

Transcript:

(00:00)

HOST: which is about the Echoes and lessons of history as well the political Fallout continues from the appearance of that group of neo-nazis at a Melbourne rally over the weekend around 30 mostly masked men arms raised in nazi-style salutes marched on Victoria's Parliament on Saturday in a show of support for controversial British gender activist Kelly J Keene it's marked outrage from anti-discrimination groups and some rare bipartisan condemnation from the premier of Victoria and the opposition leader [Music]

ANDREWS: No amount of vile ideology will defeat us as the multi-cultural capital of Australia

(00:37)

PESUTTO: we will not tolerate or ever accept any association with neo-nazis and white supremacists or anybody who sympathizes with them

HOST: there are questions being asked today around things like the police response and there's a political push to ban people from giving the notorious Nazi salute there's also division as well in the Victorian Liberal Party about expelling the MP who attended the rally with warnings at White supremacists and the white supremacy movements are growing and even infiltrating our Defense Forces

well reporter Nick (<HE WASN'T THERE>)

(01:14) McKenzie has spent more than the last couple of years investigating Neo-Nazi groups in Australia for the nine newspapers and for 60 minutes as well and he's with us now Nick McKenzie welcome back to the drum good afternoon

HOST: it's hard to know Nick were there a bunch of guys in black t-shirts who look as though they could have been going to a craft brewing convention or a barista's training afternoon doing the Nazi salute should make us really you know be frightened or just sort of you know devolve into

(01:44) mockery and peels of laughter how do you think we should respond to what we saw on Saturday

NICK: well it was a great effort by these neo-nazis to get publicity and they achieve that I think we need though to really understand more deeply what these groups stand for and the rest they impose our society I think parading as they did in public doing Nazi salute is of course troubling but it's not what really is ever heart of this behind the scenes they are groups like this are organizing they're getting younger

(02:17) recruits younger and younger recruits they're getting people with access to firearms and some people in these groups have faced counter terror investigations the head of the group in question the NSN we've recorded him on on a covert recording uh operation we had undercover in the group uh talking up the Christchurch terrorist uh they they hold some serious views and the real concern is where those views cross a line and encourage a young person to do something terrible and that's what we should be

(02:49) most concerned about

HOST: do you get a sense what is motivating these people is it just that they at some psychological level they feel better they feel tougher they feel more important by getting guns and and practicing for a race war or do they do they really have plans to make that race War happen

NICK: well they have real plans to make that baseball happen will it happen probably not because it's still a there's a small group The NSN is the largest Neo-Nazi group in the country but of course it's it's relatively small and we must keep

(03:21) uh uh our sort of emotions in check when we talk about groups such as this but they are organized they are entrenched they have been around for several years now in fact the Neo-Nazi movement has a many decades history

in Australia and you should understand that history to understand how to deal with these groups they're not going away they are getting bigger we've had the director general of ASIO not this year but the previous years annual security assessment warning of these groups that are getting

(03:51) recruits in their early teens and do pose a serious threat to our society so I think you can't just mock them and just say it's no big deal they're a bunch of idiots uh wearing silly costumes making fools of themselves although that is true too amongst this group a serious individuals who are being taken seriously by our security agencies and which pose a massive question to our society why are young men getting into these groups part of it's about Brotherhood and tribe but part of it is about they're genuinely

(04:21) part of what they see is a legitimate political movement and they they do want to bring a bring about a race war and they want to use ugly means to get there will they get there well not in the short term is there intent absolutely

HOST: Nick you're reporting on the on the weekend you're looking at Neo-Nazi elements within the Australian Defense Force and neo-nazis or people with associations with neo-nazis that have been detected in police forces in Australia why are these people not weeded out is there not a betting

(04:54) process that goes through people's internet and social media habits to see whether they hold extremist views whether

NICK: that's the question the Australian Defense Force is grappling with at the moment the ADF responded quickly and professionally to what we found which was a number of a very small number of serving soldiers had in some cases deep Neo-Nazi past there was one serving soldier who had been a part of a group extremist group well known to asio there's photos of him with Neo-Nazi leaders there's photos of him attending

(05:27) rallies attending court cases with their Neo-Nazi persons and after that he's gone and joined the military why didn't the military pick up on that very obvious social media Trail this guy left it's a really significant question I'm not sure I know the answer is I do know the Defense Force is scrambling to understand how they can better vet people such as this we only need to turn to United States to see there's a huge number of white supremacists in the U.

(05:53) S military U.S police forces and these groups have caused huge political upheaval in the US it's a warning to Australia to take portions now to vet properly to make sure the owners are just not on the applicant to the Army but the Defense Force itself is doing really rigorous background checking uh incorporation or in consultation groups like azio

HOST: next stay with us I wonder you're there in Melbourne how did you feel on the weekend seeing the Nazi salute in front of your State's Parliament

BLACK WOMAN: will I live right near the city and um

(06:24) you know seeing those images really made me sick and I think one of the things was that run for the kids was happening my sister and her family were doing Run for the kids and see if this juxtaposition of people running a marathon to raise money for The Royal Children's Hospital and this also then happening on the streets of Melbourne and it's incredibly sickening you know it's a blow to minority groups and you know I am a minority group it's a blow to the Jewish Community it is of low to the trans community and I just feel so

(06:55) uncomfortable and uneasy about you know everything that's kind of been playing out and these protests like yes that happened on the weekend but you know I've been walking through the city um regularly over the last couple of months you know enjoying Melbourne as you do it's a beautiful city but there have been many protests and the swastika symbol has been on placards in more than one protest so it is something that is being felt and it's a sentiment that we are seeing and it's incredibly scary and

(07:23) I don't think it can be ignored you know we said never again would something like this happen and so we really need to be very strong in our response and I'm so thankful that both sides of the Victorian government have come out and condemned what they saw and that you know there have been discussions about banning the salute and I think that's in play um at the moment today that they were having those conversations but you know all institutions need to be saying this is not okay we're not going to tolerate

(07:51) that in any forms

HOST: yeah Amy what do you think about the effectiveness or otherwise of things like Banning display of the swastika Banning the uh the the Nazi salute Nick talks about the way in which these people are seeking to gain attention could be that one of the ways we give them attention is by reacting strongly changing the laws cracking down arresting them if they do the do the Ohio Hitler salute again

AMY: well I mean yeah it does and and you just know that somebody is going to push it uh if the law passes just to create

(08:21) that attention but I think from a wider point of view we really need to look at how we got to this point where these groups feel emboldened enough to walk around the streets and walk up the steps of one of our state's parliaments and make these disgusting sickening symbols because we know what they represent and the thing that infuriates me about all of this is that we have been on this path for many years out in the open and every single time that we have a culture war or we have people start to normalize

(08:55) **how we dehumanize other human beings this is what this is what emboldens them** this is what they use to advertise to bring people to their groups and we talk about it on the mainstream now **we were hearing news reporters referring to an anti-trans rally could you imagine if we put you know any other other minority group after ante and the outcry that would happen like these are people we are talking about it is a human right to be who you are and yet we allow our politicians our political class our journalist class everyone to debate**

(09:32) **whether or not people have a right to existence** and then we wonder how Nazis walk up the steps of one of our parliaments and throw a salute I mean if we don't actually get a handle on the conversations that we have in this country and how far we throw out the lines because it might bring some people into your political party and we need to keep everyone in the tent then we are going to go down much darker paths because as Nick's reporting has shown this has been happening for years they are infiltrating every aspect of our

(10:06) institutions our political parties our Defense Force **our police force** and their infiltrating our homes because if **you don't think that your children are not receiving these messages then you haven't been paying attention and if we don't start stopping this in public not just by Co you can't throw a salute but why are we allowing the dehumanization of our people** then I don't know where we're going to go as a society but it's not anywhere I want to join in with

HOST: Fiona the Victorian liberal leader John

(10:37) pasuto came out strongly condemning it not just the rally but also the attendance of one of his MPS more redeeming at this **who has a history of anti-transgender comments that was the that was the stated purpose of the rally That Was Then infiltrated by The neo-nazis** Who are also anti-transgender this is potentially a political headache for John pasuto now because it looks as though he may not have the numbers to expel her from the party which is what he said he wanted to do in response to this what do you think is the

(11:06) appropriate course of action

WOMAN HOST: I think that is the appropriate course of action because you know aim is correct people like that don't belong in our political parties they don't belong in our Defense Force they don't belong in our police forces so I think that is the correct response Defenders of moira deeming have said **she's not a Neo-Nazi yes she has strong views as a part of the women's rights movement a which is a right-wing alternative to uh feminism some say others say well you know if**

(11:38) **you've got Nazis turning up saying we like what you hear you've got a problem with your with your transphobic language what what is you know should we condemn her for the company she keeps in the rallies she attends** because this is what Liberal Party members are going to decide in the next few days do we kick her out or not I

WOMAN HOST: **I think she should be because she should have done due diligence as to what that was going to be I mean neo-nazis don't turn up on a dime you know clearly there was an organized movement there and you know**

(12:06) you don't just turn up to something like that without having an idea of what was going to go on or what could potentially go on so **I I think they're making the right decision there and it's also important that the Liberal Party**

does you know sit with both the libertarian tradition and the conservative tradition and just because we have a conservative tradition doesn't mean that elements of a fascist right belongs in it belong in a conservative tradition in fact they are not conservatives they are

(12:31) nationalists and that is not a conservative tradition and so it's important for the Liberal Party to actually stand up for what is a conservative tradition and what's not um likewise for the labor party on the left you know for the same sort of thing so I mean not that there's Nazis on the left of the labor party that's not what I'm saying at all but the point is that it is important to be vigilant and on those grounds that the parties are true and representative of the Australian public and frankly Nazism is not

(12:59) representative of the broader Australian public or the Australian public that the liberal party is seeking to represent yeah

HOST: Craig Emerson what do you think is the the appropriate way to respond to this we talked about the possibility of banning Nazi symbols and and and salutes uh there's been some informal ban today on most TV networks including the ABC for much of the day not to show the protesters giving the salute blurring it out so that we're not even seeing these things is it should we be effectively

(13:27) just you know silencing these people not showing these people or should we be confronting them and and and you know engaging in the uh in the uh why we think that these things are abhorrent

CRAIG: well by way of background my father fought against the Nazis and spent three years in a Nazi prisoner of war camp um but I just wanted to um perhaps communicate with young some younger people who may not understand what the point of all this is you know there's all these different groups who protest all the time particularly in

(14:00) Victoria that in Melbourne there's always some sort of March what defines Nazism is violence violence they want to kill people Nazis want to kill people they do want to race war if they've been talking about Christchurch that was a massacre and so sure we should have freedom of speech and diversity abuse but we should not tolerate groups who espouse violence that's what Nazis do that's how they're defined and therefore we should crack down on Nazis if there were people we talked earlier about the

(14:32) Middle East if there were people saying we're from Isis hello we're just here for a bit of demonstration they'd be rounded up and they'd be arrested they'd certainly be questioned by the security agencies so there should be no tolerance in an otherwise tolerant Society for people who Advocate violence and that's what Nazism is

HOST: Craig Kelly J Keen otherwise known as **poser Parkey is a is a favorite of the far right in the United States uh fixture on Fox News and and elsewhere uh articulating the uh the**

(15:06) anti-transgender uh view that uh you know they like the neo-nazis equate them to pedophiles uh and see them as some kind of danger uh how how do we combat that kind of thinking uh not just amongst a group of of Latter-day skinheads but in people who are just anxious about the way the world looks and could be you know drafted into some extremist ideology based on the fact that they're they don't know somebody who's transitioned from one gender to another and it seems a bit weird and scary to them

CRAIG: so in this it's the Battle

(15:41) of ideas unless they're this is my view like there are there are views held by people in society that I regard as totally abhorrent but if they advocate violence that is way across the other side of the line if they have very weird views remember the uh you know the people who were taught you know before that or during their their lockdowns and so on and you know all talking about all the different horrible things that happened if you had a vaccine and they were um Sovereign citizens well they're pretty wacky in my humble opinion

(16:18) they're pretty wacky but we don't say you can't do that because we don't agree with your view in fact I remember quite a few of them were protesting out so the cfmeu offices in Victoria against um what is otherwise seen as pretty radical outfit in the cfmeu at least some of the leaders there but that's part of a very robust democracy sometimes it's ugly but it's not violent and when you get violent that's when the authority should crack down on it and that's when we should say the Nazi

(16:51) salute is out the Nazi flag is out and that's the difference but if we start saying oh well we don't like that view we don't like that view and they're not violent just maybe crazy or you know then we start defending ourselves because we then say we are actually against freedom of speech but by all means use the most forceful arguments against people who criticize trans people and then try to organize around it the most forceful arguments but when it comes to violence there should be no tolerance

AMY: with all due respect to Craig

(17:26) there these gender critical as they like to call themselves comments are violence against the trans community and they do have roots in the white supremacist movement and so you can't unlink them they are linked together and by inviting these people to speak we are inviting the other elements that are part of the white supremacist movements did when they began and I'm just saying like I understand what you're doing we shouldn't always have to tolerate the intolerant particularly when we know

(18:00) where it leads

CRAIG: so what are you saying that they should be banned from speaking

AMY: Yeah I'm saying that we should not be supporting these people

CRAIG: no no no no I didn't say we should support them I did not say we just finished but don't misrepresent me please

AMY: I'm just saying that I don't think that I'm not saying a great big ban but when it comes to what is violence these comments that Posey Parker and her ilk have been making are a form of violence against one of our most vulnerable communities

(18:38) and we also need to address that it's Nazis yes but it's also what they're doing

CRAIG: saying if there is an advocacy of violence then that should be dealt with I'm saying if there's a different point of view let's not con you know limit it purely to the trans issue if there is a different point of view that we disagree with we should tolerate it but if there's any advocacy of violence against trans people or anyone else we should not tolerate okay

HOST: so the distinction that we're drawing here is is that you're

(19:11) talking strictly Craig about physical violence Amy's talking about more than just physical violence the violence that's imposed by words against people let's leave that there for for one moment as interesting as it is I want to get back to Nick McKenzie before we lose him Nick um far-right violence has been identified as the number one domestic terrorism threat in the United States uh we've seen what's happened there in the Trump era what about authorities here how seriously do you think they're

(19:34) taking it

NICK: there was a time 80 months ago where uh far right extremism and that's not what the aseocalls it but uh um let's let's call it that for Simplicity was occupying I think it was uh over 50 of their serious domestic calendar cases the afp's investigation into uh fire extremism Neo-Nazi groups has skyrocketed in the last couple of years our security services are absolutely taking it seriously and our whole of society should be taking it seriously and the really difficult thing for our police forces and for societies you know

(20:10) when does abhorrent hate speech cross over into activities that can encourage condone violence or actually involve explicit political violence and it can be a very very fine line every day of the week or commonly neo-nazis come after me with all sorts of violent rhetoric about things I'd like to do to me I take it as as rhetoric and I take precautions but it's it's them saying things not necessarily doing things so knowing when to react knowing that we also must absolutely Embrace free speech and and fight abhorrent use with debate

(20:48) that shuts it down and calls it out for what it is uh is vital our state services are taken in very seriously legislative bands that our politicians are talking about yes ban the Nazis salute is that the answer absolutely not I'll just simply stop saluting and they'll go further underground we must have a whole of society approach and that's just

not Asia in the police forces it's Education Services it's what's happening our prisons there's a whole range of things we can be doing

(21:14) frankly a lot better it's going to cost a lot more money and it's about keeping this issue uh as part of our political debate not just when idiots crop up on the on the steps of parliament uh raising their hands in the ugly way they did good to hear from you Nick thank you thank you Nick McKenzie is an investigative journalist at the age [Music] well fine