

On Offence: The Politics of Indignation

Richard King



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Everyone has taken and given offense; anyone who claims they haven't is either lying or uniquely tolerant. Yet in recent years, offense has become more than an expression of annoyance — it's now a form of political currency. Politicians and religious leaders have mastered the art of indignation to motivate their supporters or deflect unwanted attention, and the news cycle has become increasingly dominated by reports on these tiny tempests. In this provocative account, Richard King explores how the politics of offence is poisoning public debate. With hurt feelings being paraded like union banners, we've ushered in a new mood of censoriousness, self-pity, and self-righteousness. Yet King contends that freedom of speech is meaningless without the freedom to offend, and that the claim to be offended should be the beginning of the argument, not the end of it.

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