

OUT FROM THE DARKNESS

The Alt-Right and the Mainstreaming of Antisemitism

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M.A. Religion, Politics, and Conflict 2021

Abstract

The Alternative Right movement entered mainstream American politics during the 2010s. The internet-based movement is deeply racist and antisemitic, trafficking in beliefs about racialized biology, white genocide, and anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. Where does this ideology come from? Is it an outgrowth of traditional Christian theology or a secularist response to American racial anxieties? What role has the internet played in the digitized spread of this racist ideology, allowing the movement to expand globally? In this thesis, I explore the genesis and leadership of the Alt-Right's antisemitic thought, its change over time, its relationship to religion, and its efforts to mainstream itself in American culture and society. I focus on the question of antisemitism's role in the Alt-Right ideology and the strange pattern by which its adherents blatantly advanced antisemitic ideas yet claimed innocence through irony, parody, and satire. Deciphering this complex ideology allows us to understand the larger ways in which race, religion, and hatred combine in contemporary American politics and society.

Introduction

What makes white-supremacist worldviews more comprehensive and textured than a simple animus towards nonwhites is their addition of the Jew, the nefarious foe who seeks to upend the natural racial order. Brutality, inequality, and a fiercely enforced racial caste system become weapons in the war against the Jew. Not all white-supremacist ideologies center on antisemitic conspiracy—but for many of the ideologues of organized racism, the Jew is as rhetorically indispensable as he is evil.

-Talia Lavin, *Culture Warlords*¹

On the evening of August 11, 2017, I found myself peering over the railing of a rooftop bar as a line of Tiki torch-wielding men in crisp collars and white button-up shirts raided my college campus below. A surge of panic rose: *These men don't belong here*, I thought to myself. I watched as counterprotesters—my peers—were encircled by these strangers with nowhere to turn, who met them with shouts of racist slurs and vocal violence. “The Jews will not replace us!” *Why are they saying that?* Unknown to me at the time, the latest iteration of American white nationalism had invaded Charlottesville, Virginia through an attempt to unite their followers and propel public prejudice into the twenty-first century. *Why so much hate? Why here? Why now?* I had a basic understanding of structural racism in America, but growing up in a deeply irreligious household, largely ignorant of Judaism writ large, I was left wondering why Jews were the recipient of such powerful hatred. After the events of August 11 and 12, 2017—what is generally known as the Unite the Right rally—I noted a pattern: surges in hate speech and racial violence, specifically targeted at Jews. *But why the Jews?*

In this thesis, I trace the antisemitism I observed August 11 and 12 to the ideology of a loosely organized movement called the Alternative Right, or Alt-Right.

¹ Talia Lavin, *Culture Warlords: My Journey into the Dark Web of White Supremacy* (New York, New York: Hachette Books, 2020), 22.

Antisemitism—a puzzle outside the strict confines of race and religion—in American society has a long, complex history. Yet in the aftermath of World War II, many commentators predicted an end to anti-Jewish hatred. With the rise in the context of the early Cold War of a new public discourse of Judeo-Christianity—the trope of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews as equal partners in American religiously-inflected democracy—both mainstream American political parties rejected antisemitism. Jews began to flourish materially and culturally, even with their minority status, especially because of their acceptance into the white demographic majority of American society. Antisemitic ideas became taboo in mainstream American popular culture, politics, and the rest of mainstream society.

In response to these developments, postwar racist ideologues and theologians began to develop a new underground strain of antisemitism, one that blamed the deterioration of Christianity on Jewish influence.² This new development sparked a slew of new racist theologies in the mid-twentieth century, inspiring religious beliefs that relied on the racialization of biology and creation over the western principles of the Bible. What happened in between? The popularization of the internet in the 1990s allowed this brand of racism to spread online, amassing followers throughout the country who were able to mobilize in the face of these perceived dangers. As the internet grew more sophisticated and widespread after the turn of the twenty-first century, so too did the mobilization of the followers of these ideologues. Eventually in the late 2000s, the Alternative Right movement, or the loosely knit internet-based group that shares a core belief in the superiority and necessary advancement of the white race, began to appear on

² Katherine H. Gaston, *Imagining Judeo-Christian America: Religion, Secularism, and the Redefinition of Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 1.

anonymous online chatrooms. Their messages expressed such themes as Holocaust denialism and Jewish conspiracies, which filtered into public forums like Facebook and Twitter in the 2010s. Thus, antisemitism entered into twenty-first-century public discourse.

The Alt-Right movement, a term I use loosely in this paper to illuminate the similarities between adherents of this specific ideology that have been united by public events such as the 2017 Unite the Right rally, uses both anonymous and public platforms on the internet to spread propaganda, conspiracies, and hatred. Similar to its predecessors, the Alt-Right leadership³ firmly believes that the white race is under attack by Jews and other minorities conspiring together to commit white genocide, or the existential fear of extinction of the white race. They believe in racial protectionism by any means, whether it be through education of this perceived threat or by militarization against it. Further, they believe in white supremacy, or the innate superiority of the white race. At the core of the movement is the belief in a global Jewish conspiracy, which is the origin point that other components of the movement's racism branch off from. Still, the leadership's techniques for promoting and mainstreaming antisemitism reflect an awareness that America has never had an antisemitic political party and public antisemitism is normally taboo.

In this thesis, I examine four features central to understanding contemporary American antisemitism in the Alt Right: sources of Alt Right ideology; the late-twentieth

³ To be clear, there is no official leadership of the Alt-Right. I use this term to identify key actors among those who affiliate with the same basic ideas such as anti-conservatism, anti-liberalism, Jewish conspiracy, and white genocide.

century phenomenon of the internet; the beliefs and behavior of the new Alt-Right leadership; and the Alt-Right's process of mainstreaming antisemitism.

In the first section of the thesis, I examine two antisemitic thinkers who demonstrate the divergence of Christianity and white nationalism: Revido P. Oliver and William L. Pierce. These two thinkers are important because they discuss the separation of racialized science and white nationalism from the Christianity of the mid-twentieth century, instead issuing their own polemics to address Jewish conspiracies and white supremacy. Pierce went so far as to create his own religion, Cosmotheism, based on countering Christianity's connection to Judaism which was seen as toxic to the survival of the white race. In other words, Pierce argued that Christianity was insufficiently antisemitic and survivalist to achieve white racial advancement. The development of these theologies helped the lay the groundwork for the belief by Alt-Right leaders that Christianity is too weak to sustain white nationalism, and that only the militarization and racialization of religion is acceptable to avoid white genocide by Jews.

After establishing this important point of origins, I transition out of the mid-twentieth century into the 1990s, when the second factor entered into play: the rise of the internet, which facilitated the movement of public racism to the online sphere, where antisemitic rhetoric began to flourish even as racist symbols like swastikas vanished from view. This new context led to a profusion of new beliefs and behaviors of the Alt-Right. I examine this third factor, the loose set of foundational beliefs that tie the movement together, as well as different Alt-Right intellectuals and their brand of highbrow white nationalism, or the theory that academizing and professionalizing white nationalism will make it more palatable and popular. Further, in this section I discuss the different facets

of antisemitism within the movement and how it serves as a core belief among the leadership. Finally, I provide an examination of the language used by the Alt-Right to advance and popularize antisemitism, notably their use of humor and other literary devices. A key component of this section is an analysis of the Trump administration and how it has contributed to the rise of the Alt-Right and public antisemitism. I conclude with a set of reflections on the larger stakes of my argument, as well as its implications and enduring questions for understanding and confronting antisemitism today.

Sources of Alt Right Ideology

During the mid-twentieth century, nativist thinkers fought against the increasing acceptance of Jews in American society. Antisemitism became more taboo within some Christian circles. White nationalists felt threatened by this and subsequently reacted against it by searching for ways to stop the process. Two thinkers—Reילו P. Oliver and William L. Pierce—actively fought against this changing dynamic by questioning the role of religion and race.

“Judeo-Christianity” first entered American political discourse in the 1930s, when global catastrophic events forced many Americans to rethink the validity of democracy, and the question of racial and religious difference in American society. American thinkers began to promote the idea that Protestants, Catholics, and Jews all shared an equal role in American freedom and an important part in supporting and propagating democracy.⁴ Part of this process involved greater acceptance of Judaism as a legitimate

⁴ Gaston, *Imagining Judeo-Christian America*, 1.

American religion, and rejecting anti-Jewish theological and racial prejudices as un-American ideas. Not only was Judaism legitimate, but some proponents of the idea of a Judeo-Christian America argued that together Judaism and Christianity could fight racism and religious intolerance at home and “godless communism” abroad. American democracy required religion in order to function in a defensive capacity. Judeo-Christian discourse also reflected the growing influence of Jews and Catholics in American society and government, not simply just a response to fascism and nativism. By the mid-1960s, as Judeo-Christian rhetoric permeated American Protestantism, alongside the growing civil rights movement, some nativist thinkers began to fear that Jewish influence had corrupted both American Christianity and conservatism. They hence rejected both of them altogether, in some cases even creating their own versions. That led to the emergence of an anti-Judeo-Christian idea that would become important in White Supremacist thought. At the center of this process was a thinker little remembered today who played a huge role in recasting American radical Right thought against Christianity itself.

Born in the early twentieth century, Revilo P. Oliver stands as one of the foremost influences on the modern white nationalist movement in the United States. Oliver was a professor of Classical antiquity prior to beginning his polemics in the late 1960s as he reacted to threats from both sides of the political aisle in their handling of tri-faith cooperation in the face of growing totalitarianism. During the early 1950s and 60s, Oliver was an active and powerful supporter of American conservatism and the idea that Christianity is at the base of Western civilization. He became notable as an early contributor to William F. Buckley’s magazine *National Review*, a conservative news

outlet that emerged in the postwar decades as a leading voice for American conservatism. He was also a co-founder of the John Birch Society (JBS)—a right-wing organization dedicated to fighting communism, and one that believed in a grand communist conspiracy within the American government—and a member of the leadership organization within it. However, as Judeo-Christian discourse took a stronger hold, Oliver's voice became increasingly antisemitic and racist. A professor of Classics at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Oliver often used his background to legitimize his far-right beliefs, invoking Classical antiquity to advance his views. Oliver's work today is distributed on the internet and print publishing, and many white nationalists attribute much of their influence to him.

Oliver was concerned with Holocaust denialism, a founding ideology of the modern white nationalist movement, as well as with the term "Judeo-Christianity." Oliver took issue with the fact that overt and public antisemitism had become distasteful in American politics as it was associated with the former Nazi Germany. Committed to animosity towards Jews as well as towards the preservation of the white race, Oliver found himself on the fringes of the American conservative movement, for, and concluded that American Christianity, too, had become infiltrated and polluted by Judaism. As Damon Barry writes, "just as he could simply no longer see a place for himself in the political mainstream of the conservative movement, where he felt Judeo-Christianity defined one's mores, political commitments, and attitudes towards Jewishness, he could no longer speak well of American Christianity."⁵

⁵ Damon T. Berry, *Blood and Faith: Christianity in American White Nationalism* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2017), 29.

Although Oliver was critical of mainstream Christianity as it had been popularized during the Cold War, he considered a certain brand of traditionalist orthodoxy acceptable. He believed that this historical Christianity was not a response to social changes or some sort of reform movement, but rather a personal belief that transforms oneself. For Oliver, “the sin...is their perversion of traditional Christianity. ...Authentic Christianity is the opposite of “universal love,”⁶ meaning that the liberal concepts of world peace and a global community, ideals that had been touted during the Cold War to create a united front against communism, were farcical. Christianity was at its root specific to the Indo-European peoples and was to be properly understood as such. Any other iterations of Christianity, ones that preached inclusivity and unity across religious and racial bounds, were to be flatly rejected because they were not practiced solely with the preservation of the white European race in mind. Liberal democratic thinkers’ ideas of universal equality were a “grotesque caricature of religion.”⁷ Christianity, in his eyes, was supposed to be acutely racially aware. Christianity was not supposed to be democratic and equal, rather exclusive and hierarchical.

Oliver was offended at what he saw as the regression of the Christianity of the West to the “primitive” Christianity of the “Nazarenes and Ebonites.”⁸ He was repelled by the term “Judeo-Christianity” because it brought Christianity back to its Jewish roots, whereas the religion that had developed since then had been properly and rightfully Aryanized. Billy Graham brought Judeo-Christian rhetoric into the messages he preached

⁶ Ibid, 31.

⁷ Ibid, 33.

⁸ Ibid, 34.

to his followers, amassing “tri-faith” support.⁹ Oliver believed that the followers of Graham and other “salvation hucksters” were evidence of the decline of Western Christianity, diverting attention away from Christian-backed American racism leading up to World War II towards “Jewish myths and a particularly insidious and irrational form of occultism.”¹⁰ He believed the most recent manifestation of Christianity damned the American racial consciousness as a malicious and isolating set of beliefs.

As the American Right became increasingly sympathetic to tri-faith discourse, Oliver rejected it. Figures like intellectual William F. Buckley and his “New Right” conservative movement began in the mid-twentieth century to incorporate the language of Judeo-Christianity into their political discourse, denouncing public antisemitism.¹¹ Similar rhetoric in the American conservative movement continued well into the 1980s, when Oliver began to believe that political figures were privy to a Jewish conspiracy. For example, Oliver believed that President Ronald Reagan’s ties to Hollywood and his pro-Israel stance demonstrated that Reagan was merely a vehicle for Jewish interests. Oliver found validation in his condemnation of the conservative movement’s sympathy for Israel and hatred of communism, believing that they were no longer prioritizing the survival of the white race.¹²

Writing under the pseudonym Ralph Perier in 1980, Oliver wrote a book titled *The Jews Love Christianity*, in which he contends that

Our contemporaries are coming to a radically new understanding of the Jewish Problem. One by one, and independently of one another, several of our best minds have re-examined the historical record or analyzed the forces that are today driving our race to suicide. And each of

⁹ Gaston, *Imagining Judeo-Christian America*, 188.

¹⁰ Berry, *Blood and Faith*, 34.

¹¹ Gaston, *Imagining Judeo-Christian America*, 188.

¹² Berry, *Blood and Faith*, 39.

them has come spontaneously to the conclusion that Christianity was a Jewish invention, devised for the specific purpose of enfeebling and paralyzing the civilized peoples of the world, on whom the Jews were preying in antiquity and have preyed ever since.¹³

This passage demonstrates the crux of Oliver's argument: that Jews are and always have been the primary threat to the West, and that Christianity was in fact a tool used by the Jews to bring about the downfall of the white race. A number of other titles by Oliver include *The Jewish Strategy* (2002) and *America's Decline: The Education of a Conservative* (1981), both of which discuss his belief in a Jewish conspiracy and the downfall of American conservatism. In 1978, Oliver became an editorial advisor to the prominent Holocaust-denialist Institute for Historical Review. Oliver's work has been widely spread among the modern white supremacist movement on the internet, laying the foundation for much of what was to come towards the end of the twentieth century and well into the twenty-first century with the founding of the Alt-Right.

William L. Pierce founded the neo-Nazi organization National Alliance in 1974 which was developed to fight the Civil Rights Movement and multiracial democracy. Pierce was born in 1933 Georgia. The first thirty years of Pierce's life was spent without question of politics or race, according to his autobiography.¹⁴ However, his prejudice caught up with him when he became a professor in the early 1960s, deeply turned off by the Civil Rights Movement. During this period, he joined JBC. Once antisemitism became publicly taboo, Pierce left JBC because he firmly believed in Jewish ties to Communism in America. Further, he did not believe that JBC had sufficient explicit theories of racial determinism.¹⁵ Pierce himself claimed that "the two topics on which

¹³ Ralph Perier, *The Jews Love Christianity* (Reedy, West Virginia: Liberty Bell Publications, 1980), 1.

¹⁴ Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream* (New York, New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009), 18

¹⁵ Ibid.

[he] wanted an intelligent discussion—race and Jews—were precisely the two topics Birch Society members were forbidden to discuss.”¹⁶ After leaving JBC, Pierce became increasingly tied to the American Nazi Party and its leader, George Lincoln Rockwell. Eventually he cut ties because he believed that the brownshirt uniforms and swastika armbands were not serious enough to make political sway.¹⁷ He became one of the leading neo-Nazis in America in the mid-to-late-twentieth century until his death in 2002. Eventually heavily influencing the twenty-first century Alt-Right movement, Pierce was the Cold War’s most antisemitic white nationalist. Further, Pierce wrote *The Turner Diaries* (1978), a book called “the bible of the racist right,” which not only drove the movement but was also cited as inspiration for Timothy McVeigh’s 1995 Oklahoma City terrorist bombing.¹⁸ Pierce was integral in mainstreaming antisemitism by actively shirking off Nazi symbolism in an attempt to have a more “sober-minded” effort in influencing the public’s view of Jews, understanding that wearing swastika armbands was a “dead-end.”¹⁹

Shirking off the insufficiency of right-wing politics and American Christianity in preserving white racial advancement, Pierce developed his concept of white nationalism around Cosmotheism—his program of racial survival and what he considered as a religious alternative to Christianity. He claimed Cosmotheism has a “timeless, metaphysical, and racialized truth,” which ultimately shaped how he saw Christianity and racial politics. Through this lens, Pierce rejected Christianity on the principle that it was

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 19.

¹⁸ Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 210.

¹⁹ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 19.

not racialized or hierarchical enough to preserve white racial existence. Pierce's religious program is best understood as the "metaphysics of white racial advancement to eventual godhood."²⁰ In this way, Christianity stands as a barrier to white racial advancement and the possibility of a divine future, and consequently must be rejected.

Similar to Oliver, Pierce rejected conservatism because by the mid-twentieth century it had abandoned its racial component, the one that drove it to politically and socially reject nonwhites. Further, Pierce also believed in a Jewish conspiracy that had taken over conservative politics. In the 1960s, Pierce joined the notorious neo-Nazi "Commander" George Lincoln Rockwell in the American Nazi Party (ANP), eventually becoming editor of the ANP's periodical, *National Socialist World*. Pierce and Rockwell agreed on their approach to white racial activism, which manifested in conspiratorial antisemitism. They shared a belief in "a Manichean and militaristic view of the world as the scene of racial conflict, and a myopic focus of white racial survival as the only goal worth fighting for."²¹ Pierce eventually founded the National Alliance as a vanguard organization that would lead the country to a new racial awakening, led by those he believed were the best of the white race. At one point, he claimed that his organization was to be a mighty army that would conquer the entire world. Nevertheless, his main goal was educational—he wanted to teach white Americans what he saw as the "Jewish-controlled news and entertainment media, political parties, public schools and universities, labor and trade unions, and...nearly all mainstream Christian churches."²²

²⁰ Berry, *Blood and Faith*, 45.

²¹ *Ibid*, 47.

²² *Ibid*, 52.

Pierce's desire to inspire a white revolution led to his rationalization of a "divine spark" in the white race to excel above all other human beings, which is justifiable when rejecting Christianity's universalism and replacing it with a racialist pantheism. He posited that racial differences are a product of the Creator, but the white race is destined to rule above all other living beings, and this reality is still developing materially and spiritually.²³ He emphasized unity, not equality, among every individual. According to Pierce, the European man is specifically chosen to have this impulse within him, therefore the cosmic racial order is divinely placed in the white race.

Pierce saw both Christianity and liberalism as barriers to the white race's full and meaningful expression, in addition to a third inhibitive element, Jews. He believed that Jews had been actively subverting Cosmotheism for centuries, having a race-soul incompatible with and opposite that of the white race. Further, Pierce rejected Christianity because he believed that it had been taken over by Jews, including exploitation of Christian ministries. Nevertheless, he saw Christianity as a weak doctrine meant to emasculate white men and keep them from realizing their divine "Urge" and need for white revolution. He described churches as places of "race-mixing," accusing them of mixing with homosexuals and other groups he believes exist as a weakening point in white racial consciousness. The primary sin in Cosmotheism is undermining the efforts of future white racial survival. For Pierce, Christianity is wholly incompatible with the advancement of the white race and is too influenced by "race-mixing" and Jews. He attempted to enlighten the white race of this through literature, as well as through

²³ Ibid, 57.

political tracts, like organizing the National Alliance in 1974—he wanted a white revolution, and all components of Christianity stood in the way.

The Turner Diaries laid the foundation for the survivalist mentality that arose within the white nationalist movement towards the end of the twentieth century. In January 1975, Pierce began publishing installments of the story in the National Alliance publication *Attack!*, telling a fictional narrative that begins with a multiracial government guarded by Equality Police that oppresses white people by “stealing the virtue of white women and reducing white men to powerless obeisance.”²⁴ In this world, conservatives are money-hungry, one-track-minded sell-outs that have deprioritized the interests of white people. Alongside his installments, Pierce added editorials about what he saw as pressing issues of the day, including one titled, “Jews, the USSR, and Communism.” After publishing *The Turner Diaries* in full in 1978, the National Alliance saw a marked increase in membership. It was particularly appealing to many people who felt similarly ostracized by Jews and other minorities when Pierce wrote about shooting Jewish merchants and the black Equality Police. National Alliance members were then allowed to fantasize about their darkest desires to rid the country of these racial threats.²⁵

The story, which continues to be deeply influential in the contemporary white nationalist movement, tells of thirty-year-old Earl Turner, an electrical engineer turned guerilla fighter in a coming race war. Turner is part of the elite Organization, a group of white people who aimed to violate the draconian Cohen Act gun control law and to launch an uncoordinated guerilla war in an attempt to destabilize the Zionist-occupied

²⁴ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 29.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

government called the System. These guerilla fighters rob and murder Jews and black people, blow up FBI headquarters, and kill a liberal media journalist within the first fifty pages. Members of the Organization eventually succeed in launching a full-scale war between their factions of white people and the multiracial American government. After gaining control of Southern California, the Organization drives all the minorities into the desert, kills all of the Jews, and uses fear tactics to force the remaining white population into submission, hanging all white “race traitors.” Nuclear war destroys Israel and China, and neutralizes the Soviet Union, and the Organization imposes a dictatorship over the rest of the white population and gains control of the multiracial forces. Eventually North America is taken over completely, Europe is won, and the Organization is able to eradicate all nonwhite populations on the planet. One hundred years later, the white race is on the “upward spiral of achievement.”²⁶

When pressed about the gory detail of *The Turner Diaries*, Pierce claimed that, “if only society hadn’t been so thoroughly infected...the cleansing process wouldn’t require so much blood.”²⁷ Through Pierce’s eyes in this novel, he is able to encapsulate the fears of the white nationalist movement at this point in time which was a direct reaction to what they saw as a Jewish-led movement for Black civil rights leading towards white extinction. The novel became inspiration for bands of white nationalist militias in the 1980s, leading to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing that exactly mimicked the attack against FBI headquarters in the book. The novel continues to have powerful influence

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 30.

over the survivalist mentality within the American white nationalist movement to this day.

It is lastly important to note the role of Holocaust denialism during this period, a concept that became increasingly widespread with the publicization of the internet, and laid the foundation for its popularization among Alt-Right leadership and adherents. On October 18, 1981, a California Superior Court Judge took judicial notice that “Jews were gassed to death at the Auschwitz concentration camp,” ruling that the Holocaust was to be established as a historical fact.²⁸ This was in response to the Institute for Historical Review attempting to prove that the Holocaust was in fact a historical fabrication, baiting a Holocaust survivor to provide evidence of his and his family’s experience. The Institute claimed that Jews had not been gassed to death and evidence, like Anne Frank’s diary, was falsified. In contrast, it claimed that the entire Holocaust was a fraud and the deliberate murder of Jews was counterfeited for Jewish political and economic gain. It further argued that President Roosevelt had wrongfully entered into war with Hitler, ending tragically for the West. In addition to this particular belief becoming popular among the twenty-first-century white nationalist movement, so too has William Pierce’s belief in regard to the Holocaust: that the Nazis had done “only what needed to be done,”²⁹ and “one should not deny the industrialized murder of Jews...because it may become necessary to repeat it on Jews and “nonwhites” in the future.”³⁰

The Late Twentieth Century: Racism Takes to the Internet

²⁸ Ibid, 52.

²⁹ Ibid, 57.

³⁰ Ibid, 58.

The Internet, by the 1990s, had already in large part replaced the smaller zine-style newsletters that were once widely used across various American white nationalist groups. White nationalists had always been searching for ways to amplify their voice, which in the mid-twentieth century took the form of subscription-based newsletters and publishing houses, eventually reaching an audience in talk radio. The Internet became the next natural step, as these actors recognized its potential for spreading their messages. These changes in technology and programming allowed for these groups to reach each other through advanced software and commercial chat rooms, providing open grounds not only for recruitment, but for expansion.

Louis Beam, a Klan state leader, was in part responsible for helping to guide far-right extremism into the computer age. In 1984, Beam and two of his white supremacist colleagues established the Aryan Nations Liberty Net, the first white supremacist online bulletin board.³¹ He became one of the first Americans to mobilize groups through the Internet. Similarly, Tom Metzger, a white supremacist skinhead, was among the first American racists to use the electronic bulletin to organize, creating White Aryan Resistance.³²

A culmination of the efforts of his white nationalist forefathers, Alabama Klan boss and long-time white supremacist Don Black created Stormfront in 1994. Intentionally formed as a one-stop-shop for global white supremacists, Stormfront published pages in all major European languages, as well as links to a growing list of

³¹ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Louis Beam," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/louis-beam>.

³² Laura Smith, "In the Early 1980s, White Supremacist Groups Were Early Adopters (and Masters) of the Internet," *Medium*, Timeline, November 5, 2017, <https://timeline.com/white-supremacist-early-internet-5e91676eb847>.

“white nationalist, historical revisionist, and self-described racial conservative” sites.³³ The Stormfront motto is “White Pride Worldwide,” thus indicating Black’s intention to globalize his brand of white nationalism and supremacy. Stormfront, a still very active website, was organized as a message board to allow members to be able to post opinions and have public online conversations. Various discussion titles include “What do you want done with the Jews?” and “To Hate or Not to Hate.”³⁴ However, what is most important about Stormfront in the twenty-first century is its role in mainstreaming racism. Stormfront is integral in denormalizing racist symbols like swastikas and white robes, banning racial slurs and various other forms of profanity in guidelines dating back to 2008.³⁵

Right-wing radicals often carve their own path in self-representation because they blame the mainstream media for being too elite or for not properly addressing their interests, which is clear in the internet age with the development of white nationalist message boards like Stormfront. Nevertheless, media has played a significant role in bolstering and framing the agenda of right-wing radicalism, helping to create political space for it. Studies have shown³⁶ that media can set the political agenda, frame issues, and affect audience participation, including how people vote. Media coverage affects views on contentious subjects such as welfare and race, thus the outlets through which these issues are discussed affects the way they are treated politically and socially—those

³³ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 451.

³⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center, “Stormfront,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/stormfront>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Antonis A. Ellinas, “Media and the Radical Right,” *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* (Oxford University Press: 2018), 1.

who consume certain types of media are more likely inclined to act according to what and how those messages are addressed. According to researcher Antonis Ellinas, “media “populism” is generating demand for entertaining, sensationalist, and dramatized politics that facilitate the rise of right-wing radical populists,”³⁷ which is what primed the way for the leaders of the contemporary Alt-Right to garner attention and positively impact the spread of their message in the coming century.

The 21st Century: The Alt-Right

Existing largely on the internet since the 1990s, the white nationalist movement has been allowed to expand and speak freely without much impediment. Though the 9/11 terrorist attacks sent a shockwave of Islamophobia throughout the United States that still persists and is a very present and bold facet of white nationalist ideology—a discussion that warrants a separate academic study—the development of the antisemitic twenty-first century white nationalist movement was able to remain under the radar until the 2016 presidential election, when the radical right, and consequently white nationalism, entered mainstream discourse.

The white nationalist movement is primarily concerned with self-defense against the “imagined existential threats posed by racial integration and biological and cultural pollution.”³⁸ According to Damon Berry, white nationalists reject Christianity as an alien and dangerous ideology stemming from a Jewish plot, whose influence weakens one’s adherence to the survival of the white race. Thus, racial protectionism should be

³⁷ Ibid, 3.

³⁸ Berry, *Blood and Faith*, 6.

understood as a motive for action, not merely something to ponder over. To this point, racial protectionism

motivates the constant surveillance of ideology, religious and otherwise, for the purpose of purifying the white nationalist body of thought. Rendering one's racial ideology pure, it is believed, immunizes the racial body to weaknesses that would otherwise lead to social and biological miscegenation and thereby to the destruction of the white race.³⁹

Therefore, contemporary white nationalism is best understood as a source of pan-European historic ethnonationalism that unites the white race across national boundaries, which filtered strongly into the American sphere. In this way, contemporary white nationalism is more concerned with preserving and excelling the white race as a whole. White nationalist ideation is largely preoccupied with self-defense against imagined existential threats, like miscegenation, or biological and cultural pollution. Therefore, white nationalist protectionism implies commitment to the survival of the white race globally.

The term “Alt-Right” dates back to 2008 when paleoconservative professor emeritus Paul Gottfried used the term “alternative right” in a lecture to the H. L. Mencken Society,⁴⁰ a right-wing group that has been labeled as a white nationalist organization by the Southern Poverty Law Center.⁴¹ The leadership of the Alternative Right movement, self-identified as the Alt-Right,⁴² is concerned the idea that society is fundamentally divided into competing groups and the success of their group—the white

³⁹ Ibid, 4.

⁴⁰ Alexandra Minna Stern, *Proud Boys and the White Ethnostate: How the Alt-Right is Warping the American Imagination* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2020), 5.

⁴¹ Ryan Lenz, “White Nationalist Academics Gather This Weekend for H.L. Mencken Club Annual Meeting,” Southern Poverty Law Center, November 1, 2013, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2013/11/01/white-nationalist-academics-gather-weekend-hl-mencken-club-annual-meeting>.

⁴² The Alternative Right has no official membership. It is a loose conglomeration of people who identify with a set of beliefs and have attached themselves to the title “Alt-Right.” They are united by common events and similar beliefs.

race—is of primary concern. On its face, one may assume that the group is merely an offshoot of the conservative wing of American politics. However, the leadership flatly rejects contemporary Republican conservatism on the basis that it is too liberal for their agenda. Conservatism accepts constitutional government, liberty, and morality, among other values, as universal and equally accessible to all people regardless of class, race, gender, or religion. Because of the acceptance of nonwhites as a personhood deserving of equal status in America, the main influencers in the movement see the popular Republican brand of conservatism as too soft and lenient on the survival of white Americans. They reject major premises of the Republican conservative moment, including moral traditionalism, economic liberty, and a strong national defense,⁴³ in large part because it regards democracy as inherently flawed. The Alt-Right “represents the first new philosophical competitor in the West to democratic liberalism, broadly defined, since the fall of communism.”⁴⁴

There are four basic tenets that comprise the splintered movement: a rejection of liberal democracy, white racialism, anti-Americanism, and vitriolic rhetoric. The first tenet holds that all men are not created equal, equating liberal political principles with the eradication of the natural order of white supremacy. Second, white racialism is the idea that society can be held firm and orderly if and only if the white race is dominant. Third, Alt-Right leadership rejects America because, as racial equality has been a progressive and popular goal in American society, importantly among the conservative wing, they see

⁴³ George Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 4.

⁴⁴ Thomas J. Main, *The Rise of the Alt-Right* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), kindle, location 182.

a decline in white dominance that “no longer merits the allegiance of its white citizens.”⁴⁵ Lastly, vitriolic rhetoric is one of the main tools the movement uses to provoke admiration among its base and hatred among its countermovement. Fringe elements use unrestrained language to reject the standard code of ethics, playing with “racebaiting, coarse ethnic humor, prejudicial stereotyping, vituperative criticism, and the flaunting of extremist symbols.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the Alt-Right is not monolithic and each figurehead has different factors they see as key in the movement.

The most well-known figure of the Alt-Right is Richard B. Spencer, who projected himself to be the face of the Alt Right. He was born into an affluent family in 1978 and grew up in Texas. An intellectual like Oliver and Pierce, Spencer attended the University of Virginia where he majored in music history and English. He then went on to receive his Master of Arts in the Humanities from the University of Chicago, after which he attempted a PhD in modern European intellectual history from Duke University. In 2007, after dropping out of Duke’s PhD program, Spencer took a position at *American Conservative* magazine as an assistant editor, from which he was fired for having views that were too radical for the publication’s values.⁴⁷ of the Alt-Right. He claimed to have invented the term “Alternative Right” and was willing to be the public face for it. This is noteworthy because most Alt-Right podcasters and writers prefer to remain anonymous, being content under pseudonyms. Spencer has been willing to communicate with journalists and make public statements regarding the movement,

⁴⁵ Ibid, 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, “Richard Bertrand Spencer,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 2020, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/richard-bertrand-spencer-0>.

despite the possibility of financial ruin coming from being associated with the radical ideation. He became more famous among the white nationalist cohort in 2008 after becoming editor of a webzine called *Taki's Magazine*, which became a source of controversial journalism after he had taken over, allowing white nationalists a voice. After leaving the position in 2009, he began his own website called *Alternative Right*. Spencer's website not only focused on race, but on foreign policy, economics, and culture as well. He was not explicitly aiming for a white nationalist label for his website, but it was certainly headed in that direction.

After handing over editorial control of *Alternative Right* in 2012, Spencer became president of a conservative think tank, the National Policy Institute (NPI).⁴⁸ The NPI's mission statement aims to “elevate the consciousness of whites, ensure our biological and cultural continuity, and protect our civil rights. The institute...will study the consequences of the ongoing influx that non-Western populations pose to our national identity.”⁴⁹ The publishing sector of the NPI, Washington Summit Publishers, allows publications from known white nationalists like Jared Taylor, editor of *American Renaissance* journal, and Sam Francis, former editor of the *Council of Conservative Citizens'* newsletter. In that same year, Spencer created his own publishing company called *Radix Journal*, a website whose contributors include the notoriously antisemitic Kevin MacDonald. In 2017, Spencer left *Radix Journal* to launch AltRight.com, creating a conglomeration of white nationalists spanning the United States and Europe.

⁴⁸ George Hawley, *The Alt Right: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 20-21.

⁴⁹ Southern Poverty Law Center, “Richard Bertrand Spencer.”

What is notable about Spencer's time in the academic world was the development of his fascination with Friedrich Nietzsche, the 19th-century German philosopher who was skeptical of democracy and egalitarianism, which would greatly influence Spencer's outlook on race, religion, and politics. One of the main effects of Nietzsche on Spencer was his view on Christianity, that it was a religion meant to enslave the masses and console the weak. Spencer, at one point, claimed he was "red-pilled" by Nietzsche,⁵⁰ which is a term used by the Alt-Right to have a sort of "eureka" moment, taken from the movie *The Matrix*. Though similar in the view of his predecessors that Christianity was a weak point for white race, Spencer's reasoning was not as much to do with Christianity being a Jewish conspiracy intent on white genocide. Instead, Spencer interpreted and absorbed Nietzsche's work as a testament to a dark truth that "modern pieties about race, peace, equality, justice, civility, universal suffrage"—all Christian values—were merely constructed truths, and there is no capital-T "Truth," as Christianity claims.⁵¹ In *The Genealogy of Morality*, the work to which Spencer attributes much of his enlightened views, Nietzsche breaks down the intellectual justifications for Christianity's supposed truths. He argues that Christianity upended classical Roman values like strength, will, and nobility of spirit, instead replacing them with ideas of egalitarianism, community, and other humanitarian values. He goes on to say that this is when Western civilization took a giant shift towards democratization, which prioritized the weak over the strong and denigrated the individual.⁵² The Alt-Right leadership, similar to their twentieth century

⁵⁰ Graeme Wood, "His Kampf," *The Atlantic*, June 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/06/his-kampf/524505/>.

⁵¹ Sean Illing "The Alt-Right is Drunk on Bad Readings of Nietzsche. The Nazis Were Too." Vox, December 30, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/2017/8/17/16140846/alt-right-nietzsche-richard-spencer-nazism>.

⁵² Ibid.

predecessors, is obsessed with the idea of the decline of the West, or what they consider a degenerate culture. Spencer, a self-proclaimed atheist, found this anti-Christian argument deeply compelling, but paradoxically believed that it was Christendom that united Europe and created white identity.

Another face of the Alt-Right, Andrew Anglin, editor of the *Daily Stormer*—a website visited more than 900,000 times each month—gives what he interprets the movement’s core pillars to be: antisemitism, wherein Jews are fundamentally opposed to the white race and Western civilization and thus must be completely removed from Western society; white countries for white people, the end goal being mass deportation of all nonwhite immigrants out of predominantly white countries globally (i.e. sending African Americans back to Africa, Asians back to Asia, etc); scientific racism, implying a disbelief that all races are inherently equal; opposition to gender equality; endorsement of white history, teaching that white people are the creators and maintainers of Western history; cultural normalization, taking authoritarian reign over societal ills like pornography and drug usage; commonsense economics, or physically removing Jews to support free market socialism; and understanding that the white struggle is a global battle between whites and Jews.⁵³ Anglin is notable for his blatant antisemitism, publishing articles titled along the lines of “Jew Admits Dreams of Defiling Aryan Blood.”⁵⁴ He is a significant Alt-Right figure in the neo-Nazi branch.

Alt-Right figure Greg Johnson is noteworthy for his promotion of highbrow white nationalism through his position as editor of *Counter-Currents Publishing*. Johnson is

⁵³ Main, *Rise of the Alt-Right*, 98.

⁵⁴ Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right*, 14.

most well-associated with the North American New Right (NANR), an ideology linked to his publishing website. He runs his organization with the mindset that all those in academia, publishing, arts, and media are enemies to the white nationalist cause, thus using his books, articles, and podcasts to advance a certain brand of white nationalism appealing to those that feel ostracized by mainstream society. Although he admits that his work is largely aimed at those “whose IQ is superior to 120,”⁵⁵ *Counter-Currents* is quite popular among the Alt-Right and other white nationalists. He is a prototypical Alt-Right figure, rejecting liberalism and claiming that “You can’t have a functioning society consisting of bureaucrats, academics, welfare parasites, Jews, coloreds, feminists, fruit juice drinkers, and assorted busybodies.”⁵⁶ This is significant firstly because the article published by *Counter-Currents* in which this quote appeared is titled “Why Conservatives STILL Can’t Win,” meaning that Johnson blames the ills of society on the fact that America is not an ultra-conservative monolithic white ethnostate run by an authoritarian regime. He believes that white nationalism is bound to occur because terms like “diversity” and “multiculturalism” are synonymous with the ethnic-cleansing of the white race. Secondly, this is significant in regard to the Alt-Right and antisemitism because it once again elucidates the idea that Jews specifically have a disparate amount of power in the way that America functions. Likewise, Johnson claims in another publication of his that,

As for the Jews...At the very least, all their property should be confiscated. At the very least. There are two reasons for this. First, we should consider reparations. Second, if they were allowed to keep their wealth, they would immediately use it to stir up trouble against us. Just look at what happened when Adolf Hitler, with the typical excess of

⁵⁵ Southern Poverty Law Center, “Greg Johnson,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed November 2020, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/greg-johnson>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

kindness that was his greatest flaw, allowed the Jews of Germany to emigrate with their fortunes.⁵⁷

This belief that, one, Hitler was a benefactor to Germany, and two, that Jews are disproportionately wealthy, powerful, and troublesome, is a common thread among Alt-Right ideology, dating back to the mid-twentieth century. Much of his republished articles come from explicit white nationalists and antisemites, including Ben Klassen, William Pierce, and George Lincoln Rockwell.

Each figurehead interprets their mission differently, nonetheless united by a belief that there can be no peaceful coexistence between competing identity groups. In line with their frequently vulgar language, the Alt-Right refers to conservatives as “cuckservatives,” or a “white (non-Jewish) conservative who is not racially aware.”⁵⁸ Richard Spencer claimed that “Whether you want to identify with race, race identifies with you. You are part of something bigger than yourself. Race has history to it.”⁵⁹ The Alt-Right, at its core, extends beyond the racial prejudice of the mid-twentieth century and prior. Its ideological sources incorporate a complete rejection of American political principles in conjunction with a twisted reverence for racial populism. The movement’s leadership is paradoxical in that it wants something that has never practically existed before, but also draws from the rewritten history of white triumph. It both seeks success from the past but also carries grievances from parts of history that were in fact dominated by the white race, and continue to be. The United States has never seen a movement that

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right*, 95.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 62.

rejects large swaths of its racial conquest so widely, ignoring the fact that the country still runs on white supremacy.

Regardless of disagreement among key Alt-Right figures over the goals of the movement, there was a general agreement that, in order to be successful, they would have to create a new face and get rid of overt racist symbols like Nazi insignias and KKK white hoods. They agreed that selling the Alt-Right brand superseded the importance of donning racist symbolism in a public manner. Two events sparked this realization: the “Hailgate” episode in 2016 and the Unite the Right rally in 2017. “Hailgate” refers to the event held by NPI after the 2016 presidential election to celebrate Trump’s victory, when about two hundred attendees raised their arms in a Nazi salute and shouted “Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!”⁶⁰ Many Alt-Rightists, including Spencer—the speaker the audience was saluting—shrugged off the poor optics as simple irony, something “normies,” or those unaffiliated with the movement, just could not understand. RamZPaul, a popular Alt-Right vlogger, explained in 2016 that the movement “was fundamentally identity politics for our people without the neo-nazi [sic] baggage.”⁶¹ The August 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and its subsequent “failure” in actually uniting members of the far-right, was recognized by Alt-Rightists as a major blow to the movement. This was in part due to the fact that one of the protestors decided to run his car through a crowd of counterprotesters, killing one and injuring many more. Paradoxically, however, intense criticism of the neo-Nazi wing of the Alt-

⁶⁰ Stern, *Proud Boys*, 6.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 5.

Right encouraged circulation of its message and the images that accompany it, helping the movement break into public discourse.

It is important to understand the ideology of the Alt-Right leadership as both a continuation and a deviation from the mid-twentieth century white nationalist discourse. What is carried over from their antecedents, notably Revilo P. Oliver and William Pierce, is deeply-rooted antisemitism and conspiracies about Jewish power. There is a similar rejection of conservatism, both groups of men understanding American conservative political values to be too weak to sustain the white race. Further, there is a rejection of Christian values as denigrating to the white race, believing that ideas like community and charity favor the weak over the strong, and that the universalism associated with Christianity is a means for minorities to get the upper hand and promote multiculturalism. These two groups of white nationalists have intellectual backgrounds from which they drew their conclusions about the place of the white race in society, using classical literature and history to bolster their claims about white ethno-states, the supremacy of white people, and scientific racism.

However, the leadership is quite different from its predecessors in a number of ways. Firstly, there is less of an emphasis on the rejection of Judeo-Christianity as a principle, largely because in the twenty-first century, Judeo-Christian discourse is not nearly as often used as a political tool to fight communism and the United States has become increasingly secular. Instead of rejecting religion on antisemitic grounds, many leaders of the Alt-Right are admittedly atheistic and reject religion, specifically Christianity, on the basis that it does not serve white racial advancement and the values associated with it are in fact partially contributing to white genocide. Nevertheless, there

is an understanding by some leaders such as Richard Spencer that Christianity is important because it is what united white Europeans. Further, though there is a shared anti-Americanism, the reasoning for it is different. For Oliver and Pierce, they were deterred by the Judeo-Christian rhetoric surrounding American civic identity during the mid-to-late twentieth century. On the other hand, the Alt-Right leadership is anti-American because they believe that the American political system is dangerous for the white race, instead preferring various forms of authoritarianism. There is also a transnational European component to the contemporary leadership that did not exist with their mid-twentieth century counterparts.

Most importantly for this study, there is the difference in forms of antisemitism. Both Oliver and Pierce approached their prejudice from a predominantly religious standpoint, believing that Jews are responsible for the denigration of Christianity, and subsequently for the denigration of American society. They supported their claims through their own publications, each writing a number of books centering around Jewish conspiracies and the weakness of right-wing politics in ensuring the survival of the white race in the face of growing Jewish-controlled American multiculturalism. Though many of these works, most notably *The Turner Diaries*, had a significant effect on the development of Alt-Right ideology in the twenty-first century, the Alt-Right's version of antisemitism took form on the internet and differed in the types of rhetoric used to advance it. The Alt-Right, broadly speaking, prefers to use humor at the base of their antisemitism such that it can break the taboo of public prejudice and enter mainstream discourse. Its leadership has helped to advance that agenda by being the public face for it.

Breaking into the Mainstream: The Alt-Right and Antisemitism

Alt-Right ideology, though in part stemming from mid-twentieth century white nationalism, had taken a form all its own by the 2010s. The internet created a chimera of ideas that came together under the Alt-Right umbrella, melded by leaders like Richard Spencer and brought into national conversation with events like “Hailgate” and the Unite the Right rally. Media coverage acted as an expedient for the white nationalist cause, especially when politicians began to address the emerging ideology as a threat. In August 2016, Hillary Clinton gave a speech in which she referred to the Alt-Right as “race-baiting...anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant, anti-woman,”⁶² acknowledging the “radical fringe” as mixing with Republican politics. Unknowingly, Clinton empowered the group to expand their ideas and membership. The question becomes, then, how was the Alt-Right’s version of antisemitism able to enter mainstream discourse in the face of growing public opposition?

Beginning with the use of the term in the late 2010s, the Alt-Right leadership stresses the importance of looking and acting “normal”—they believe they will gain more followers with clean haircuts, suits, and proper journalism, in contrast to appearing as militants or branding swastikas on their sleeves. This is referred to as highbrow white nationalism, or the practice of avoiding the violence and vulgar symbolism of groups like the Klan, instead propagating white nationalism through quasi-scholarly journals, books, and websites. The people associated with this tend to have an intellectual background. Their language typically avoids the use of racial slurs and other overt forms of racism.⁶³

⁶² Abby Ohlheiser and Caitlin Dewey, “Hillary Clinton’s alt-right speech, annotated,” *The Washington Post*, August 25, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/08/25/hillary-clintons-alt-right-speech-annotated/>.

⁶³ Hawley, *The Alt-Right*, 6.

This is critical, as it demonstrates the continuation of the sort of logic behind William Pierce and the National Alliance's shirking off of Nazi symbolism because they believed it to be too harsh and off-putting. In place of overt racism, the Alt-Right employs literary devices in order to advance their prejudice.

Alt-Right adherents, both leadership and those on the ground, popularize antisemitism through the rhetorical devices of irony, satire, and parody.⁶⁴ In this thesis, irony refers to a statement's literal meaning differing from its intended meaning, typically involving an attitude toward both what is said and what is written between the lines. Parody, which can use irony, is an imitation of the style of a specific piece of artwork or literature using deliberate exaggeration for comedic effect. Lastly, satire can include both irony and parody to make light of a subject, and is often political. Alt-Rightists use all three of these rhetorical devices to cloak their antisemitism. The inability to tell the difference between sincerity and satire allows antisemitism to filter into public discourse. Humor is at the base of the Alt-Right's terminology, allowing them to use racist "jokes" that challenge the norms of the greater public, using a sideways approach to couch their prejudice in seemingly benign forms. How did the Alt-Right break the taboo of antisemitism? Despite the ambiguity of Jewish identity and the presence of Jews within conservative circles challenging an easy transition towards antisemitism, the Alt-Right and its leadership has changed the face of American bigotry.

Alt-Rightists online are able to function without legal repercussion because they exploit the weaknesses of the internet to spread online hate, riding the tide of popularity created by the public faces of the movement. Trolling, or the act of promoting discord on

⁶⁴ Viveca S. Greene, "'Deplorable' Satire: Alt-Right Memes, White Genocide Tweets, and Redpilling Normies," *Studies in American Humor* (2019).

the internet merely for the sake of entertainment, is the most frequently used method. Alt-Right adherents and leadership both seek to disrupt the political and social status quo, therefore trolls use whatever loopholes in the internet they can to create fear, hatred, and distrust of American institutions and popular figures. Online hatred is facilitated by the social platforms themselves, allowing trolls to engage with their targets purely to provoke conflict. For a troll, simply getting the attention of a target is considered a success. Because social media is global, trolling can be seen by anyone anywhere, which is often the goal—the more people who witness the interaction, the better. Baiting journalists into following fake stories is a popular means of achieving this discord. For example, trolls promoted the idea that the “okay” hand symbol was a secret code for “White Power” because the three fingers form a “W” and the thumb, index finger, and forearm form a “P.”⁶⁵ These trolls often conceal their extreme racism and antisemitism under the guise of irony, creating a smokescreen with their code words and memes, or viral cultural symbols.

Alt-Rightists oftentimes manage their antisemitism by treating it as a joke. For example, Alt-Right trolls crashed a university contest for Holocaust art by posting in the article’s comments section, telling absurd stories about their families’ experience in the Holocaust. One comment stated: “All six of my grandmothers were survivors. They avoided being gassed by playing alto saxophone and electric piano solos for the guards while hiding in a pile of rubble.”⁶⁶ Nevertheless, these sorts of irreverent comments are

⁶⁵ Hawley, *What Everyone Needs to Know*, 109.

⁶⁶ Main, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right*, 25.

rampant all over the internet because there is no way to monitor it. There is no way to censor satirical commentary. Further, freedom of speech limits any sort of legal backlash.

The act of turning prejudice and hatred into a joke is further illustrated by Alt-Right figures changing its terminology such that it is nearly untraceable. For instance, Alt-Right trolls have referred to African Americans as “googles” and Jews as “skypes,” terms that are part of common vernacular and obviously cannot be banned from the internet. When online platforms like Facebook and Twitter try to block Alt-Rightists from posting hateful comments, trolls find new backdoors through which to channel their discussions. Online sites like 4chan, 8chan (now defunct), and Reddit have sub-pages which trolls can spread various racist and antisemitic memes without repercussion because the “rules” of the websites and the freedom of speech clause make it such that racist and antisemitic memes can trend without access to its source.

One of the most popular memes of the Alt-Right is Pepe the Frog, or a green cartoon frog that on its face seems innocent enough. However, the Alt-Right leadership adopted it as a sort of mascot for that very reason. It first appeared as a comic strip on MySpace in 2005, often depicted acting out vulgar behavior, despite the anthropomorphic frog not being inherently violent or racist in character. However, the frog meme became popular among online anonymous platforms like 4chan and Reddit, characterized more and more in racist and antisemitic contexts. It is now easy to find Pepe the frog in Nazi regalia, donned in shirts with racial slurs, or wearing the white hats of the Ku Klux Klan, for example. The internet-savvy Alt-Rightists exploit the ignorance of the general public to spread racist memes like Pepe the frog, knowing that their images will be seen globally.

Another common symbol of the Alt-Right is the number 1488. The “14” stands for the “Fourteen Words,” or the white supremacist slogan “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.”⁶⁷ The “88” stands for “Heil Hitler,” as H is the eighth letter in the English alphabet. This term was coined by David Lane, a famous neo-Nazi popular among the more extreme fringes of the Alt-Right. “1488” is a ubiquitous symbol within the white nationalist movement because it is a general endorsement of the movement’s beliefs. This symbol manifests in graffiti, tattoos, screen names, and email addresses, among other outlets. It is simple to overlook this symbol as just a random series of numbers, which is what makes it so easy for Alt-Rightists to spread their message under the radar.

Another form of Alt-Right symbolism used to specifically single out Jews is the use of the echo, or three parentheses. Using the echo is supposed to symbolize to those in the Alt-Right who is Jewish, or what is a Jewish concept.⁶⁸ It began as an audio effect on the Alt-Right podcast *The Daily Shoah*—an echo sound would play behind the mention of a Jewish or Jewish-sounding surname. The Alt-Right blog *The Right Stuff* explained that “All Jewish surnames echo throughout history. The echoes repeat the sad tale as they communicate the emotional lessons of our great white sins, imploring us to Never Forget the 6 GoRillion.”⁶⁹ This quote is representative of the Alt-Right’s lack of belief and respect in regard to the Holocaust, hence the play on the word “million” and the clear sarcasm behind “our great white sins”. Noticed by Jewish journalists, the purpose of the parentheses was to shed light on the core belief that Jews are overrepresented in media

⁶⁷ Mike Wendling, *Alt-Right: From 4chan to the White House* (London: Pluto Press, 2018), 76.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

and academia. For example, an Alt-Rightist may write out (((Albert Einstein))), indicating him as a Jew. Further, it may be used around a term that is seen among the far-right as synonymous with Jews, like (((banker))). This sort of symbolism is often seen on platforms like Twitter, and has made it to the mainstream Twitter feed by using simple punctuation marks. An Alt-Rightist even produced a google plug-in called the “Coincidence Detector,” which automatically put the echo around “Jewish-sounding names”—this plug-in was downloaded by the thousands.⁷⁰ Some of the journalists that have had the echo around their name have received death threats and photoshopped images of them in concentration camps. This is part of the greater conspiratorial message among the Alt-Right ideologues that Jews hold disproportionate power over the world. Explained by the editor of *The Right Stuff*, “The inner parenthesis represents the Jews’ subversion of the home [and] destruction of the family through mass-media degeneracy. The next [parenthesis] represents the destruction of the nation through mass immigration, and the outer [parenthesis] represents international Jewry and world Zionism.”⁷¹ The popularization of the echo is indicative of the widespread antisemitism on the internet.

During the 2016 Presidential campaign, Alt-Right leaders sought out something to help break the mainstream. They wanted specific talking points and slogans to rally around and profit off of populist anger as well as a Facebook-friendly media presence. Most of all, they wanted a political candidate to be the face of their beliefs.⁷² On Reddit, one user made a message board called r/The_Donald, which became a site for supporters to post pro-Trump propaganda. Different from 4chan, the messages and images on this

⁷⁰ Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right*, 82.

⁷¹ Wendling, *Alt-Right*, 82.

⁷² *Ibid*, 38.

site had an up/down voting system that allowed posts to stay around longer, meaning they would reach a wider audience. In addition to pro-Trump posts, users posted “data” about what they perceived as pressing issues, like black-on-white crime or crimes committed by immigrants. One of the headlines posted by a user was titled “Bombshell report dropped in France! 33% of young Muslims there support terrorist scum! French media frozen in terror as they refuse to release full results of survey till after election! Spread it around boys!”⁷³ Clearly messages like this are meant to propagate fear and populist anger amongst anti-immigration conservative users who feel that their identity was under attack. This sort of hatred convinced far-right Americans that their country was under invasion by terrorists and criminals, and Trump’s rhetoric proved to be their source of empowerment. From r/The_Donald, these sorts of messages and images made their way onto Twitter and other social media platforms, eventually making their way to Trump’s own Twitter account. From there, they reached mainstream media.

The Trump administration has had a powerful role in galvanizing the Alt-Right leadership and its supporters. Donald Trump illuminated right-wing populism in America, which is predicated on “producerism”—the working class “producers” of America are tormented by an evil elite suppressing them from above, and those reliant on welfare and government benefits from below.⁷⁴ This dynamic of perceived oppression of the working class creates a specific brand of hostility threaded with nativism. His ascendancy to power sowed disorder in the American psyche, especially within those who had already had deep-seated nativist tendencies. These longtime nativists saw Trump

⁷³ Ibid, 57.

⁷⁴ David A. Neiwert, *Alt America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump* (London, England: Verso, 2018), kindle, location 90.

as their way out, a way to rid the country of what they saw as the threat of white racial extermination.⁷⁵ Trump was the bandwagon that the radical right could jump on, now able to throw their weight behind a powerful figure who promised change. This new figure created an opening for the faces of the Alt-Right to enter and manipulate. When Trump kicked off his campaign spewing hateful and racist commentary, like calling Mexicans rapists and drug dealers, those leaders knew they found their saving grace—the one thing that would carry their brand of racism and bigotry all the way to the White House. According to Richard Spencer,

He was the man, he was changing everything, he was doing things for us, he couldn't be stopped. I was definitely excited. The Alt-Right felt unified with average Trump supporters. I could walk around with a Trump hat on...and get a slap on the back and a pat on the back from an average person. For what I'm doing, which is quote "far-right" politics, that's not something that normally happens.⁷⁶

Many other Alt-Rightists referred to Trump as the "God Emperor,"⁷⁷ a hero-figure they could finally throw their support behind politically, someone who was outspoken about their beliefs. This "God-Emperor" figure is manifested in memes of Trump in golden armor, as a Roman centurion, or, most ironically, of Trump depicted as Jesus.⁷⁸ 4chan's /pol/ message board "saved America," according to one Alt-Rightist.⁷⁹ Through Donald Trump, the Alt-Right was able to enter into electoral politics. However, they had to find a way to mainstream their message to make it more palatable and attractive to a wider audience.

⁷⁵ Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right*, 115.

⁷⁶ Wendling, *Alt-Right*, v.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Due to the fact that there were few qualified right-wing figures in Washington at the time of Trump's election that aligned with his populist ideation, he selected three men, all of whom are associated with the Alt-Right: Steve Bannon, Stephen Miller, and Sebastian Gorka. Steve Bannon, Trump's former top advisor and chief strategist, is the most notable of these three men for the purposes of discussing antisemitism. Bannon, former head of Breitbart News, claimed that the news platform was a platform for the Alt-Right. This is significant because Bannon's acceptance of Breitbart into the White House gave the Alt-Right a gateway into policy-making, including supporting policies like Trump's Border Wall. Although Bannon denied the Alt-Right as inherently racist or antisemitic, the mere fact that he has allowed Alt-Right voices into Breitbart News speaks volumes. Further, Bannon even published an article written by Milo Yiannopoulos, a famous Alt-Right figure. Once Bannon was appointed as Trump's chief strategist, a number of infamous white nationalists and supremacists cheered, including David Duke—a neo-Nazi, longtime Klan leader, and international spokesperson for Holocaust denial—as well as Jared Taylor of *American Renaissance* and Brad Griffin of *Occidental Dissent*. Lastly, in line with the Alt-Right, Bannon is a fierce critic of mainstream conservatism and progressivism. Although there are no obvious antisemitic quotes attributed to Bannon, his leadership of Breitbart News and later appointment to a position in the Trump administration gave the Alt-Right ideology a way into mainstream politics. After Trump was elected, Breitbart News and the Alt-Right took off. Breitbart was getting access to the White House that other media outlets did not have because its former executive editor was acting as Trump's top advisor. The anti-establishment right

had taken such a strong liking to the new president because he defended their greatest insecurities by turning them into his platform.

Whether he knew it or not, one of the ways Donald Trump championed for the Alt-Right was through his Twitter account. After retweeting a meme of him depicted as Pepe the frog, Alt-Rightists cheered because one of their “jokes” had made it onto the page of the most powerful politician in the world. On the *Daily Stormer*, Anglin stated, “Jews, Blacks, and lesbians will be leaving America if Trump gets elected—and he’s happy about it. This alone is enough reason to put your entire heart and soul into supporting this man.”⁸⁰ Trump’s rhetoric empowered his followers to abandon their much-hated “political correctness” and openly spout out their racial and religious hatred. They were able to freely jump aboard inane conspiracy theories spread by famous conspiracists like Alex Jones, claiming that liberals had been brainwashed by “globalists”—an Alt-Right moniker for Jews—and that Trump was the best man to take on this global elite.⁸¹ In an act of overt antisemitism, unknowingly or not, Trump tweeted on July 2, 2016 “Crooked Hillary—Makes History!” next to a meme that was crudely mocking Clinton’s campaign graphic design. The slogan was put over an image of Clinton, a pile of cash, and a star that could only be interpreted as the Star of David, with the caption “Most Corrupt Candidate Ever”.⁸² Prior to this incident, Trump had retweeted a significant amount of people whose profiles clearly mentioned the conspiratorial “white genocide” theory—one of the handles that he retweeted was called

⁸⁰ Southern Poverty Law Center, “Andrew Anglin,” <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/andrew-anglin>.

⁸¹ Neiwert, *Alt-America*, location 5238.

⁸² Wendling, 198.

“@WhiteGenocideTM”.⁸³ Matthew Heimbach, a young identitarian who set up a “White Students Union” at his university, eventually setting up a Traditionalist Youth Network, wrote:

While Donald Trump is neither a Traditionalist nor a White nationalist, he is a threat to the economic and social powers of the international Jew. For this reason alone as long as Trump stands strong on deportation and immigration enforcement we should support his candidacy insofar as we can use it to push more hardcore positions on immigration and Identity. Donald Trump is not the savior of Whites in America, he is however a booming salvo across the bow of the Left and Jewish power to tell them that White America is awakening, and we are tired of business as usual. The march to victory will not be won by Donald Trump in 2016, but this could be the stepping stone we need to then radicalize millions of White working- and middle-class families to the call to truly begin a struggle for Faith, family and folk.⁸⁴

It is evident to the far-right that Trump is on their side when slogans of theirs like “white genocide” come to the platform of the most powerful man in the world.

The Future of the Alt-Right

Developments over the past few years have rearranged the cast of the Alt-Right. Richard Spencer, seen as the de facto leader of the movement, has faced serious legal backlash following the August 2017 Unite the Right rally, and has been seen among the movement as “radioactive” and a “blowhard who sidled up to déclassé agitators and made tactical errors.”⁸⁵ RamZPaul rebuked Spencer on his YouTube channel for “Hailgate” and for aligning with the Daily Stormer and Andrew Anglin. He claimed to have warned Spencer about the dangers of associating with “Hollywood Nazis.”⁸⁶ The Unite the Right rally was thought to be doomed from the beginning by some prominent

⁸³ Ibid, 195.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 198.

⁸⁵ Stern, *Proud Boys*, 115.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Alt-Rightists—they saw no coherent message among the iconography used to advertise the event. Spencer’s ventures, including his website and the publishing wing of the NPI, have seen little activity since 2017. He has been banned from twenty-six European countries, and has become a pariah in the United States. Although Spencer has over 70,000 Twitter followers and occasionally appears on various Alt-Rightist’s YouTube channels, he is “more character actor than leading man.”⁸⁷ He is respected as a foundational figure and is still admired by some, but his momentum has been lost and replaced by such figures as RamZPaul and Nick Fuentes—the leader of the up-and-coming groyper movement. The void left by Spencer has led some to believe that the Alt-Right has peaked. However, it is more accurate to say that the movement has come full circle, back to where it was in 2015, “before the boom of 2016, the bust of 2017, and the triage of 2018.”⁸⁸ The movement nevertheless has expanded horizontally, gaining traction among private online chatrooms and secret Facebook groups.

The figures of the Alt-Right have never before faced the severe media scrutiny, legal prosecution, and negative press that they face now, which has been worsened by the movement’s

“penchant for eating its own, internecine backstabbing, and testosterone-charged power plays.”⁸⁹ Alt-Rightists themselves complain about the movement’s tendency to “purity

spiral,” or take zero-sum game positions on points of contention like the “Jewish

Question” or “Women Question,” creating paranoia and ideological “claustrophobia.”

Much of the fall-out following the Unite the Right rally forced the Alt-Right to

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 116.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 7.

decentralize, and many of the movement's followers have been pushing for using terms such as "dissident right," "affirmative right," or "ethnonationalist" instead of "Alt-Right."⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the movement has been unable to shake the damning phrase. Puzzlingly, reporting conflating neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and the Alt-Right has brought Alt-Right discourse into the mainstream, leading many adherents to be more optimistic than ever. Leading figures believe that their "nameless movement" can capitalize on the current political polarization, claiming that things are moving in the right direction.⁹¹ The movement is gaining young followers globally, which has been apparent when Alt-Right figures have gone on speaking tours in Europe only to find "young, attractive, accomplished, well-informed people who see the world identically,"⁹² indicative of the ever-increasing popularity of their ideologies. Figures are celebrating the coming birth of the Alt-Right 2.0 as long as it sheds off the stain of neo-Nazism.⁹³

The Alt-Right's message has attracted the interest of many white Americans. According to researcher George Hawley, six percent, or eleven million out of two hundred million white Americans would self-identify as white nationalists.⁹⁴ Hawley found three questions that could be connected with Alt-Right sympathy: "1) a strong sense of white identity, 2) a belief in white solidarity, and 3) a feeling of white victimization."⁹⁵ It was further found that the strongest correlations with these sentiments were among populations with low-income levels (\$29,000 or less per year), no college

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid, 116,

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 117.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

degree, and who were divorced; respondents over sixty-five years old were the most likely to take these statements personally.⁹⁶ Strangely, white women were more likely than white men to identify with these beliefs—strange because much of the Alt-Right belief system is predicated upon white women as “damsels in distress”—which highlights the appeal of ideas of heritage, ancestry, and racial preservation. In a study done by Reuters/Ipsos in collaboration with the University of Virginia in 2017, 31% of the 5,360 adults surveyed believed that “America must protect and preserve its White European heritage,” while 59% believed that “political correctness” stands in the way of freedom of speech.⁹⁷ Based on this data, it is safe to say that Alt-Right ideology is comparably pervasive in American society and sees no sign of abating.

The result of the depopularization of the term “Alt-Right” among white nationalists has led to a new group in 2020—the “groyper,” or the younger white nationalists’ attempt to “unite America First conservatives, Christians, anti-globalists and nationalists.”⁹⁸ This has been a direct response to the Trump administration’s vitriolic, racist, and bigoted language. The “Groyper Wars” is the 2020 version of the Alt-Right leadership’s desire to mainstream white nationalism. This movement was started by Nick Fuentes, a young YouTuber known for his “America First” podcast, as well as Patrick Casey of what was formerly known as Identity Evropa, now called the American Identity Movement. The concept behind the “Groyper Wars” is not new, but rather an elucidation

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 118.

⁹⁸ Charles Tanner and Devin Burghart, “From Alt-Right to Groyper,” (IREHR, 2020), <https://www.irehr.org/reports/alt-right-to-groyper/>.

of the latest trial strategy used by white nationalists to gain ground in the American mainstream political and social sphere.

The groypers are a dangerous group because they took the racism and bigotry of the Alternative Right and are now using it to bolster Trump's base and "Trumpism," furthering the gap between mainstream conservatism and the far—now moving further—right. Like the Alt-Right, groypers are interested in "entryism," or "gaining a place in more mainstream organizations by moderating one's appearance and expressed values in order to further movement goals."⁹⁹ At a Groypers Leadership Summit in late 2019, one of the leaders of the movement expressed one of their goals as finding a presidential candidate to groom to go beyond the pale of Trumpism—one that will take pure white nationalism into the 2024 presidential race. The groypers can also be considered, and have referred to themselves, as a populist movement as well as a staunchly conservative one. None of this is new to the American political and social system, just its most recent iteration. As for antisemitism in the groypers generation, expect similar behavior and rationale. They use the same antisemitic memes, jokes, and employ the same themes, just under a new name.

Conclusion

Much of the Alt-Right's antisemitic inspiration can be dated back to two American pseudo-scholars who began their polemics following World War II and the defeat of fascism alongside the rise of Judeo-Christian rhetoric in American collective identity. Revido P. Oliver took great concern over the growing influence of tri-faith

⁹⁹ Ibid.

cooperation in public discourse, believing Judaism to be an infestation into the success of the West. He saw the message of global peace and community as a farce created by Jews to weaken and eventually exterminate the white race. Christianity, Oliver argued, was in fact the reason America was seeing such racial degradation, and Jews were to at the heart of the conspiracy. Similarly, William L. Pierce wrote Christianity off as a Jewish scheme, instead creating an alternative religion that stressed the supremacy of the white race. Both men were integral in laying the foundational beliefs for the twenty-first century Alt-Right leadership—Oliver was responsible for extrapolating antisemitism from Judeo-Christian rhetoric and amplifying the fear of Jewish influence in American society while Pierce was responsible for instilling antisemitic white supremacist survivalism in the face of a perceived white genocide. Both men actively disentangled their ideologies from conservatism, partially blaming toxic Jewish influence on insufficient action in regard to racial protectionism and white advancement from the political right. Pierce went so far as to theorize his own novel religion, Cosmotheism, as an alternative to Jewish-controlled Christianity, which prioritized the innate supremacy of the white race over the Christian message of universal and unconditional acceptance. Further, Pierce went on to write his own fictional narrative about the takedown of a multiracial American government by a white minority, part of which included murdering American Jews and extinguishing the Israeli state with a nuclear weapon. Both men played a critical role in the Alt-Right's desertion from the conservative political wing, condemnation of Christianity as a Jewish plot to exterminate the white race, and whole-hearted acceptance of antisemitism as a central tenet in their fight for white nationalism. The Alt-Right, a product of sixty years of culture wars, simply picked up the mantle of antisemitism and put it on full display.

However, the Alt-Right leadership deviates from its predecessors in a number of key ways. There is a lack of emphasis on the destructiveness of Judeo-Christianity in white identity because discourse surrounding the term has become much less important since the end of the Cold War. There is still a belief that Jews have a disproportionate amount of power—which is a core component of Alt-Right conspiracy—but there is less weight placed on antisemitic anti-Christianity. Instead, there is a strain of Alt-Right belief that rejects Christianity on the basis of it being damaging to the survival of the white race, prioritizing egalitarian values over individualism. Paradoxically, Alt-Right leaders like Richard Spencer, while rejecting Christian values and oftentimes claiming atheism, place worth in Christianity's historical ability to unite white Europeans. There is also the Nietzschean streak within the movement, which is notable because Nietzsche was also praised by and utilized to justify the Nazi regime. Both Oliver and Pierce came up with their own academic justifications for their versions of white nationalism and antisemitism, publishing numerous influential articles and books. The Alt-Right, while being an intellectual movement in part, is also an internet movement that uses humor in ways its predecessors did not. Its use of the internet sets it apart from its mid-twentieth century antecedents.

The Alt-Right found discrete back channels through which to bring forth their discourse. These back channels come in the form of encrypted chat rooms and firewalls, but also in the form of coded language and literary devices. The Alt-Right has used irony, parody, and satire to elucidate what they acknowledge as a Jewish conspiracy to wipe out the white race, going so far as to deny the Holocaust as a Jewish power grab. The movement has even created its own swastika-brandishing mascot, an anthropomorphic

green frog named Pepe, which has become so widely popular that a former American president retweeted it. The development of these public displays of antisemitism has brought new questions to the table over how far free speech extends, and how intensely are people willing to protect and defend this First Amendment right.

My study of the Alt-Right leading figures and antisemitism in the twenty-first century sheds light on the publicization of racism in America in light of the election of Donald Trump. Although the Alt-Right has become less popular in name, the sentiments that have carried the movement forward are still well in frame. The question becomes, how active of a threat are these ideas? Following the January 6, 2021 Capital Hill riot, led by many people whose belief systems are aligned very closely with the Alt-Right and other far-right extremist groups, there is clearly no end in sight in the discussion of these dangerous ideologies. Far-rightists are fighting for a seat at the table, believing former president Donald Trump to be their saving grace speaking on behalf of their concerns over white genocide and multiculturalism. Partisan politics in the United States will continue until American society erupts into chaos or until some sort of national consensus is reached—the former is much more likely. Far-right militias have felt empowered by the previous administration, stoked by racial division and political polarization. These groups firmly believe that a day of reckoning is coming for the United States, that leftists and other progressives are going to soon be met with resistance. Minorities are under continued threat from right-wing violence, and the American Jewish community over the past decade has seen a notable increase in violent threats and actions against them. It is safe to say that the American Jewish community must remain on high alert.

A few questions stand for further examination. Firstly, what are the current implications of Alt-Right behavior on the American Jewish community? They are under threat, but how much? Secondly, what of other American minority communities—is the Alt-Right an active violent threat, or has the rhetorical mantle been passed along to newer, younger far-right groups? Thirdly, what can the intelligence community do about this? Are there proper avenues which can further examine and address the potential violent threat against American Jews and other minorities, or must we wait and see what happens? This sort of examination, especially in light of the intelligence failure of the January 6 riot, calls for a drastic reevaluation of the ways in which the intelligence community, and the government in general, handle far-right extremism. What can we as average Americans do to protect these communities under threat? Is it enough to simply educate, or must we be active in the fight against racism and prejudice? The latter at this point in time seems to be more pressing as political polarization and racial division shock national identity. The world watches as America fractures itself, leaving us to wonder what is going to happen next.

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