



Photo: Evan Vucci/AP

A BIBLICAL VIEW ON

# Political Violence

.....

*Kerby Anderson*





# Political Violence



Many of the articles online under the heading of “political violence” usually discuss what is happening in other countries. Sadly, more and more examples are being cited from the U.S.

This nation has had its share of presidential assassinations: Abraham Lincoln in 1865, James Garfield in 1881, William McKinley in 1901,

and John F. Kennedy in 1963. Add to that the attempted assassinations of Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, and Donald Trump. We have also seen the attempted assassination of a Supreme Court justice and threats to others.

## **What is Political Violence?**

The formal definition of political violence is easy to state but hard to accurately define. Political violence involves the use of force, coercion, or intimidation to achieve certain political ends. But the interpretation unfortunately varies depending on a person's political perspective or worldview.

Recent articles about political violence often lump together people that should be separated. Let's take a few notable examples. The person who attempted to assassinate Ronald Reagan didn't shoot at him for political

reasons. He was an individual that most everyone would conclude was apolitical. In fact, he was so mentally unstable, he wasn't even given a prison sentence.

By contrast, the person who killed Martin Luther King, Jr. did so because he was a white racist. Politics and racism motivated him. Even though we are hearing from many pundits that we shouldn't bother to understand a shooter's motive, we would be appalled if the history books that described the 1960s failed to mention the bias and background of the person who killed this civil rights leader.

We shouldn't always lump victims of violence together. Some people were shot by mentally deranged people, others by those with overt political reasons. The person who shot Representative Gabby Giffords (D-AZ) fits the first category. The

person who shot Representative Steve Scalise (R-LA) and wanted to kill many of his fellow Republican members of Congress fits the second category.

Another important point is the fact that protests are appropriate and protected by the Constitution. Riots and political violence are not. At this point it is also worth saying the obvious: political violence is wrong whether done by liberals or conservatives.

In a recent op-ed, Heather Mac Donald asked an interesting question: “Is rioting acceptable?”<sup>1</sup> She follows it up with the question: “If so, how much?” She asks that because of the fact that both left-wing extremist groups and right-wing extremist groups use violence to advance their agenda.

She focused her attention on two different pictures of what

happened in Los Angeles. The first is the official one from California's elected leaders and the media. The second is what she calls the ground-level view from law enforcement. The incident she discussed is what happened when "a crowd broke into an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center downtown to liberate the detainees. The vandals overpowered the skeletal crew of National Guard soldiers, using improvised bombs made from M-80 firecrackers, nails, and broken glass."

Politicians said local law enforcement had everything under control. Mac Donald even reminds us that the day before, a mob surrounded two ICE agents. A dozen men "jumped out of a truck and grabbed the handcuffed suspect from the back of the ICE van, threw

the suspect into their truck and fled. The ICE agents gave chase, but without sirens or lights, the pursuit was futile.”

Neither of these two incidents were reported by the media. Instead, the official narrative and the message from the legacy media was that these “protests” were “largely peaceful.” They were also labelled by a federal judge as “some stray violent incidents.”

In her commentary, she reminded us of the phrase used by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan – “defining deviancy down.” Our society tends to minimize bad behavior and even criminal behavior. If you have ever read the book of Isaiah, you will recognize this tendency. In Isaiah 5:20 we read, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.”

## **Violence in the Streets**

Long before we had violence in the streets over ICE enforcement, we had the riots that took place five years ago. The spark was a video of the death of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis police. But the reaction was much greater in this tragic death than any other. Victor Davis Hanson observed at the time that the rioters “trying to burn down a Portland police precinct – with police barricaded inside – or looting the high-end boutiques of Chicago’s Magnificent Mile” did NOT appear to be driven by Floyd’s death.

One explanation was the perfect-storm of the fear of COVID-19 coupled with the lockdowns. Millions of young people sequestered in their apartments and basements, unemployed and worried about their dismal career

options wanted to vent their rage at the world.

Others pointed to the fact that it was an election year with tensions high about the possible reelection or defeat of President Trump.

Others pointed to groups like Antifa and Black Lives Matter that took advantage of the protests and used the turmoil in the streets to advance their agenda.

We have seen this before in the French Revolution and in Mao's Cultural Revolution. The mob in the street promotes anarchy and violence but isn't trying to form a more perfect union. It's often violence for merely the sake of violence.

That is why Kyle Smith, in one of his columns felt the need to say, "Don't excuse, defend, or encourage rioters."<sup>2</sup> You might think that would be obvious. Apparently, it is not.

Here are a few of the ways excuses were made for the rioters.

Some commentators kept telling us that what we saw was merely a protest and not a riot. Holding a sign and marching in the street is one thing. Throwing rocks at law enforcement, breaking windows, stopping cars, and beating up bystanders is quite another. The public knows the difference even if some media personnel do not.

Some commentators suggested that property damage was merely an example of free speech expression. People who are frustrated sometimes throw something or break something. That may be understandable but it's not justifiable. But media personnel who sympathize with the frustrations of rioters never have to deal with the consequences. I suspect they would feel differently if it was their car or store

set on fire.

Other commentators argued that riots are the only way to attain justice in a racially rigged system. But even that argument falls flat when we see riots in cities where both the mayor and the police chief are African American. Nor do they explain how burning down the police headquarters advances any form of justice. This isn't a difficult call. No one should be trying to excuse or defend rioters.

## **Violence on Campus**

Charlie Kirk was murdered on September 10, 2025. His death was unfortunately the culmination of many violent acts brought against speakers like Ben Shapiro, Candace Owens, Michael Knowles, David Horowitz, Charles Murray, Milo Yiannopoulos, Ann Coulter, and Riley Gaines. These speakers (and many others that could be men-

tioned) faced protesters who would interrupt their message and even cancel them from speaking on campus at all.

The latest campus protests have been about the war between Israel and Hamas, along with protests concerning immigration and President Trump policies. While protests should be allowed, many of these protests turn violent and harm speakers and students (especially Jewish students).

Some pundits have suggested that the reason for this behavior on campus is that the millennial generation (and now Gen Z) are what could be called the “snowflake generation.” While that may be true in some respects, those rioting on the campus hardly look like meek snowflakes. They are very aggressive in their words and behavior.

Heather Mac Donald has experienced these campus protests and believes that we have misdiagnosed the problem. An article in a 2015 issue of *The Atlantic* on “The Coddling of the American Mind” blames the problem on parenting.<sup>3</sup>

Heather Mac Donald agrees that some of this can be explained, but she also asks that if “risk-adverse child-rearing is the source of the problem, why aren’t heterosexual white males demanding safe spaces?” They had the same sort of parents.

She persuasively argues that the problem is not psychological but ideological. Campus intolerance has surfaced because of decades of teaching that Western culture is racist, sexist, and the primary reason for so many evils in society. Read some of the blog posts and letters from students protesting

her. They reject the idea of a single truth and believe that promoting Western values are merely a veiled attempt to oppress them.

That explains why one student writing in the U.C. Berkeley campus newspaper justified the riots. He explained, "I can only fight tooth and nail for the right to exist." Another justified his actions by saying they were "not acts of violence. They were acts of self-defense." Campus riots have become a phenomenon not because students are snowflakes but because they are Western cultural opponents.

That is really the only explanation for the protests today. Protesters and rioters carry Hamas flags and even flags of Iran. Often, they carry signs calling for the end of capitalism and talk about overthrowing the current U.S. government.

University presidents need to get control of their campuses, or campus riots will get worse. Fortunately, some have taken a strong stand and others have been forced to resign. Former Senator Ben Sasse (who has also served on two occasions as a university president) argues that “University Trustees Have Their Heads in the Sand.”<sup>4</sup> They didn’t join the board to fight, but they also need to get more involved.

## **Words Have Consequences**

A phrase we often use is, “ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have victims.” It is also true that words have consequences. When you hear that Republicans are racists and fascist, someone is likely to go and shoot Republican members of Congress practicing at a ball field. When you constantly hear that the 2020 election was

stolen, some are likely to riot at the capitol even if told to protest peacefully. If you always hear that Charlie Kirk is a hate monger, someone will be inclined to pick up a rifle and kill him.

Journalist Michael Shellenberger has written about the “Left’s Dehumanization of MAGA Behind Rising Support for Violence.”<sup>5</sup> He argues that “the environment that led to Kirk’s death was created by the Left in its decades-long demonization and dehumanization of conservatives. For 80 years, schools, universities, and the media have used Hitler, Nazism, and fascism as symbols of ultimate evil.”

He says we need to see this singular event in its larger context. “This was all part of a deliberate dehumanization campaign. Kirk, Trump, and other conservatives, Democrats argued, are white

supremacists and misogynists who hate black people and women, who are committing trans genocide, and who are destroying our democracy.”

We should also demand that the media tell the truth. Whenever there is a shooting or any act of violence, we hear the “what about” argumentation or are told that there is violence “on both sides.” That simply is not true, nor does it help to use such verbal distractions.

Columnist Jim Geraghty concludes that “The Media Are Incapable of Covering Left-Wing Violence.”<sup>6</sup> He wonders, for example, why *Rolling Stone* magazine never put any of the Boston marathon victims on its cover, but did put the lone surviving perpetrator on the cover of the magazine.

He wondered why CNN choose to feature a liberal columnist who

was gushing about the man who assassinated the UnitedHealthcare CEO as a “morally good man,” and “revolutionary, famous, handsome, young, smart” in their prime-time special.

Antifa, he explains, has “a long history of vandalism, attempted arson, successful arson, building incendiary devices and improvised explosive devices, harassment, stalking, shootings, looting, burglary, and one case of murder.” He asks why the commentator at NPR compared Antifa to the Allied Forces landing at Normandy.

So much of the legacy media have not been telling the truth about violence in the streets and on campus. Perhaps the best visual example was the video of CNN reporter Omar Jimenez reporting from Kenosha, Wisconsin in 2020. As he spoke to the camera,

a building was on fire in the background and yet he reported that the protests were “mostly peaceful.”

We need to hold the media accountable, and we need to tell the truth about the rising tide of political violence in America. That is what we will continue to do on *Point of View*.



## **Additional Resources**

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on Criminal Justice*, POV Ministries, 2019.

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on Politics of Hate*, POV Ministries, 2019.

Douglas Groothuis, *Fire in the Streets: How You Can Confidently Respond to Incendiary Cultural Topics*, Salem Books, 2022.

Owen Strachan, *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel and the Way to Stop It*, Washington, DC: Salem Books, 2021.

## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Heather MacDonald, *Is Rioting Acceptable? If So, How Much?* *Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Kyle Smith, “This is Easy: Don’t Excuse, Defend, or Encourage Rioters,” *National Review*, May 29, 2020, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/05/this-is-easy-dont-excuse-defend-or-encourage-rioters/>.

<sup>3</sup> Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt,

"The Coddling of the American Mind," *The Atlantic*, September 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Ben Sasse, "University Trustees Have Their Heads in the Sand," *Wall Street Journal*, September 10, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Shellenberger, "Left's Dehumanization of MAGA Behind Rising Support for Violence," September 11, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Jim Geraghty, "'The Media Are Incapable of Covering Left-Wing Violence,'" *National Review*, September 17, 2025.



# *Point of View*

Point of View Ministries • PO Box 30 • Dallas, TX 75221

[pointofview.net](http://pointofview.net) • 800-347-5151

November 2025 • A Biblical View on  
Political Violence

© Point of View Ministries 2025

