

The Far-Right Is Weaponizing Instagram to Recruit Gen Z
Jessica Bateman

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This is welcome reporting.

George Washington in his Farewell Address said “ You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart-burnings, which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those, who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection.”

He was saying that constant vigilance against liberty for all requires constant constraint against lies. It is never finally repaired but always comes back as groups form. Lies need to be constrained. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue has taken in its name “Dialogue” which the science of lies says is the only way to understand lies for what they are, when they are true or false, when they deceive, and when they are meant to deceive, and why.

A particularly interesting paragraph in Bateman’s report is:

“I’ve had Instagram since I was eight so [the algorithm] knows I’m not into racist comments,” says Maia. “But when I go through my friends’ accounts who are more conservative than me, I do see a lot.” After she began the school strike protests, she was added to group chats that shared multiple conspiracy memes dismissing the climate crisis. “People send things to me [from Instagram] saying, ‘Look, an adult is saying this, so it must be true and you’re wrong,’” she says.

For thousands of years we have known arguments are made by logic, ethics, or character assertions, Maia friends are ultimately won over by lies by a character argument that parents do not lie. What makes this particularly interesting is that it suggests that perhaps there should be a wider dialogue option as conversations start seeding division which offer logic, ethics, or character constructive criticism.

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