mortgage fraud" *BBC News*, 2014

<sup>79</sup> Rose, Steve: "7 simple facts that do not point to a 'reformed' Tommy Robinson" *Tell MAMA*, 2014

<sup>80</sup> "The rising scourge of anti-Muslim hatred" *Tell MAMA*, 2013



include not only his remarks and actions but also those of people inspired by his actions and speeches.

Throughout 2012 and 2013, Robinson made a series of bigoted and hateful comments regarding Muslims and immigrants, particularly women, in which he linked them to terrorists.<sup>81</sup> Tell MAMA reported 41 separate hate tweets from Tommy Robinson; during this time he was briefly in prison, but following his release he continued posting hateful comments about Muslims, in which he sometimes compared them to vermin such as rats.<sup>82</sup>

In 2013, the British soldier Lee Rigby was hacked to death on the streets of Woolwich by a pair of violent Islamist fanatics. Robinson fuelled social tensions that were inevitably stoked in the aftermath of this terrorist attack, declaring that "They're chopping our soldiers' heads off. This is Islam. That's what we've seen today."<sup>83</sup>

Footage emerged showing Tommy Robinson directly blaming every Muslim in the UK for the 7/7 bombings and saying they had gotten away with it.<sup>84</sup>

In September 2013, Robinson was charged over his role in a planned march through an area in Tower Hamlets, home to one of Britain's biggest Muslim communities.<sup>85</sup> The march had been prevented and Scotland Yard had arrested 300 people at the far-right EDL protest and counter demonstration held by anti-fascists. Robinson faced two public order charges: failing to comply with law and inciting illegal public assembly.

Throughout 2014, Tommy Robinson continued to make hate-filled remarks regarding Muslims.<sup>86</sup> On 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014 he made his first reference to Muslim grooming gangs amid serious allegations against the South Yorkshire police. He then shared three images with data published by the Law and Freedom foundation – a group who help in resisting the planning of mosques.

A report by Kings' College London found that Tommy Robinson and his organisation were heavily exploiting the fears over the grooming gangs to whip up suspicion towards Muslims and immigrants.<sup>87</sup>

On 29<sup>th</sup> August he tweeted "I/we have been ridiculed and called bigots for 5 years for trying 2 raise and highlight the issue of Muslim grooming! #Rotherham #vindicated." The 'we' is a clear reference to the EDL. Tommy Robinson also sought to stoke tensions between British Muslims and Sikhs, on the idea that Sikh girls were being abused by Muslim men.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> "Surprise, surprise – the Tommy Robinson rehabilitation not going too well?" *Tell MAMA*, 2013

<sup>82</sup> "Tommy Robinson – Back to his hate tweets" *Tell MAMA*, 2013

<sup>83</sup> "Rise in anti-Muslim attacks after Woolwich soldier killing" *Tell MAMA*, 2013

<sup>84</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=8j7IX\\_5a\\_9M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=8j7IX_5a_9M)

<sup>85</sup> "EDL leader Tommy Robinson charged over London protest" *Guardian*, 2013

<sup>86</sup> Rose, Steve: "Ex-EDL leader Tommy Robinson, a changed man or back to past behaviours?" *Tell MAMA*, 2014

<sup>87</sup> Smith, Mark "English Defence League exploiting sex-grooming fears, says report" *Guardian*, 2013

<sup>88</sup> Hundal, Sunny "Sikhs v Muslims: why the debate on grooming isn't about the women themselves" *Liberal Conspiracy*, 2013

In 2015, he falsely accused two men pictured with the Labour MP for Rotherham, Sarah Champion, of being convicted child rapists.<sup>89</sup>

In 2017, a stepfather who refused to let his 12-year-old stepdaughter finish a homework assignment about converting to Islam had 'liked' various far-right Facebook pages and shared videos from Tommy Robinson.<sup>90</sup>

Filming outside a row of homes, Robinson claimed these areas were full of Muslims who were "enemy combatants" and in another video said militias would be formed to "clean out this Islamic problem".<sup>91</sup>

Darren Osborne, responsible for the Finsbury Park mosque terror attack, was inspired by content from Britain First and the EDL, including a trove of tweets made by Robinson.<sup>92</sup> This includes receiving a direct message from Jayda Fransen of Britain First as well as an email from Robinson as part of an email subscription to the Rebel Media which read "It has now been left to us, the ordinary people of the United Kingdom, to stand up to hate, to unite and in one voice say 'no more.'"<sup>93</sup>

Tell MAMA has received various incidents of far-right thugs supporting Tommy Robinson and abusing British Muslims.<sup>94</sup>

At Rebel Media, Robinson's profile continued to grow, as did his online videos, which consistently relied on sensationalist and alarmist tones concerning Muslims and extremism.<sup>95</sup> This has included some videos titled "Jihad by foster care"<sup>96</sup> and "UK gov't housing radical Jihadists on your streets".<sup>97</sup>

Robinson also continued to insist that the grooming gang scandal that raged through Britain was a Muslim problem, claiming the "racist press" were tarring Hindus and Sikhs by association.<sup>98</sup> His supposed fear about young children being groomed by dangerous Muslims did not, however, extend to young girls groomed by older ISIS operatives.<sup>99</sup>

In 2018, Robinson was arrested for charges of contempt of court after live broadcasting court proceedings regarding a rape trial. Robinson's team on his verified Twitter account (now banned) said he was arrested for "attempted journalism", while Robinson said it was for trying

---

<sup>89</sup> "Robinson endangers Rotherham resident of Pakistani Muslim heritage" *Tell MAMA*, 2015

<sup>90</sup> "Stepfather who refused to allow stepdaughter do homework on Islam had shared anti-Muslim content online" *Tell MAMA*, 2017

<sup>91</sup> Wickham, Alex "Tommy Robinson called British Muslims "enemy combatants"" *Guido Fawkes*, 2017

<sup>92</sup> "Darren Osborne guilty of Finsbury Park terror attack" *Tell MAMA*, 2018

<sup>93</sup> Dearden, Lizzie "Finsbury Park terror suspect Darren Osborne read messages from Tommy Robinson days before attack, court hears" *Independent*, 2018

<sup>94</sup> "Tommy Robinson supporter spat at girl, 4, because her mother was wearing a hijab" *Tell MAMA*, 2018

<sup>95</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_GSHvo9W9yBxu0sp6gkmLsV](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2HWRRSziC_GSHvo9W9yBxu0sp6gkmLsV)

<sup>96</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzs7uGMpFds&t=0s&index=74&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_GSHvo9W9yBxu0sp6gkmLsV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzs7uGMpFds&t=0s&index=74&list=PL2HWRRSziC_GSHvo9W9yBxu0sp6gkmLsV)

<sup>97</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_xYdUJJeGWbM&t=0s&index=101&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_GSHvo9W9yBxu0sp6gkmLsV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xYdUJJeGWbM&t=0s&index=101&list=PL2HWRRSziC_GSHvo9W9yBxu0sp6gkmLsV)

<sup>98</sup> Robinson, Tommy "Muslim, not Asian" *Rebel Media*, 2017

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkTl4Tq-JWw>

to “video the Muslim paedophiles”.<sup>100</sup> However, his case was funded by various right-wing think tanks and organisations, allowing him to get a bail. The #FreeTommy hashtag on Twitter, made the extent of his support outside the UK clear. A sizeable bulk of his support was the Middle East Forum who funded two #FreeTommy rallies and have been involved in the defence of various far-right groups and politicians.<sup>101</sup> The #FreeTommy rallies saw his supporters abusing journalists, performing Nazi salutes and preventing a Muslim woman from driving a bus, bombarding her with abuse.<sup>102</sup>

Robinson announced that he would be doing a speaking tour of Australia in December 2018 with the leader of a far-right group, Proud Boys, whom the FBI considered to be extremist.<sup>103</sup> Robinson has met with the Proud Boys’ leader numerous times, including attending football matches at Luton FC. He was also invited to meet with Republican members of Congress following an invite from Daniel Pipes, President of the Middle East Forum, but his visa had not been granted in time for the meet in Washington.

In late 2018, videos emerged of a Syrian refugee being bullied at a school in Huddersfield. Tommy Robinson claimed on his Facebook page that the boy had been involved in a separate attack on a girl, and that five Muslim boys had attacked another boy. These claims turned out to be inaccurate, and Robinson confessed to spreading fake news.<sup>104</sup> Following this, the family of the Syrian refugee announced they would be suing Robinson for his false claims.

Tommy Robinson is now a political adviser to the leader of UKIP, Gerard Batten.<sup>105</sup> This appointment triggered huge backlash and unease, not least within the party itself, including criticism from Nigel Farage who labelled Robinson as a “thug”. There were multiple resignations from the party linked to Robinson’s appointment, including two former leaders, six of the party’s thirteen MEPs and the leader in Scotland.

The danger that Tommy Robinson poses to the concepts of democracy, rule of law and liberty cannot be underestimated. His ability to whip up armies of extremist support has been demonstrated across the years both for EDL and in his independent capacity. Robinson seriously challenges the values of tolerance, coexistence and pluralism, threatening community cohesion with his views regarding Muslims.

Furthermore, as evidenced in the murder of Lee Rigby and the issue of grooming gangs, Robinson is adept at appropriating issues of legitimate anger and concern and morphing them into crusades against Muslims. His referral to Muslims “getting away” with it in 7/7 and them being “enemy combatants” when standing directly outside an ordinary street cannot be construed in any other way than inciting violence and hate towards Muslims.

---

<sup>100</sup> Grafton-Green, Patrick “Former EDL leader Tommy Robinson arrested after ‘trying to film Muslims’ outside court” *Independent*, 2017

<sup>101</sup> “How the latest Tommy Robinson saga exposed the influence of foreign funding” *Tell MAMA*, 2018

<sup>102</sup> Drury, Colin “Bus driver in headscarf shows far-right Tommy Robinson demonstrators everything that’s great about Britain” *Independent*, 2018

<sup>103</sup> “Tommy Robinson to tour Australia with the leader of group FBI deems extremist” *Tell MAMA*, 2018

<sup>104</sup> Clifton, Katy “Tommy Robinson admits he shared ‘fake news’ about Muslims attacking boy at school where Syrian refugee was filmed being bullied” *Independent*, 2018

<sup>105</sup> “UKIP AM calls for new leadership election over Tommy Robinson role” *BBC News*, 2018

The illustration in the size and strength of his support during the #FreeTommy campaign is a chilling indicator to how much of an influential pull he has, both nationally and internationally.

### *Faith Goldy*

Faith Goldy was born in Toronto in 1989. She received her formal education at Havergal College, a private school and studied later at University of Toronto where she graduated in Politics and History, minoring also in Philosophy and Physics. In 2012 she was honoured with the Gordon Cressy Student Leadership Award from the University of Toronto Alumni Association. She is a member of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and was a director on the board of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institution Foundation – a faculty at University of Toronto which specialises in Eastern Christian theology – from 2015 until her resignation in 2017.

Goldy has worked for a string of media outlets as a commentator and reporter, such as *The Catholic Register*, the *Toronto Sun*, *TheBlaze* and the *National Post*. She was also a former reporter with the Sun News Network. It was at Rebel Media where Goldy elevated her profile from national prominence to global controversy. She worked as a political commentator in articles, uploaded YouTube videos and hosted a weekly show online called *On The Hunt with Faith Goldy*.<sup>106</sup>

Goldy has consistently demonstrated sympathy for arguments propagated by white nationalists and neo-Nazis, believing that Islam is a violent religion and fundamentally incompatible with western civilisation. She has particularly pushed the notion that the Islamic takeover of the West is being enabled by liberal appeasement and cultural relativism towards Islam.<sup>107</sup> She has maintained that immigration is a threat to white people and is a proponent of the white genocide theory, believing that the white demographic is being gradually erased in Canada.<sup>108</sup> Goldy has arguably sought to legitimise the far-right positions with some sort of respectability and credibility to integrate it into the mainstream discourse.

In 2015, Goldy interviewed the alt-right commentator Paul Joseph Watson about Islam in Europe to discuss Sharia courts and the hotly-disputed “no go zones” despite there being no evidence to show this happens).<sup>109</sup> This line of attack is something that she consistently returned to during her time at Rebel Media.

In early 2016, Goldy discussed a rape epidemic in Europe caused by Muslim migrants which was being deliberately covered up by a leftist agenda.<sup>110</sup> She continued this attack on Syrian

---

<sup>106</sup> [https://www.therebel.media/on\\_the\\_hunt\\_with\\_faith\\_goldy](https://www.therebel.media/on_the_hunt_with_faith_goldy)

<sup>107</sup> “Whatever happened to Canada’s separation of mosque and state?” 2016 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQxrQWTTeDM&index=251&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQxrQWTTeDM&index=251&list=PL2HWRRSziC_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv&t=0s)

<sup>108</sup> Mastracci, Davide “Stop Faith Goldy from having a platform at Wilfrid Laurier University” *Huffington Post*, 2018

<sup>109</sup> “Paul Joseph Watson: Islam in Europe (and “far right” backlash)” 2015 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB4tlnOW6lc&index=263&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB4tlnOW6lc&index=263&list=PL2HWRRSziC_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv&t=0s)

<sup>110</sup> “Europe’s rape coverup PLUS what leftists don’t teach you in school” 2016 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QILHQepZ06k&index=259&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QILHQepZ06k&index=259&list=PL2HWRRSziC_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv&t=0s)

refugees claiming that Americans and Canadians were being kept in the dark about the systematic sexual abuse and harassment of women and children by refugees.<sup>111</sup>

Goldy further maintained that refugees were receiving preferential treatment at the expense of a white population that is gradually becoming displaced, which was an integral aspect of her belief in the white genocide. She claimed that an “educational apartheid” was being created by giving scholarships to refugees over whites.<sup>112</sup>

Goldy produced a video that claimed the Crusades were a response conditioned by multiple centuries of decadent brutality and aggression by Muslims.<sup>113</sup> During this video, she insisted repeatedly that Islam was not a religion of peace and that the origins of the faith had its roots in violence and the displacement of Christian cities.

In response to the Quebec Mosque shooting which left several dead, Goldy mourned the victims but conjured a conspiracy theory regarding “shifting narratives” which implied the shooter was not a white nationalist fuelled by anti-Muslim hatred but other Muslims.<sup>114</sup>

Following a terrorist attack in London, Goldy claimed that a higher Muslim population in any given area would spark higher levels of terrorism, thereby implying that Muslims were more prone to being terrorists than any other group.<sup>115</sup> Evidence has shown that in countries such as America, this is factually incorrect.<sup>116</sup> During this video, she interviewed the founder of EDL, Tommy Robinson, where she expressed support and sympathy with his views regarding Muslims and extremism in the UK.

Goldy posted a video on Twitter in the Palestinian city of Bethlehem, expressing shock that she could hear the Islamic call to prayer in the city, stating that the “Bethlehem’s Christian population has been ethnically cleansed.”

Goldy ignited controversy when she livestreamed a broadcast of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, where she expressed visibly sympathy with white nationalist sentiments and the alt-right protesters who had gathered.<sup>117</sup> Her live broadcast captured the moment when a car mowed into a crowd of counter-protesters, killing Heather Heyer. Her attendance at the protest, coupled with the video being uploaded to Rebel prompted huge anger and the organisation’s co-founder Brian Lilley resigned.

---

<sup>111</sup> “Syrian refugee policy: What Canadians (& Americans) need to know” 2016 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQjYDo5cSxw&index=253&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQjYDo5cSxw&index=253&list=PL2HWRRSziC_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv&t=0s)

<sup>112</sup> “Scholarships for refugees, not whites” 2017 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TGnOpxZhKU&t=0s&index=109&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TGnOpxZhKU&t=0s&index=109&list=PL2HWRRSziC_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv)

<sup>113</sup> “The truth about the crusades and Islam” 2016 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuYj8lqviYo&t=0s&index=160&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuYj8lqviYo&t=0s&index=160&list=PL2HWRRSziC_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv)

<sup>114</sup> “What they won’t tell us about the Quebec Mosque attack” 2017 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gV62pqS7AAA&t=0s&index=140&list=PL2HWRRSziC\\_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gV62pqS7AAA&t=0s&index=140&list=PL2HWRRSziC_F2kAudaITJ4QNfilpyV9jv)

<sup>115</sup> “Faith Goldy: More Muslims = More Violence (w/guest Tommy Robinson)” 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbW3GbIVwRA>

<sup>116</sup> “Fact Check: Are far-right groups the biggest US terror threat?” *The Week*, 2018

<sup>117</sup> Harper, Tim “Is this the beginning of the end for Canada’s Rebel Media” *The Star*, 2017



Goldy later appeared on the podcast for the neo-Nazi website the *Daily Stormer* which led to her being fired.<sup>118</sup> Rebel's founder Ezra Levant, following this, lamented her decision to do so and said it was the culmination of anger from the team that she had attended the Charlottesville rally, despite being told not to do so.

She was a guest on the alt-right podcast *Millennial Woes* and recited a white nationalist slogan, the Fourteen Words: ""We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children"". <sup>119</sup>

Goldy was registered to run for Mayor in the 2018 Toronto election. She ran on a platform that included the monitoring of Islamic organisations and the forced removal of homeless illegal immigrants.<sup>120</sup> She ended up receiving just 3% of the vote. However, she did receive an endorsement from the Republican US congressman Steve King, from Iowa.

As with the others, the threat posed by Faith Goldy to multicultural communities cannot be understated. In presenting Muslims, both those born and raised in the West and refugees, as a moral and security threat to life in the West, Goldy has sought to normalise extremist far-right rhetoric within the mainstream discourse. Her allying with notable far-right movements and protesters, as well as appearing on a neo-Nazi podcast, coupled with the size of her profile, is particularly concerning. With deeply sensationalist headlines she has fuelled the conspiracy of the white genocide and the idea that Muslims are slowly taking over the western world.

As of the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019, Faith Goldy has roughly 92,000 subscribers on YouTube and 117,000 followers on Twitter.

## How are they funded?

Rebel Media exists upon a foundation of a strong donor base (with mega-donors underwriting their operations) according to an ex-employee at the company.<sup>121</sup> An initial crowdfunding of \$100,000 injected the company with enough funds to get up and running. The site, with its high rate of YouTube views and subscribers was believed to have generated a significant amount of money. However, it's believed this shrivelled in the wake of YouTube's changes to its advertising policies, meaning the video views on Rebel's YouTube account would have garnered very little in the way of financial revenue.

Vice reported that in order to counter YouTube's policy change, Levant organised a \$300,000 crowdfunding effort to build and implement their own video app. They claim to have reached \$180,000 for this target. Two former Rebel staffers confirmed to Vice that the website siphons \$1,000,000 per year from subscriptions alone, which, in 2017, was around 10,000 subscribers. "YouTube was a valuable revenue source for us for about six months; before that, we were too small; after that, their censorship policy kicked in," Ezra Levant insisted.<sup>122</sup> The website's founder

---

<sup>118</sup> Goldsbie, Jonathan and Gordon, Graeme "Faith Goldy fired from the Rebel" *Canadaland*, 2017

<sup>119</sup> Uyehara, Mari "How free speech warriors mainstreamed white supremacists" *GQ*, 2018

<sup>120</sup> Faith Goldy's Mayor Election manifesto: <https://www.faihtfortoronto.ca/about>

<sup>121</sup> Ling, Justin "Follow the money" *Vice*, 2017

<sup>122</sup> Britneff, Beatrice "625 companies boycott Rebel Media: impact unclear" *iPolitics*, 2018

lamented what he saw as the deliberate targeting of conservative news outlets but insisted that crowdfunding and paywall content for subscribers was their largest financial generators.

Rebel's email marketing is believed to be a vital source of its funding. Levant typically sends out a few emails to supporters monthly, encouraging them to join him and his hosts on a paid cruise of the Caribbean (which has since been cancelled by the Norwegian cruise operator) and asks them to watch subscriber-only content, whilst also making direct requests for money. According to Vice, "To build up that email list, Levant has, according to a domain registry search, set up a plethora of microsites — websites with unique URLs like thetruthaboutrefugees.com or stopantifa.com — that issue-specific calls to action on an issue. Through signing a petition, joining the email list, or donating, Levant grows his supporter base well beyond just fans of The Rebel. Levant has registered more than 200 of these sites since launching The Rebel in early 2015."

However, a former contributor Caolan Robertson claimed that Rebel Media had dishonestly solicited money from crowdfunding avenues for media operations that had already been funded, claiming where the remaining money went was not addressed.<sup>123</sup> Robertson stated that Levant sought to bribe him for his silence in what Levant described in the recording as "hush money", and then threatened legal action if Robertson or his partner and producer, George Llewelyn-John, were to try and sell their story to a British tabloid.<sup>124</sup> Ezra Levant released public statement denying this and said he was being blackmailed by Robertson.<sup>125</sup> Levant claimed that the allegations were smears concocted by Robertson to extract money from him, based on no evidence but a knowledge that the liberal media would use it to destroy Rebel's credibility anyway. Levant also added that Robertson claimed to have a footage revealing Tommy Robinson attacking someone which he felt they would release to either police or a UK tabloid. Thus, Levant claimed, he wasn't bribing Robertson but being extorted himself.

For a time, the website had streamed revenue from advertisers by allowing third parties to rent spaces on their webpages to advertise their own content. However, this exploded after Faith Goldy's appearance at the Charlottesville rally. The anti-fascist and anonymous group Sleeping Giants began pressuring Canadian companies to stop placing digital ads on their website.<sup>126</sup> The group claims that as of 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018, they had convinced 626 companies to blacklist the Rebel Media, more than double the numbers during August 2017.

Most of these advertisers are Canadian and American with some from the UK and parts of Europe. They include companies from a wide range of industries including car manufactures, telecommunications companies, banks and several major retailers according to *iPolitics*. Levant insisted that the Sleeping Giants' tactics wouldn't work because online ads weren't a "significant source of money" for Rebel Media, but when questioned as to whether company's revenues had plummeted with hundreds of companies boycotting Rebel, he described it as a "PR stunt" and said no more.<sup>127</sup>

A former Rebel employee also said that large funds from wealthy conservative-minded individuals interested in the website's editorial stances were a significant boost to their revenue

---

<sup>123</sup> Brean, Joseph and Hauen, Jack and Smith, Marie-Danielle "Rebel Media meltdown: Faith Goldy fired as politicians, contributors distance themselves" *National Post*, 2017

<sup>124</sup> Robertson, Caolan "Why I left Rebel Media" *YouTube*, 2017

<sup>125</sup> Levant, Ezra "Blackmail: setting the record straight" *Rebel Media*, 2017

<sup>126</sup> Britneff, Beatrice "625 companies boycott Rebel Media: impact unclear" *iPolitics*, 2018

<sup>127</sup> Britneff, Beatrice "625 companies boycott Rebel Media: impact unclear" *iPolitics*, 2018

streams. Some of these, according to Vice, are secretive but others are less so. For example, Tommy Robinson and Laura Loomer were listed on the website as “Shillman Fellows”, whereby a fellowship run by the tech businessman Robert Shillman made large donations towards media figures pushing a fiercely anti-Islam line. The fellowship is funnelled through the David Horowitz Freedom Centre, an institution which has been described for its extreme hostility towards Muslims.

It was also revealed that Ezra Levant had personally received a payment from the anti-Muslim think tank Middle East Forum, from a \$2m education fund.<sup>128</sup> It's unclear whether anything from this donation went towards Rebel Media itself.

## How much of a risk are Rebel Media?

In under five years, Rebel Media have grown rapidly into a leading worldwide platform for alt-right supporters and news. Its social media profiles combined with its YouTube analytics, signals worryingly that they have seen a market for radically far-right views and have tapped ruthlessly into it, both dominating it locally in Canada but now moving across the world. Their rota of contributors has included large names with sizeable profiles of their own. The reach of Rebel coupled with their deeply sensationalist scaremongering regarding Muslims and immigrants makes them arguably the leading far-right organisation to watch out for.

Rebel Media have thrived in normalising hate and suspicion of Muslims and migrants through the relentless hammering away of the narrative that there is a white genocide taking place, and that Muslims are taking over western civilisation. Key contributors have persistently repeated this theme, finding stories across a variety of countries to provide it with a hue of global significance and immediate urgency. Their rhetoric has arguably made them a gateway to genuine Nazi rhetoric, glimpsed in Faith Goldy's actions around and following the Charlottesville rally.

Although politicians in Canada have increasingly began boycotting and distancing themselves from Rebel Media, the size of this news website means their tentacles of influence cover more than just Canada. In the age of suspicion of formerly trusted and established media institutions, the crumbling of old news pillars is paving platforms for the likes of Rebel to dominate, with little interest in pluralism and nuanced reporting.

---

<sup>128</sup> “Rebel Media's Ezra Levant received foreign funding from ‘anti-Muslim’ think tank” *PressProgress*, 2017



FAITH MATTERS

WORKING GLOBALLY, IMPACTING LOCALLY

Copyright © Faith Matters 2019