Left now turning to thuggery

THE Left is in self-destruct mode.

One would have hoped that three months after Donald Trump’s unlikely triumph, we would see his political opponents reflecting on how they lost the unlosable election.

But instead of rethinking the merits of toxic identity politics and illiberal attitudes to free speech, they have doubled down on the very rhetoric and antics that are increasingly being rejected by much of the civilised world.

Hyperbolic language has given way to intimidation and violence.

It’s no longer just verbal abuse and slurs, as irrational activists, calling themselves the Resistance, resort to thuggery.

Anyone who doesn’t subscribe to their world view is fair game.

You can see why people have so little trust in the media when the New York Times, Newsweek and CNN, among others, report in sympathetic terms on the feral rioters at University of California’s Berkeley campus, who were filmed rioting, destroying property and attacking people.

Some media outlets presented a warped version of events at odds with the violence on camera, including women being maced and struck with poles by protesters, who also caused extensive damage to public and private property.

The mayhem began because activists were outraged that conservative firebrand Milo Yiannopoulos was giving a speech at the university. So, a pack of aggressive thugs trample on the rights of a gay, Jewish man because they don’t like his opinions.

Yet CNN sought to blame the victims of aggression rather than the perpetrators and even falsely labelled Yiannopoulos an “extremist”.

Newsweek had this ludicrous headline: “Milo Yiannopoulos gets schooled at Berkeley: Ferocious protests greet the Right-wing provocateur”. So, violent thugs smashing heads and windows in order to silence opposing views is now considered “schooling”?

So, what did the protesters really achieve?

Milo’s speech was cancelled but the ordinary person watching at home would have been horrified by the depths the Left was willing to stoop to in order to shut down debate.

Instead of appearing in front of a few hundred who had paid to hear him speak, Yiannopoulos was on national television being introduced to millions of viewers hearing him for the first time.

Sales of his upcoming book, Dangerous, soared more than 17,500 per cent in the hours after the riot and he sat at No. 1 on Amazon’s bestseller list on the strength of pre-sales alone.

“The fascists of the future will be the anti-fascists” is a quote often falsely attributed to Winston Churchill.

Whoever said it got it right and we are seeing the same trend in Australia and in much of Europe, where those with totalitarian tendencies, who consider diversity of thought as tantamount to hate speech, shut down debate and open discourse.

In December, a community forum in Melbourne, organised by Jewish businessman Avi Yemini and involving senators Pauline Hanson and Malcolm Roberts, was cancelled because of the threat posed by aggressive protesters.

Why would any reasonable person want to stop elected senators from meeting members of the Jewish community?

But the activists are neither reasonable nor rational. They label every ideological opponent a fascist, racist, sexist xenophobe.

But the real fascists are the ones who use violent tactics to shut down free speech.

The Left needs to relearn the art of debate and explain their ideas. Their current tactics no longer work.

Trump’s success followed the extraordinary Brexit vote, and throughout much of the Western world there is a revolt against those espousing so-called “progressive” policies.

That should be a blessing for conservative leaders, but Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is being damaged by the very phenomenon that should be helping him.

Turnbull needs to rediscover his conservative credentials or at least stand for something that resonates with the public.

As it is, the Coalition is floundering in the polls and failing to capitalise on the rise of conservative sentiment in the community.