

The Alt-Right and Christianity

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Summary

In this capstone, I will explore the rise and fall of the alt-right movement, discussing how the movement began, the foundations of its politics, and the prominent discourses within the movement surrounding Christianity. I will look at the three major factors affecting the alt-right's view of Christianity: the movement's extreme anti-Semitic views, their understanding of modern Christianity as a deracinated liberal phenomenon causing Western decline, and their rejection of a 'Germanized' Christianity and subsequent adoption of a purely aesthetic brand of historical Christianity. My discussions on each of these factors will include sections on the intellectual figures that influenced the alt-right to better contextualize the movement's political views. I will also discuss the newer white nationalist groups who have superseded the alt-right and how they will affect politics in America going forward.

Thesis Statement

The alt-right movement envisioned itself as an intellectual, multinational white separatist movement that capitalized on the politics of foreign far-right leaders and historical philosophers. While the alt-right was successful in mainstreaming its ideology through the early years of the Trump Administration, the movement has since declined. In this capstone, I will argue that the newer white nationalist groups that have superseded the alt-right in 2019 and 2020, and who pride themselves on their hyper-nationalistic, traditionalist Catholic views, have been able to connect to a culture of right-wing American jingoism, religious zealotry, and anti-globalism in a way that the original alt-right could not due to its anti-Christian views and transnational vision of white nationalism.

I. Introduction

What Was the Alt-Right?

The alt-right or “alternative right” was a white nationalist political movement comprised of multiple far-right ideologies, or as Professor George Hawley better described it, an “atomized, amorphous, predominately online, and mostly anonymous” collective.¹ United by their anti-egalitarian, anti-immigration and explicitly anti-Semitic views, the alt-right was an umbrella term for a range of political identities including (but not limited to) paleoconservatives, anti-interventionists, right-wing libertarians, Neo-Christians, fascists, archeo-futurists, anarcho-capitalists, theocrats, accelerationists and populist nationalists. The alt-right as a large-scale political movement saw “significant gains” in 2015-2016 and by 2017-2018 began to rapidly decline, losing membership and ending as a coherent movement.² Though the leaders of the original movement are still active, the alt-right collective as it was known at the time of the 2017 Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia,³ for all intents and purposes, no longer exists. Richard Spencer – the movement leader credited with first adopting the term “alt-right”⁴ – declaring in August of 2020 that “the MAGA/Alt-Right moment is over.”⁵

At the beginning of the movement, members of the alt-right were brought together by a common interest in an “erudite” approach to race realism and white nationalism, attracted by the

¹ Hawley, George. *Making Sense of the Alt-Right*. Columbia University Press, 2019. 3.

² McCoy, Terrence. “Imploding!: Financial Troubles. Lawsuits. Trailer Park Brawls. Has the Alt-Right Peaked?” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 22 Apr. 2018. Web.

³ The Unite the Right Rally was a gathering of white supremacists in Charlottesville, Virginia to protest the removal of a Robert E. Lee statue in the city’s Market Street Park. The rally was violent, leading to the tragic murder of counter protestor Heather Heyer by alt-right affiliate and white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr.

⁴ “Richard Bertrand Spencer.” Web.

⁵ Palmer, Ewan. “Richard Spencer Backs Joe Biden, Says ‘MAGA/Alt-Right Moment Is over.’” *Newsweek*, Newsweek, 24 Aug. 2020. Web.

promise of becoming a new, powerful subgroup that could reject mainstream conservatism and globalizing capitalism in favor of anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian worldviews.⁶⁷ Inspired by European Nouvelle Droite philosophers like Alain de Benoist, esoteric traditionalists like Julius Evola, and white identitarian historians and authors like Sam Francis and William Pierce, the alt-right viewed human inequality and racism as natural, understanding the “right to difference” – i.e. separatist ethnopluralism – as the only viable solution to saving white identity from burgeoning multiculturalism.⁸ Prominent members of the alt-right like Richard Spencer often focused on the decline of European heritage and the “cultural dispossession” of white people in the West, feeling they had been stripped of their own lands and cultural traditions because of “orthodoxies” caused by liberalism and unrestricted immigration.⁹

The term “alt-right” was first introduced in 2008 by Richard Spencer’s former mentor Paul Gottfried during an address at the H.L. Mencken Club, wherein the paleoconservative philosopher proposed the beginnings of an “independent, intellectual right... something different from the failed establishment right-wing model.”¹⁰ The address, titled “The Decline and Rise of the Alternative Right”, would be the starting point for the alt-right, spearheaded by Richard Spencer: white nationalist leader, creator of AlternativeRight.com and Radix Journal, and head of the National Policy Institute in Washington D.C.¹¹

Identifying an “identitarian” to align himself with far-right white nationalist movements abroad, Richard Spencer created and cultivated a variety of online spaces for the alt-right in the

⁶ Burley, Shane. “The Autumn of the Alt Right.” *Commune*, 21 Feb. 2020. Web.

⁷ Gray, Phillip W. “The Alt-Right: An Introduction (Part I).” Oxford Research Group, 18 Dec. 2018. Web.

⁸ Burley, Shane. Op. Cit. “The Autumn of the Alt Right.”

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Hirsch, Laramie. “A Post-Mortem of the Alt-Right Brand.” *Culture Wars*, Culture Wars, 1 Mar. 2019. Web.

¹¹ “Richard Bertrand Spencer.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Web.

years following Gottfried’s address.¹² Attracting bloggers and commentators from other right and far-right leaning spaces like the “Manosphere”¹³ and “The Dark Enlightenment” or “NeoReactionary Movement”¹⁴, Spencer was able to expand his ranks by appealing to all those who didn’t fall into mainstream Christian conservatism and/or wanted to promote an ‘intellectual’ approach to the politics of white racial solidarity and anti-Judaism.¹⁵

In the formative years of the alt-right, Spencer’s vision for the movement was separatist rather than imperialist, working towards the establishment of separate white ethno-states not only in America but also abroad.¹⁶ Diverging from previous race-identitarian and white supremacist movements that wished to expand their “superior race” and conquer foreign territory, the alt-right in the mid-2010s was more focused on installing the cultural hegemony of whiteness through “metapolitics”, a term describing the movement’s strategy of converting and radicalizing members online via memes and internet discourse. The goal of the alt-right’s metapolitics was to change the dominant discourse surrounding white nationalism and ultimately “shift the Overton window” so that these ideas are considered more socially acceptable in Western society – an ambition that serendipitously aligned with the 2016 election of Donald Trump.¹⁷

¹² Burley, Shane. Op. Cit. “The Autumn of the Alt Right.”

¹³ The Manosphere is a colloquial term referring to ultra-misogynistic, right-wing groups.

¹⁴ Jones, Andrew. “From NeoReactionary Theory to the Alt-Right.” *Critical Theory and the Humanities in the Age of the Alt-Right*, 23 June 2019. 101-120. The Dark Enlightenment – also known as NRx Movement – is an online movement which began in 2007 with American software engineer Curtis Yavin, known online as Mencius Moldbug. The movement is anti-democracy and anti-equality, favoring absolute monarchism and cameralism over liberty. The movement has also been compared to the alt-right (particularly in Andrew Jones’ work cited below) labeled as a neo-fascist and far-right accelerationist ideology.

¹⁵ *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, by Mark J. Sedgwick, Oxford University Press, 2019. 226.

¹⁶ Gray, Phillip W. Op. Cit. “The Alt-Right: An Introduction (Part I).”

¹⁷ Dafaure, Maxime. “The ‘Great Meme War:’ the Alt-Right and Its Multifarious Enemies.” *Angles*, no. 10, 2020.

Who Joined the Alt-Right?

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center’s definition of the movement, the alt-right typically appealed to a younger crowd of white men who rejected the politics of traditional republicanism and spent most of their time online.¹⁸ Those within the alt-right were undoubtedly drawn to the internet, favoring the anonymity, the lack of moderation, and the lack of censorship of ideas.¹⁹ The young age and gender of many alt-right adherents may also have accounted for the notable overlap between alt-right political circles and the previously mentioned “Manosphere” – a collection of websites, forums, and other online spaces that promote anti-feminist, misogynistic rhetoric.²⁰

As author Angela Nagle suggests in her book *Kill All Normies*, the decline of traditional monogamous marriage and the readjustment of the sexual hierarchy to ostensibly favor women in the 21st century has led many young men to feel “anxiety and anger” about their own low ranking in a hierarchy guided by sexual freedom and choice, causing them to embrace radically conservative views towards women.²¹ This has led to the proliferation of the “incel” community online – or “involuntarily celibates” – a group of (typically underage) men who express their sexual frustration by dehumanizing women, often framing women as worthless, slutty, stupid, shallow, hysterical, and – as has been seen with Eliot Rodger and Alek Minassian among others – justly deserving of violent retribution.²²

¹⁸ “Alt-Right.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Web.

¹⁹ Rainie, Lee, et al. “The Future of Free Speech, Trolls, Anonymity and Fake News Online.” *Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech*, Pew Research Center, 27 Aug. 2020. Web.

²⁰ Hawley, George. “The Demography of the Alt-Right.” *Institute for Family Studies*, 9 Aug. 2018. Web.

²¹ Nagle, Angela. *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from Achan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. John Hunt Publishing, 2017. 145.

²² *Ibid.* 163.

The alt-right capitalized on this growing sexual insecurity, mixing anti-feminism with white advocacy and blaming the moral decay of Western society on women's economic and sexual freedom, miscegenation, immigration, and low white female birth rates leading to feminism.²³ By creating a correlation between increased female sexual promiscuity and the decline of white masculinity, the leaders of the alt-right successfully recruited young men, playing on their sexual insecurities and convincing them that restoring orthodox patriarchy, deporting immigrants, and instituting white nationalism would be the solution to the uncontrollable and dangerous nature of liberal feminism. The movement placed a large emphasis on the demographic decline of whites/Europeans, advocating for strict heteronormative gender roles and promoting "sex realism" i.e. the idea that men and women have biological differences that should dictate their social status.²⁴ By restoring Western society back to its patriarchal values and increasing the dominance of masculinity, the alt-right believed that the white population could replenish itself by producing large families, perhaps enough to stop the influx and threat of an increasingly large populace of minorities in the Western hemisphere.²⁵

What Happened to the Alt-Right?

The decline of the alt-right has been attributed to many factors; social media outlets purging alt-right platforms, a series of disorganized 'protests' ending in violence, and a proliferation of publicized lawsuits against certain alt-rightists in the aftermath of the Unite the Right Rally causing the original leaders of the movement to go underground or disavow.²⁶ While

²³ Ibid. 151.

²⁴ Hawley, George. *Making Sense of the Alt-Right*. Columbia University Press, 2019. 17

²⁵ Gray, Phillip W. Op. Cit. "The Alt-Right: An Introduction (Part I)."

²⁶ Hayden, Michael Edison. "The Alt-Right Is Fractured, More Violent Headed into Trump's Second Year: Analysis." *Newsweek*, 25 Apr. 2018. Web.

all of these factors certainly contributed to the movement's downfall, what is less mentioned is how the alt-right's religious beliefs (or lack thereof) factored into the movement's decline.

The alt-right, as it existed in the mid-2010s, was decidedly anti-mainstream conservative and anti-Christian.²⁷ Taking a stance against (what they perceived to be) the universalist, empathetic nature of Christianity led to a general rejection of the religion in alt-right circles as incompatible with race realism and “racial particularism.”²⁸ For many in the alt-right, Christianity was inextricable from its Jewish roots and necessitated a “world-rejecting” outlook that caused the “necessary condition for white racial suicide.”²⁹ The egalitarian philosophy of Jesus was seen as a Nietzschean “slave morality”³⁰ that has hampered the traditional, weaker conservatives and old guard conservatives who have failed to protect the nation and “played too nicely” with the left, letting feminism, Islam and mass migration run wild.³¹

While Spencer's ‘intellectual’ white nationalist politics found a home in the early days of the Trump Administration – particularly in the cruel and xenophobic policies of Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller³² – the firmly international, anti-GOP, anti-Christian and “erudite” approach to white supremacy that Spencer introduced in 2015-2016 became increasingly unpopular in the second half of Donald Trump's presidential term. A platform of hyper-patriotism, Christian nationalism, and pro-traditional conservative values has become the benchmark of Trumpism

²⁷ Gray, Phillip W. Op. Cit. “The Alt-Right: An Introduction (Part I).”

²⁸ Shaw, Daniel Odin. “Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed: The Alt-Right on Building Christendom Without Christ.” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 18, no. 54, 2019. 82.

²⁹ Rose, Matthew. “The Anti-Christian Alt-Right” *First Things*, 1 Mar. 2018. Web.

³⁰ Nagle, Angela. Op. Cit. 68.

³¹ Nagle, Angela. Op. Cit. 99.

³² Hayden, Michael Edison. “Stephen Miller's Affinity for White Nationalism Revealed in Leaked Emails.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 12 Nov. 2019. Web.

and continues to inspire his followers³³ – in short, all of the traditional elements of conservatism that Richard Spencer and the original alt-right hoped to avoid.

As this capstone will discuss, despite the best efforts of the alt-right to later incorporate Christianity (at least aesthetically) despite their virulently anti-Semitic views, the alt-right's popularity has been undoubtedly superseded by newer, American-centric, zealously Christian far-right groups whose politics and religious views are far better suited to the later years of Trump's presidency. What follows is a discussion of the alt-right's view of Christianity, how they attempted to reconcile their political beliefs with the religion, and how they ultimately failed to appeal to a steadfastly religious right-wing populace in America.

II. The Anti-Semitic Alt-Right Meets Christianity's Jewish Roots

Anti-Semitism was a central tenet of alt-right ideology.³⁴ It is (still) nearly impossible to enter into an online far-right space without seeing swastikas, memes of Pepe the Frog (the unofficial alt-right mascot) in Schutzstaffel uniforms, jokes about the Holocaust comparing murdered Jews to “burnt cookies in the oven”,³⁵ or references to 1488 or David Lane's “Fourteen Words” as a code for Heil Hitler.³⁶ As Talia Lavin explains in her work *Culture Warlords*, the alt-right resurrected race sciences like phrenology exclusively to dehumanize Jews online,³⁷ and often used phrases like “the Goyim know” to suggest that white ‘Gentiles’ within the alt-right

³³ Bailey, Sarah Pulliam. “Seeking Power in Jesus' Name: Trump Sparks a Rise of Patriot Churches.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 27 Oct. 2020. Web.

³⁴ Wendling, Mike. Op. Cit. 10.

³⁵ @bennyjohnson (Benny Johnson) “Fuentes is a Holocaust Denier: Fuentes has compared Jews killed in the Holocaust to baked cookies and has questioned the actual number of victims killed in the Holocaust adding that “the Math doesn't seem to add up there”. *Twitter*, November 18th, 2019, 5:42 P.M. Web.

³⁶ Hawley, George. Op. Cit. 68.

³⁷ “The Jews.” *Culture Warlords: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Battle for America's Soul*, by Talia Lavin, Hachette Books, 2020, p. 44.

were suspicious of “nefarious” Jewish behavior.³⁸ The “JQ” or “The Jewish Question” was often discussed on alt-right sites³⁹⁴⁰⁴¹ referring to the 19th and 20th century conspiracy believed by anti-Semites and Nazis that a powerful, global Jewish cabal undermines white supremacy by pushing civil rights, globalism, and the “cultural dissemination of anti-white tropes.”⁴² Anti-Semitic memes have been tweeted out by President Donald Trump himself, who on July 2nd, 2016, posted an image of Hillary Clinton superimposed over a pile of money with a six-pointed star reading “Most Corrupt Candidate Ever!”⁴³

The alt-right saw Jews as a formidable threat, claiming that the insidious Jewish cabal – often referred to as “ZOG” or Zionist Occupied Government”⁴⁴ – had single-handedly led to the decline and downfall of the “biological survival” of the white race.⁴⁵ Online, far-rightists continue to use (((three parentheses))) AKA the “echo” to indicate whether a person, profession, or thing is Jewish or synonymous with Judaism – often using terms like (((banker))) as a placeholder for the word “Jew” to protect and disguise their hate speech.⁴⁶ The use of the echo and of ostensibly ‘jokey’ memes has allowed all members of the far-right to spread their anti-Semitism online without much censorship and often with tragic consequences; as a 2018 report

³⁸ Ibid. 70.

³⁹ Liddell, Colin. “The Alt-Right Has Made The JQ Unapproachable.” *Affirmative Right*, 19 July 2020. Web.

⁴⁰ Spencer, Richard. “Kevin MacDonald: What Is the Jewish Question?” *AltRight.com*, 2 Mar. 2018. Web.

⁴¹ O’Brien, Luke. “The Making of an American Nazi.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 14 Nov. 2017. Web.

⁴² Atkinson, David C. “Charlottesville and the Alt-Right: a Turning Point?” *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2018. 310.

⁴³ Wendling, Mike. Op. Cit. 193.

⁴⁴ “ZOG.” *Anti-Defamation League*. Web.

⁴⁵ “Alt-Right.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Web.

⁴⁶ “Echo.” *Anti-Defamation League*. Web.

by the Southern Poverty Law Center revealed, multiple violent anti-Semitic incidents between 2013 and 2018 were linked to individuals associated with the alt-right.⁴⁷⁴⁸

Though some alt-right figureheads like political commentator Milo Yiannopoulos claimed in 2016 that “1488ers” AKA Neo-Nazis were not really part of the movement and were “unlikely to achieve anything significant in the alt-right”,⁴⁹ the alt-right ideology appeared to share enough in common with Nazism to inspire anti-Semitic action. Despite the best efforts of Unite the Right Rally organizer Jason Kessler, multiple Nazi flags were flown at the 2017 Rally and the now-infamous chant “Jews will not replace us” being yelled by young, angry alt-rightists painted an unavoidably clear picture.⁵⁰ Andrew Anglin, head of the now defunct alt-right publication Daily Stormer, a Neo-Nazi, and friend of Richard Spencer⁵¹ claimed on his site that “the only thing in our movement that really matters [is] anti-Semitism...If only the Jews were gone, the white race, freed from bondage, would immediately overcome all of its problems.”⁵² This sentiment was echoed by Richard Spencer in an audio tape leaked at an “emergency meeting” after the Unite the Right Rally in 2017 wherein Spencer blamed the “little f*cking kikes” and claimed “[Jews] get ruled by people like me.”⁵³

⁴⁷ Amend, Alex, and Keegan Hankes. “The Alt-Right Is Killing People.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 5 Feb. 2018. Web.

⁴⁸ Barrouquere, Brett, and Rachel Janik. “A Gunman Opened Fire on a Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Killing at Least Eleven People and Wounding Others.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 27 Oct. 2018. Web.

⁴⁹ Yiannopoulos, Milo, and Allum Bokhari. “An Establishment Conservative's Guide To The Alt-Right.” *Breitbart*, 30 Mar. 2016. Web.

⁵⁰ Rosenberg, Yair. “Jews Will Not Replace Us’: Why White Supremacists Go after Jews.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 29 Apr. 2019. Web.

⁵¹ “Andrew Anglin.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Web.

⁵² Anomaly, Jonathan, and Nathan Cofnas. “What the Alt-Right Gets Wrong About Jews.” *Alt-Right*, Quillette, 1 Apr. 2018. Web.

⁵³ Oster, Marcy. “Richard Spencer Slurs Jews, Blacks in Expletive-Laden Rant Put Online.” *The Times of Israel*, 5 Nov. 2019. Web.

As Talia Lavin asserts in the last paragraph of her second chapter “The Jews” in *Culture Warlords*, members of the alt-right were lured in by an ideology of cruelty, craving an enemy and blaming everything from queer rights to immigration to social justice” on the machinations of a sinister, cunning, and infinitely resourceful enemy”, adding “to the hammer, everything looks like a nail; to the white supremacist, every evil looks like a Jew.”⁵⁴

Intellectual Influences on the Alt-Right’s Anti-Semitism

The alt-right’s anti-Semitism stemmed from a long tradition of white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and white nationalists who saw Jews as culturally and biologically inferior, blaming them for the downfall of Western culture⁵⁵ and for the ‘blood libel’: an antiquated allegation that Jews were responsible for the murder of Jesus and carried on ritually sacrificing Christian children.⁵⁶ Kevin MacDonald, an emeritus psychology professor at CSULB and anti-Semitic member of the alt-right, claimed in his book *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* that Judaism is an “undeserving historical victim.”⁵⁷ MacDonald supposed that the Jewish elite “has emerged to dominate intellectual and political debate...even as it almost instinctively loathes the traditional institutions of European-American culture”⁵⁸ – a culture which he credits directly to the Catholic Church and Christianity.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ “Boots on the For the Boogaloo.” *Culture Warlords: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Battle for America's Soul*, by Talia Lavin, Hachette Books, 2020, pp. 75–76.

⁵⁵ Rosenberg, Yair. Op. Cit. “Jews Will Not Replace Us: Why White Supremacists Go after Jews.”

⁵⁶ “Blood Libel: A False, Incendiary Claim Against Jews.” *Anti-Defamation League*. Web.

⁵⁷ MacDonald, Kevin. “What Makes Western Culture Unique?” *The Occidental Quarterly*, 2002. 9–38.

⁵⁸ Schulson, Michael. “Kevin MacDonald and the Elevation of Anti-Semitic Pseudoscience.” *Undark Magazine*, 27 June 2018. Web.

⁵⁹ MacDonald, Kevin. Op. Cit.

White supremacists like William Pierce were also a notable alt-right influence; known for his anti-Semitic views and outlandish conspiracy theories,⁶⁰ Pierce was the author of the infamous book *The Turner Diaries*, a fictional novel depicting a future race war in America and the work which inspired the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh.⁶¹ Pierce wrote in his 1982 article “On Christianity” that “Christianity, with its Jewish mythology and racially alien teachings, especially the trope of universal brotherhood and the use of it to teach race mixing and sympathy with Zionism...is therefore necessarily opposed to white racial survival.”⁶² For Pierce, Christianity’s domination of European intellectual life in the 20th century was the work of Jewish propagandic media and thus he rejected Christianity outright, seeing it as too “inhibitive” and a “Jewish trick” to remove race consciousness from the white population.⁶³⁶⁴

The alt-right idea that Jewish-rooted Christianity is a deracinated phenomenon that promotes white-erasing multiculturalism can ultimately be traced back to Oswald Spengler’s 1918 work, *Decline of the West*.⁶⁵ Arguably the most influential source for the alt-right, Spengler’s work is largely preoccupied with the cultural decline of Western civilization due to the white race engaging in “pseudomorphosis” – a term describing the phenomenon of a powerful civilization adopting the socio-political mindset of a weaker foreign culture.⁶⁶ For far-right thinkers, pseudomorphosis perfectly explains the downfall of Western white-dominated civilization as it has adopted the “weaker” mindset of liberal, Jewish culture.

⁶⁰ Gray, Phillip W. Op. Cit.

⁶¹ Thomas, Jo. “Behind a Book That Inspired McVeigh.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 9 June 2001. Web.

⁶² Berry, Damon. Op. Cit. 71.

⁶³ Ibid. 58.

⁶⁴ Gray, Phillip W. Op. Cit. “The Alt-Right: An Introduction (Part I).”

⁶⁵ Spengler, Oswald, et al. *The Decline of the West*. Windham Press, 2013.

⁶⁶ Ilany, Ofri. “The Complete Glossary of the Trumpist Alt-Right.” *Haaretz.com*, Haaretz.com, 24 Apr. 2018. Web.

Per Spengler, the dominant civilizations of the world existed in cycles of birth and decay, each following their own metaphysical framework informing their understanding of space and time. In Spengler's model, early Levantine Judeo-Christian culture belonged to the "Magian" civilizational style (referring to the Magi Cult of antiquity) – a simplistic worldview defined by its "twofold way of envisioning all reality": the earthly vs. the divine and good vs. evil.⁶⁷ Conversely, the civilizational worldview of the West starting in the 10th century onwards was "Faustian", defined by its unyielding intellectual pursuit of infinity, without such limiting dichotomies like good vs. evil.⁶⁸ According to Spengler, the modern West was unique in its promotion and pursuit of a "Faustian drive toward transcendence."⁶⁹ As described in *Decline of the West*, the Faustian Man, who unrelentingly sought out the unknowable Platonic forms of the universe, imbued his vision of infinity into his creations, erecting impossibly high cathedrals, circumnavigating the globe and orchestrating great symphonies.⁷⁰

Spengler's view of Christianity matched his diagnosis of Western worldviews; where Magian or early Jewish-Christianity is limiting, Faustian Christianity (which he specifically refers to as "German-Catholic"⁷¹) is limitless.⁷² Spengler claims that "it was not Christianity that transformed man, but Faustian man that transformed Christianity", maintaining that Western European culture gave the religion a "new moral direction."⁷³ The Jewish-Christianity that Jesus taught, or "Primitive Christianity" as he later calls it,⁷⁴ is limited by simplistic dichotomies of

⁶⁷ Richardson, David B. "Spengler's 'Magian' Classification Applied to an Unrecognized Ecumene: The Near East, 1500 to 0 BCE." *Comparative Civilizations Review*, vol. 81, no. 81, 2019.

⁶⁸ Spengler, Oswald. Op. Cit. 183.

⁶⁹ Rose, Matthew. Op. Cit. "The Anti-Christian Alt-Right."

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Spengler, Oswald. Op. Cit. 248.

⁷² Ibid. 187.

⁷³ Ibid. 344.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 360.

bad vs. good. Medieval, German-Catholic Christianity, however, was improved by modern white civilization and gave the religion the ability to reach for the heavens.⁷⁵

Spengler's comparative analysis of cultures leading to a conclusion that the West would begin to decline starting from (approximately) the year 2000 greatly appealed to the alt-right's fear of an increasingly globalist world taken hostage by Jewish elites.⁷⁶ Spengler's "cultural pessimism" was foundational for Richard Spencer in particular, whose disdain of liberal multiculturalism and the homogenization of diversity was the foundation for his proposal of separate white ethnostates.⁷⁷ More importantly, Spengler's focus on the character of cultures and civilizations rather than on nations or states was arguably the inspiration for the alt-right framing their ideas of racial supremacy as "cultural differences."⁷⁸ For Spengler, each culture "possesses its own standards, the validity of which begins and ends with it",⁷⁹ affirming the alt-right's quest for white racial solidarity and ethnic separatism which, for Spencer, did not include Jews.⁸⁰ Spencer's support of Zionism was not pro-Jewish but rather deeply anti-Semitic, as he claimed Jews must be confined to their own ethnostates lest they impose their "egalitarian Judeo-Christian tradition on Europeans" and poison the West with their "antinational and traitorous" forces.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Ibid. 362.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Bar-On, Tamir. "Richard B. Spencer and The Alt-Right." *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, edited by Mark Sedgwick, Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 225.

⁷⁸ Rose, Matthew. Op. Cit. "The Anti-Christian Alt-Right."

⁷⁹ Spengler, Oswald. Op. Cit. 345.

⁸⁰ Bar-On, Tamir. Op Cit. "Richard B. Spencer and The Alt-Right."

⁸¹ Ibid. 234.

III. The Decline of the West

Spengler's *Decline of the West* took on a life of its own in the 21st century, appealing to a crowd Spengler – as a cultural relativist and an anti-fascist – would not have expected.⁸² In his 2017 article “Restoring the Deconstructed West”, popular alt-right blogger Theodore Beale – known online as Vox Day – summed up the alt-right's neo-Spenglerian view of Western decline in a succinct way:

Western civilization is a consequence of three things: The European nations, Christianity, and the Graeco-Roman legacy of philosophy and law. To restore it, anything and everything that stands in the way of those three things has to go. The elite narratives that are designed to subvert and undermine the three pillars of the West must be rejected. These include “civil rights”, “civic nationalism”, “social justice”, “equality”, “Judeo-Christianity”, “feminism”, and “racism.”⁸³

The alt-right saw the West as constantly under attack; threatened by Muslim immigrants who they believed wanted to establish cultural and religious dominance, threatened by feminists and ‘social justice warriors’ who wanted to dismantle the white-led patriarchy, threatened by Jewish elites who pushed these progressive values onto the unwilling white children of America, and threatened by weaker, mainstream conservatives who allowed this damage to become widespread. President Trump only served to stoke these fears while in office, retweeting profiles which prominently mentioned “white genocide” and sharing data from a fictional “Crime Statistics Bureau” which artificially inflated the number of white Americans killed by Black

⁸² Rose, Matthew. Op. Cit. “The Anti-Christian Alt-Right.”

⁸³ Day, Vox. “Restoring the Deconstructed West” *Vox Populi*, 19 Apr. 2017. Web.

Americans.⁸⁴ Trump's frequent references to social decay and violent crime in American cities (particularly Black majority cities) that must be corrected with "law and order" painted a picture of the United States in decline.⁸⁵

The alt-right's preoccupation with the decline of the West has been an urgent topic in far-right American circles for decades. Here in the U.S., the idea may have originated with William Lind of the Free Congress Foundation, whose 2000 speech "The Origins of Political Correctness" put forth the theory that "cultural Marxists" and "nefarious, communistic destroyers" were invading the American school system and brainwashing youth to reject Christian family values.⁸⁶ This theory stirred up immense feelings of xenophobic worry for white nationalists who felt they needed to protect America from Jewish leftist propaganda.⁸⁷ Paleoconservative Pat Buchanan, who ran for the presidency on the Reform Party ticket in 2000, pushed the campaign message that "America's history and heroes and Western civilization itself are under relentless attack. The violence of this political correctness is nothing less than cultural Marxism."⁸⁸ As Milo Yiannopoulos explained in his 2016 Breitbart article "An Establishment Conservative's Guide to the Alt-Right", the alt-right was simply the "inevitable result" of society ridiculing and dismissing as racist those who "cherish" Western culture.⁸⁹

The alt-right was also heavily influenced by Alain De Benoist, founding member of the French New Right (Nouvelle Droite) and creator of the ethno-nationalist think tank GRECE.

⁸⁴ Wendling, Mike. Op. Cit. 195.

⁸⁵ Perry, Andre M. "Trump's Violent Debate Performance Is a Reflection of His Racially Violent Policies." *The Avenue*, Brookings, 30 Sept. 2020. Web.

⁸⁶ Berkowitz, Bill. "'Cultural Marxism' Catching On." *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 15 Jan. 2003. Web.

⁸⁷ Neiwert, David A. *Alt-America: the Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump*. Verso, 2018. 460-468.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 470.

⁸⁹ Yiannopoulos, Milo, and Allum Bokhari. "An Establishment Conservative's Guide To The Alt-Right." *Breitbart*, 30 Mar. 2016. Web.

Benoist was often translated by members of the alt-right and is still looked to as a leading theorist of the global far-right movement.⁹⁰ For Benoist, Christianity’s universalism had slowly chipped away at the West’s Spenglerian “Faustian vitality”, rendering the Western world “morally lethargic and culturally defenseless” against foreign religion.⁹¹ Unlike those in the alt-right who put the blame squarely on the shoulders of cultural liberalism and Judaism, Benoist believed that the West is more Christian than it has ever been – that the West’s continuing alliance to Christianity and Judeo-Christian values is what’s causing its downfall. Benoist argued that Christianity’s “self-distrust, concern for victims, and fear of excluding outsiders” caused Western civilization to move away from racial kinship, and that a hierarchy of races disguised as “ethnodifferentialism” was the only way the West could survive globalization and the “ideology of sameness.”⁹²

Similar ideas have been espoused by significant far-right thinkers and authors like Guillaume Faye, an archeofuturist, identitarian, and early member of GRECE.⁹³ Faye saw the West as threatened by a “cancer” of white demographic decline, global financial crisis, the rise of religious fundamentalism, and the “ethnoreligious clash” between the West and the “chaotic” global South.⁹⁴ This hypothesis has been echoed in works by Pat Buchanan, who claimed that the decline of Christian church attendance in the West had led to a “collapse” in moral order,⁹⁵ and by Wilmot Robertson, author of *The Dispossessed Majority* and a major influence on Richard

⁹⁰ Gray, Phillip W. Op. Cit. “The Alt-Right: An Introduction (Part I).”

⁹¹ Rose, Matthew. Op. Cit. “The Anti-Christian Alt-Right.”

⁹² Sedgwick, Mark J. *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*. Oxford University Press, 2019. 75-76.

⁹³ Ibid. 91.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 97.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 128.

Spencer, who asserted that, because the white Europeans who built America are experiencing cultural decline, America is suffering as well.⁹⁶

None of these thinkers, however, were so influential on Richard Spencer as Friedrich Nietzsche, whose doctrine on Western decline and criticism of the “weak and egalitarian” Judeo-Christian values producing a “sickness” in Western society associated with liberalism, globalism, feminism and socialism earned him prophetic status in Spencer’s politics.⁹⁷ Spencer credited Nietzsche’s essay *The Genealogy of Morality* as causing an “awakening” which shattered his “moral universe”, an essay which discusses the “slave morality” of Christian belief that was developed by the lower classes to subdue the will of the strong.⁹⁸ Nietzsche acknowledged Christianity is an important aspect of Western civilization, but like other alt-right influences, argued that Christianity champions the weak masses over strong individuals, replacing classical values like strength and valor with “humility, charity and pity.”⁹⁹

Nietzsche’s supposition that “God is dead” – an acknowledgement of the fact that society has progressed to the point where it no longer can justify belief in a god – was translated by the alt-right to mean that Christianity is over, rather than that society must progress and value reason and science over faith.¹⁰⁰ This misunderstanding left Richard Spencer and his acolytes in an uncertain position, wherein the alt-right criticized and rejected Christianity while still defending historical Western civilization which was unquestionably shaped by Christendom. As Hugo Drochon, author of *Nietzsche’s Great Politics*, explains in the article “Nietzsche and The Alt-

⁹⁶ Ibid. 231.

⁹⁷ Bar-On, Tamir. “Richard B. Spencer and The Alt-Right.” *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, edited by Mark Sedgwick, Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 231.

⁹⁸ Illing, Sean. “The Alt-Right Is Drunk on Bad Readings of Nietzsche. The Nazis Were Too.” *Vox*, Vox, 17 Aug. 2017. Web.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Right”, “Nietzsche's argument was that you had to move forward, not fall back onto ethnocentrism... so in many ways Spencer [was] stuck in the 'Shadows of God' – claiming Christianity is over but trying to find something that will replace it so that we can go on living as if it still existed, rather than trying something new.”¹⁰¹

IV. The Germanization of Christianity

The alt-right was stuck in a confusing theological space, oscillating between rejecting modern Christianity as a weak and failing institution and believing historical Christianity was a fundamental building block of Western white civilization. This was clearly summed up in Spencer’s view that historical Westerners “turned Christianity into something European” by “paganizing or Germanizing” the religion,¹⁰² an opinion he expressed on his podcast episode interestingly titled “Christianity is for Cucks.”¹⁰³¹⁰⁴

The ‘Germanization’ of Christianity is an idea that has existed for decades in white supremacist circles, viewing Christianity as an indigenously European religion which began in the Middle Ages with Anglo-Saxon, pre-Christian pagan values. It asserts Christianity is a “malleable institution” that has historically been molded to serve white supremacy and “forge a common European identity”,¹⁰⁵ allowing far-right Christians to credit the technological and political advances of the West in the Middle Ages to the dominating cultural presence of white

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Shaw, Daniel Odin. Op. Cit. 86.

¹⁰³ Spencer, Richard, and Hannibal Bateman. “Cucksplaining - 1 - Christianity Is For Cucks.” AltRight.com, 2 Oct. 2017. Web.

¹⁰⁴ “Cuck” is a derogatory term referring to the word “cuckhold.” In far-right circles, it’s used to describe a person (typically a man) who is seen as having “beta status”, i.e. he is not a strong person and often lets others (usually women) walk all over him. It can also mean spineless or weak.

¹⁰⁵ Willard, Mara. “Theo-Politics in Flux: The 'Alt-Right' on God, Christendom, and the Nation.” *Contending Modernities*, 26 May 2017. Web.

Christians during that period.¹⁰⁶ Historically, religious white nationalist movements like Christian Identity have shared the belief that Christianity is a white-centric institution that gave Europeans a nationalist purpose and a provided a divine, hierarchal order to their society.¹⁰⁷

The concept of Christian ‘Germanization’ originates with James C Russell, a writer often quoted in far-right publications discussing the benefits of a racialized, pro-white Christianity. Articles published on alt-right forums like AltRight.com,¹⁰⁸¹⁰⁹ Counter Currents,¹¹⁰¹¹¹ Affirmative Right,¹¹² and by white nationalist writer Samuel Francis¹¹³ “The Christian Question”,¹¹⁴ all engaged with and supported Russell’s view espoused in his 1994 work *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation*.

In short summary, Russell’s work asserts that the character of medieval Christendom was inalterably shaped by the conversion of white Germanic peoples, who remodeled the social organization of the church and imbued the religion with their cultural values.¹¹⁵ Like Spengler, Russell claims the Christianity of antiquity (i.e. Jewish-Christianity) was a “world-rejecting” universalist religion with broadly-applicable doctrinal components whereas Germanized Christianity was “world-accepting and folk centered”, prizing group solidarity and a worldview

¹⁰⁶ Shaw, Daniel Odin. Op. Cit. 87.

¹⁰⁷ Parrott, Matt. “Why We Should Save Christianity.” *Counter Currents*, 2 Sept. 2013. Web.

¹⁰⁸ Spencer, Richard. “Ghosts of Christmas Past.” AltRight.com, 22 Dec. 2017. Web.

¹⁰⁹ Storey, Rik. “White People Need An Anti-Globalist Church.” *AltRight.com*, 1 May 2017. Web.

¹¹⁰ Donaldson, Ash. “The Saxon Savior: Converting Northern Europe.” *Counter Currents*, 29 July 2019. Web.

¹¹¹ Hood, Gregory. “The De-Germanization of Late American Christianity.” *Counter Currents*, 20 Oct. 2018. Web.

¹¹² Howard-Hobson, Juleigh. “Mali Principii Malus Finis.” Affirmative Right, 17 Mar. 2015. Web.

¹¹³ “Sam Francis.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Web.

¹¹⁴ Francis, Samuel. Review of *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation*, by James C Russell. *The Occidental Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1. 99–101

¹¹⁵ Morris, Colin. Review of *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity. A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation*, by James C Russell. *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1, Apr. 1996. 341–343

with a “heroic, religiopolitical, and magicoreligious orientation.” Russell argues that a religion which did not focus on military, agricultural, and folk matters would not have been able to appeal to the pre-Christian pagan Germanic peoples, thus Christianity was transformed to fit with a white European worldview. This joining of religion and culture fundamentally changed Christianity from a salvationist faith concerned with eschatological matters to a religion concerned with “chivalry, feudalism, the Crusade ideology, and the cult of relics.” Russell concludes that, unlike the early Christianity of the failing Roman Empire, Germanized Christianity maintained and appealed to intragroup solidarity, strengthening “strong interlocking kinship and community bonds.”¹¹⁶

In his review of *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity* titled “The Christian Question”, white nationalist author Samuel T. Francis used Russell’s work to argue that enemies of Germanic heritage continue to undermine the “Euro-Christian religiocultural fusion”, threatening Western civilization by trying to separate Christianity from its white medieval roots. He points to the Protestant Reformation as the major point at which the demand to return to “the primitive church” began, driving those who valued Germanic and Anglo-Saxon strength to seek alternative forms of religion like paganism to “positively affirm their racial and cultural roots.”¹¹⁷ Echoing alt-right opinion, Francis concludes that “indeed, organized Christianity today is the enemy of the West and the race that created it.”¹¹⁸

Similarly Michael O’Meara, an alt-right influence and author of *New Culture, New Right*, has cited Russell’s work arguing that Catholicism transformed itself from a “universal salvation

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 343.

¹¹⁷ Francis, Samuel. Op. Cit. 100.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

religion [into] a Germanic, and eventually European, folk religion” in the Middle Ages, but that Protestantism challenged the Europeanization of the religion by “re-rooting North Europeans in the Hebraic forms of the early church”, tainting Germanic Christianity with “secularizing forces.”¹¹⁹ Early Christianity, which O’Meara describes as “Jewish heresy” catering to “the weak, the sickly, and the mediocre”, led its adherents away from communal attachments and social obligations to their kin, “desacralizing the cosmos, objectifying nature, and devalue[ing] creation.”¹²⁰ He ends by saying that in a modern secularized Europe, Europeans who are “spiritually adrift” must “return to [themselves]” and to their white heritage¹²¹ – a phrase reminiscent of the old alt-right slogan “become who you are.”¹²²

‘High Church Christianity’ and the Classical Aesthetic

Germanized Christianity could have aligned with their politics had the alt-right authentically adopted religious belief, but the “decidedly secular orientation”¹²³ of the alt-right meant most of the members were not interested in taking part in any faith or worship. Instead, the alt-right used Christianity as a political tool, removing the religion from the religiosity and appropriating Christian imagery to be symbols of white supremacy.

In his article titled “Alt Right and Christianity”, Daniel DeCarlo – former editor of the now defunct Thermidor magazine, a publication associated with the neo-reactionary

¹¹⁹ Berry, Damon. Op. Cit. 181.

¹²⁰ O’Meara, Michael. New Culture, New Right: Anti-Liberalism in Postmodern Europe. Arktos Media, Ltd., 2013. 127.

¹²¹ Ibid. 128.

¹²² Berry, Damon. Op. Cit. 173.

¹²³ Hawley, George. Op. Cit. 32.

movement¹²⁴¹²⁵¹²⁶ – uses the term “High Church Christianity” to refer to the purely aesthetic brand of alt-right Christianity.¹²⁷ Per DeCarlo, the alt-right’s ‘High Church Christianity’ was not theological but rather part of a purely symbolic, nebulous conception of “Western civilization” which he describes as the alt-right’s “placeholder for whiteness”. For the alt-right, ‘the West’ was a “vague and ill-defined concept which seemed to exist in the alt-right imagination largely as a kind of composite or mashup of medieval cathedrals, Classical and Neo-Classical Renaissance sculpture, nineteenth-century landscape paintings, and descriptive passages from J.R.R. Tolkien.”

By adopting this aesthetic of a whitewashed, quasi-Christian idealized ‘West’, the alt-right was able to give off the impression to potential Christian recruits that they were aligned with traditional Christian values without actually having to believe or associate with the faith.¹²⁸ Neo-Hellenistic Renaissance and Medieval art styles were ubiquitous in alt-right publications, banners, and posters, commonly accompanied with the phrase “Deus Vult” – a Latin expression from the 11th century Order of the Holy Sepulcher meaning “God Wills It”.¹²⁹¹³⁰ This Latin-Catholic phrase was displayed on multiple signs carried by alt-rightists at the 2017 Unite the Right Rally, along with shields painted with the Knights Templar red cross and the black eagle, representative of the Roman Theban legion leader Saint Maurice.¹³¹ Additionally, at the

¹²⁴ Gray, Rosie. “The Anti-Democracy Movement Influencing the Right.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 25 Apr. 2017. Web.

¹²⁵ Hawley, George. Op. Cit. 45.

¹²⁶ Means, Alexander J., and Graham B. Slater. “The Dark Mirror of Capital: on Post-Neoliberal Formations and the Future of Education.” *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2019. 162–175.

¹²⁷ DeCarlo, Dan. “The Future of Alt-Right Christianity.” *Berkley Center For Religion, Peace and World Affairs*, 29 Oct. 2018. Web.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Little, Becky. “How Hate Groups Are Hijacking Medieval Symbols While Ignoring the Facts Behind Them.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 18 Dec. 2017. Web.

¹³⁰ Kim, Dorothy. Op. Cit. “The Alt-Right and Medieval Religions.”

¹³¹ Little, Becky. Op. Cit. “How Hate Groups Are Hijacking Medieval Symbols While Ignoring the Facts Behind Them.”

November 19th, 2016 National Policy Institute conference, a photo of the statue of David carved by Michelangelo could be seen at Richard Spencer's presentation with the words "Become Who We Are", an originally Odinist phrase adopted by the alt-right to "advocate for a reclamation of European cultural identity."¹³² Similarly, American Identity Movement, a newer alt-right-adjacent group often depicts angels and Biblical figures on their campaign flyers, overwritten with phrases like "Let's Become Great Again", "Protect Your Heritage", and "Serve Your People."¹³³

Removing any substance from Christianity allowed the alt-right to trace its history back to famous Christian figures like the Knights Templar, using first Crusades imagery as an ode to the continuing Western battle against "aggressive, expansionist Islam."¹³⁴ As Donna Zuckerberg explains in her article "How to Be a Good Classicist Under a Bad Emperor", the alt-right "self-mythologized", imagining their own genealogy as stemming from Hellenistic foundations and believing other historical European figures shared their quest for white racial purity.¹³⁵ As M. Ambedkar further adds in their article "The Aesthetics of the Alt-Right", the alt-right assigned this amorphously non-religious-religious imagery to Donald Trump, calling him the "God-Emperor" with "depictions of Trump evok[ing] a sun-swept Manichaeian battlefield; the gilded Greco-Roman architecture in the distance evokes Mussolini's promise of a New Roman Empire or the taste of Hitler's "Great German Art Exhibition."¹³⁶

¹³² Berry, Damon. Op. Cit. 173.

¹³³ Davis, Ben. "White Nationalism's New Love of Art History, Decoded." *Artnet News*, 8 Mar. 2017. Web.

¹³⁴ Little, Becky. Op. Cit. "How Hate Groups Are Hijacking Medieval Symbols While Ignoring the Facts Behind Them."

¹³⁵ Zuckerberg, Donna. "How to Be a Good Classicist Under a Bad Emperor." *Medium*, EIDOLON, 13 Nov. 2017. Web.

¹³⁶ Ambedkar, M. "The Aesthetics of the Alt-Right." *PostOffice Arts Journal*, 29 Apr. 2017. Web.

Despite the alt-right's 'High Church' approach and attempts to tie their movement into religious history, the alt-right was never fully understood or seen as an authentically Christian far-right movement. Attempts to "pull from the Medieval past" in order to claim religious space for their vision of white nationalism was never taken seriously, instead likened by scholars and journalists to Middle Ages cosplay.¹³⁷ The constant bashing of the religion by Richard Spencer and other notable alt-rightists like blogger Gregory Hood¹³⁸ did not help their cause, though some alt-right writers like Vox Day insisted the alt-right was simply "anti-church" rather than anti-Christian.¹³⁹ Regardless, the predominantly atheistic culture of the alt-right left room for the movement to be superseded by new Christian nationalist movements, groups whose politics are certainly reminiscent of the alt-right but whose allegiances lie firmly with America and God.

V. The New (New) Christian Right

The American far-right game has changed; Spencer's vision has become outdated in an increasingly anti-globalist right-wing political scene and groups like The Groyper Army (part of America First) and the American Identity Movement (previously Identity Evropa) have taken over.¹⁴⁰ While these groups maintain the goal of reframing white nationalism for a broader audience, they deviate from the alt-right in their commitment to American Christian nationalism and rejection of international solidarity.¹⁴¹ As Nick Fuentes, creator of America First, put it in a Telegram post in December of 2019: "We are not the 'Alt-Right' – the alt-right was a racist,

¹³⁷ Kim, Dorothy. "The Alt-Right and Medieval Religions." *Berkley Center For Religion, Peace and World Affairs*, 5 Nov. 2018. Web.

¹³⁸ Hood, Gregory. "Why Christianity Can't Save Us." *Counter Currents*, 31 July 2013. Web.

¹³⁹ Day, Vox. "The Anti-Churchian Alt-Right." *Vox Populi*, 11 Feb. 2018. Web.

¹⁴⁰ Tanner, Charles, and Devin Burghart. "From Alt-Right To Groyper: White Nationalists Rebrand for 2020 and Beyond." *IREHR*, 13 Feb. 2020. 21.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

atheist, post-American, revolutionary and transnational movement. American First is a traditionalist, Christian, conservative, reformist, American Nationalist Movement.”¹⁴² Unlike the alt-right, which sought to pull “disaffected reactionaries and misogynists outside the republican party into the white nationalist fold”¹⁴³, America First and the American Identity Movement have defined themselves by their position as “Christian Conservatives” who are focused on American nationalism and opposed to globalism, feminism, LGBTQ+ rights, and immigration.¹⁴⁴

The Groyper Army

Groyperers, also known as the Groyper Army, are relatively new on the alternative/ far-right scene. An American white nationalist movement mostly comprised of far-right Zoomers (referring to Generation Z or those born after 1997)¹⁴⁵ Groyperers take their name from an offshoot of the Pepe the frog meme called Groyper, a cartoon toad and a “friend of Pepe”,¹⁴⁶ referring to the unofficial alt-right mascot Pepe the Frog.¹⁴⁷ Though Groyperers have no official hierarchal structure, the movement is spearheaded by America First podcast host Nick Fuentes.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Ibid. 12.

¹⁴³ Ibid. 3.

¹⁴⁴ “Groyper Army.” *Anti-Defamation League*. Web.

¹⁴⁵ Dimock, Michael. “Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins.” *Pew Research Center*, 28 July 2020. Web.

¹⁴⁶ “Groyper.” *Know Your Meme*, 12 Sept. 2020. Web.

¹⁴⁷ “Pepe the Frog.” *Anti-Defamation League*. Web.

¹⁴⁸ Anti-Defamation League. Op. Cit. “Groyper Army.”

Fuentes, a 22-year old self-identified “pro-white identitarian”¹⁴⁹ political commentator on streaming site DLive¹⁵⁰ and former YouTube personality,¹⁵¹ joined forces with American Identity Movement’s leader Patrick Casey to initiate the “Groyper Wars” in 2019, a mobilization of their base to help push mainstream Republican politicians towards supporting white nationalism in America. Making headlines for their consistent attacks on mainstream and pro-Trump Republicans, the Groyperers have become known for their heckling and online harassment, targeting Donald Trump Jr. and Rep. Dan Crenshaw at public symposiums, initiating an online harassment campaign against conservative commentator Ben Shapiro, and targeting Turning Point USA leader Charlie Kirk at Q&A events in 2019 and 2020.¹⁵²

While Richard Spencer typically “reached out” to nationalist intellectuals and reactionaries on the fringes of the American GOP and right-wing movements abroad, the Groyperers and Fuentes have focused their efforts on targeting Trump supporters and Trump-adjacent conservative groups, hoping they will be able to convert young, typically college-age conservatives into adopting the “core issues and political framings of white nationalism”¹⁵³ (a strategy which is identical to the alt-right’s use of metapolitics). As Charles Tanner and Devin Burghart explain in their comprehensive report on Groyperers for the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights, the Groyperers utilize “entryism”, a political strategy that encourages

¹⁴⁹ Tanner, Charles, and Devin Burghart. Op. Cit. “From Alt-Right To Groyper: White Nationalists Rebrand for 2020 and Beyond.” 4.

¹⁵⁰ Bergengruen, Vera. “How Far-Right Personalities Are Cashing In on COVID-19.” *Time*, Time, 20 Aug. 2020. Web. DLive is a video streaming service which operates by using a blockchain for its servers and donation systems. It’s frequently used by white nationalists, conspiracy theorists, and far-right extremist communities and is a significant source for white supremacist crowdfunding.

¹⁵¹ Oster, Marcy. “White Nationalist Nick Fuentes’ YouTube Channel Is Banned for Hate Speech.” *Haaretz.com*, 18 Feb. 2020. Web.

¹⁵² Collins, Ben. “Pro-Trump Conservatives Are Getting Trolled in Real Life by a Far-Right Group.” *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 12 Nov. 2019. Web.

¹⁵³ Tanner, Charles, and Devin Burghart. Op. Cit. “From Alt-Right To Groyper: White Nationalists Rebrand for 2020 and Beyond.” 3.

members of an organization to moderate their appearance or change their rhetoric in order to gain access to a different group and infiltrate the new group to push their organization's goals. As a recent example, a Groyper Leadership Summit in 2019 saw AIM leader Patrick Casey suggest that Groypers target the GOP in order to push the party "beyond Trumpism" in favor of a 2024 candidate who could "carry the mantle of nationalism" in a more favorable way.¹⁵⁴

While the Groypers have not yet entered the media consciousness or conversation in the same way the alt-right did, Nick Fuentes has hundreds of thousands of followers on Twitter and a social account for his organization, "America First Clips" on Twitter, was retweeted by President Trump in May of 2020.¹⁵⁵ Personally thanking Michelle Malkin, a conservative blogger and member of the Groyper Army, Trump's quoted retweet of America First was taken by Fuentes and Casey as an endorsement by the President of their beliefs, with Patrick Casey claiming on DLive that "the President's tweet will help their ideology go mainstream."¹⁵⁶

Tradecath and Rad Trad Groypers

While the Groypers may share Spencer's affinity for mainstreaming white nationalism, Nick Fuentes has frequently refuted Richard Spencer's irreligiousness, identifying himself as a faithful conservative Catholic.¹⁵⁷ In an interview on Bitchute¹⁵⁸ in October of 2017, Fuentes rejected Richard Spencer's understanding of Christianity, claiming that the alt-right had been

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 4-5.

¹⁵⁵ Oster, Marcy. "Trump Retweets Video by Conservative Shunned for Supporting Anti-Semite." *The Jerusalem Post* | *JPost.com*, 19 May 2020. Web.

¹⁵⁶ Skidmore, Gage. "White Nationalist Groypers Are Taking Trump's Retweet as an Endorsement." *The Daily Dot*, 17 May 2020. Web.

¹⁵⁷ Sixsmith, Ben. "What the Heck Is a 'Groyper'?" *Crisis Magazine*, 19 Nov. 2019. Web.

¹⁵⁸ Bitchute is a streaming service known for accommodating far-right talking heads and conspiracy theorists. It is often used by individuals in the far-right who have been banned from YouTube for hate speech violations.

“lied to” by the Jewish New World Order, and that Christianity has a “tremendous power to unite our people around positive things that will destroy the influence of the establishment.”¹⁵⁹ For Fuentes, the “paganism and moral liberalism” that the alt-right associated with undermined their effectiveness. Instead, a full embrace of Christian faith – particularly one that rejects modernity – will guide these new far-rightists towards a transcendent goal.¹⁶⁰

The Catholicism embraced by Groyper is often referred to as “tradcath” or “rad trad” – internet slang words and shortened versions of “traditionalist catholic” or “radical traditionalist Catholic” referring to those who want to restore Catholicism to the conservative religious norms which were commonplace before the Second Vatican Council.¹⁶¹ Sharing little in common with a true traditionalist stance of Catholicism, the tradcath movement within the Groyper Army is more akin to heavily meme-ified, internet-based understanding of Francoist Catholic fascism¹⁶² - Francoist Catholicism referring to the Roman Catholicism practiced by genocidal Spanish dictator Francisco Franco.¹⁶³ Given Fuentes’ expressed admiration for Mussolini and Falangism combined with his calling for the imprisonment of political enemies and for the murder of journalists on his America First show, it appears Fuentes’ dictatorial leanings blend with his religiopolitical worldview.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ “Three Myths About Christianity Debunked.” Performance by Nicholas J Fuentes, and Matthew Drake, *BitChute*, 30 Oct. 2017. Web.

¹⁶⁰ Hirsch, Laramie. “TradCaths, Groyper, And Beyond.” *Men Of The West*, 15 Feb. 2020. Web.

¹⁶¹ “Tradcath.” *Wiktionary*. Web.

¹⁶² Sixsmith, Ben. Op, Cit. “What the Heck Is a 'Groyper'?”

¹⁶³ Tremlett, Giles. “Yes, Spain Should Dig Franco up. But It Must Not Bury the Horror of His Regime.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 24 Aug. 2018. Web.

¹⁶⁴ Tanner, Chuck. “Groyper Leader Nick Fuentes Calls for Trump ‘Rule by Decree’” *IREHR*, 19 Apr. 2020. Web.

From what little online discourse there is on Groyper tradcaths,¹⁶⁵ the religious aspect of the identity appears to be mostly performative – driven chiefly by aesthetic purposes as well as a way to legitimize their ultra-conservative political leanings and homophobic and misogynistic views.¹⁶⁶ Overlapping with groups within the ‘Manosphere’, tradcaths use fundamentalist Christianity as a vehicle to spread and legitimize their gospel of traditional family values; women in subservient familial positions, no premarital sex, no watching or deriving pleasure from pornography, and the shunning of societal behavior (like homosexuality) that they find unacceptable.¹⁶⁷ Whether or not self-identified tradcath Groyperers are faithful Christians is unknown, but members of other right-wing forums and individuals have accused tradcaths – including Fuentes – of “LARPing”¹⁶⁸ AKA pretending to be Catholic to root their political beliefs in a religious tradition.¹⁶⁹¹⁷⁰

American Identity Movement (AIM)

American Identity Movement or AIM – previously Identity Evropa – was created by white identitarian, Iraq war veteran and fundamentalist Baptist Nathan Damigo in 2016 with the intention of recruiting college-age people to the alt-right movement.¹⁷¹ Labeled “identitarian” to

¹⁶⁵ There is very little scholarly information available on Groyper tradcaths so I ended up taking information from chat forums online. You can typically identify a tradcath Groyper online by their profile pictures – usually a Groyper frog dressed in religious garb – accompanied by a Twitter bio referencing a religious crusade or Biblical verse.

¹⁶⁶ KiwiJoe, “America First with Nicholas J. Fuentes / "Nick the Knife" - Basically just Lauren southern with a love for catboys”, *Kiwi Farms Forum*, July 14th, 2020. Web.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ LARPing stands for ‘Live Action Role Playing’ and is usually used by people playing fictional live action role playing games and wearing costumes, etc.

¹⁶⁹ @SteveSkojec (Steve Skojec) “I said Fuentes wasn't even really Catholic and people jumped down my throat. Lotta LARP-loving trad groyper avis out there tonight having to choke down some cognitive dissonance.” *Twitter*, March 11th, 2020, 7:14 PM. Web.

¹⁷⁰ u/Merkava_Smasher_10, “Babyfash, please consider: You’re not fooling anyone”, on r/stupidpol, *Reddit*, April 2020. Web.

¹⁷¹ “Identity Evropa/American Identity Movement.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Web.

align his group with European far-right movements under the same banner, Damigo at first affiliated Identity Evropa with Richard Spencer's vision of the alt-right, labeling Identity Evropa "explicitly pro-white" and aiding in the planning of the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally in 2017.¹⁷²

In the aftermath of the Unite the Right Rally, Identity Evropa quickly distanced itself from Richard Spencer and his followers, publicly changing its leadership and changing its name. This decision was made by the group's new president Patrick Casey after left-wing media group Unicorn Riot¹⁷³ leaked 770,000 messages from Identity Evropa's Discord chat between September 2017 and February 2019, revealing the group's rhetoric was "rife" with anti-Semitic discussions about the Jewish Question, Holocaust denial, and Jewish control of the media and censorship by the feds.¹⁷⁴ The leak also revealed that Identity Evropa had been successful in infiltrating traditional conservative spaces, with a special Discord server created for "organizing young Republicans" that Identity Evropa had ostensibly converted to the far-right.¹⁷⁵

Patrick Casey's desire to bring white nationalism into the mainstream and to "depathologize ethnic and racial identity" has been obvious in his rebranding and actions as AIM's president.¹⁷⁶ Publicly stating he wants to mainstream identitarianism for "normies" (i.e. normal people), Casey has begun to move AIM into the GOP, attending the 2018 Conservative Political Action Conference and remarking that "he found many attendees amenable to his ideas thanks to 'the Left's anti-White rhetoric and blatant unwillingness to tolerate any restrictions on

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Unicorn Riot is a leftist, nonprofit media collective online that is well-known for reporting on far-right/white supremacist organizations and leaking private information from these groups. In the case of Identity Evropa, Unicorn Riot infiltrated their Discord chat, Discord being an American VoIP instant messaging platform.

¹⁷⁴ "Identity Evropa." *Anti-Defamation League*. Web.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Southern Poverty Law Center. Op. Cit. "Identity Evropa/American Identity Movement."

immigration.” AIM has also focused more on community-building through public meetups, environmentally friendly clean-up groups, fitness groups, and other seemingly harmless attempts to foster a community and to align their brand with everyday, normal American culture.¹⁷⁷

Both Fuentes and Casey have committed to the brand of Christian conservative nationalists, expressing their support for restricted immigration, traditional family structures, the American worker, pro-white advocacy, and Christian values.¹⁷⁸ Taking from Trump’s 2017 inaugural address stating “From this day forward, it’s going to be only America first”,¹⁷⁹ both AIM and the Groyperers have aligned themselves with Trump’s religious nationalist vision which focuses on American Christianity.¹⁸⁰ Similar to Trump’s declaration at a campaign speech at Liberty University, “We are going to protect Christianity...Christianity, it’s under siege”, these alt-right offshoots see Christianity as both protected and promoted by the US Constitution¹⁸¹ and as a white religion that is being threatened by liberal subversives.

Linking their ideology back to Germanized Christianity, Patrick Casey stated at the 2019 American Renaissance conference, “We have to go back to something like existed in medieval Christendom where you do have individual nations, but we see an overarching unity” adding “I have far more in common with an Irish Catholic in Dublin or a Scottish Presbyterian in Edinburgh than I do with an American in south Atlanta whose is not of my religion and not of

¹⁷⁷ Ibid

¹⁷⁸ Tanner, Charles, and Devin Burghart. Op. Cit. “From Alt-Right To Groyper: White Nationalists Rebrand for 2020 and Beyond.” 50-60.

¹⁷⁹ The term “America First” dates back to the 1940s with the anti-Semitic group The America First Committee (AFC) which opposed US involvement in WWII against German Nazis. The isolationist phrase has been used by Pat Buchanan, who viewed WWII as an unnecessary war, and by Donald Trump in March 2020 in an interview with The New York Times.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 52.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 36.

my race.”¹⁸² Unlike Richard Spencer and other alt-right predecessors, America First members, AIM members, and members from other similar, hyper-nationalist organizations like The Patriot Front and the Legion of St. Ambrose have embraced Christianity, refusing to reject it based on Jewish roots and instead folding it into their white nationalist beliefs.¹⁸³

VI. Conclusion: The Alt-Right Goes Mainstream (and Comes to an End)

While the Groyppers and AIM flourish online, gaining thousands of followers and earning Nick Fuentes a ‘verified’ blue-check mark on Twitter,¹⁸⁴ the alt-right continues to fade from the spotlight.¹⁸⁵ The last upload on AltRight.com was two years ago¹⁸⁶, r/The_Donald, the subreddit which hosted alt-right politics and promoted the Unite the Right Rally in 2017 was banned,¹⁸⁷ Richard Spencer has distanced himself from the movement,¹⁸⁸ and prominent alt-rightists like Matthew Heimbach, Andrew Anglin, and most recently, Steve Bannon have had their Twitter platforms removed.¹⁸⁹¹⁹⁰¹⁹¹ Many journalists have mistaken the visible decline of the movement online as indicative of the failure of the alt-right, but to say the alt-right ‘failed’ in its mission to mainstream their white nationalist politics would be untrue. As Shane Burley, author of *Fascism Today: What It Is and How to End It* correctly argues, the alt-right and its ideas about Western

¹⁸² Ibid. 49.

¹⁸³ “White Nationalist.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Web.

¹⁸⁴ Beck, Chris. “The Groyppers Emerge As the Far Right’s Enfant Terribles.” *Splice Today*. Web.

¹⁸⁵ Ellis, Emma Grey. Op. Cit. “The Year the Alt-Right Went Underground.”

¹⁸⁶ “Why Anti-Racism Is Nothing but a Lie.” *AltRight.com*, 3 May 2018. Web.

¹⁸⁷ Allyn, Bobby. “Reddit Bans The_Donald, Forum Of Nearly 800,000 Trump Fans, Over Abusive Posts.” *NPR*, NPR, 29 June 2020. Web.

¹⁸⁸ Palmer, Ewan. “Donald Trump Loses Support of White Nationalist Richard Spencer over Iran Fallout.” *Newsweek*, Newsweek, 9 Jan. 2020. Web.

¹⁸⁹ Ohlheiser, Abby. “Just a ‘Speed Bump’: White Nationalist Says a Twitter Ban Won’t Stop the Spread of His Views.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 28 Apr. 2019. Web.

¹⁹⁰ Kassel, Matthew. “Neo-Nazi Andrew Anglin Is Still On Twitter Despite Ban - And Now We Know Where.” *The Forward*, 2 July 2019. Web.

¹⁹¹ Devine, Curt, et al. “Twitter Permanently Suspends Steve Bannon Account after Talk of Beheading.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 6 Nov. 2020. Web.

decline did not disappear but were rather absorbed into mainstream conservative American politics, effectively ending the need for an alt-right fringe movement.¹⁹²

Proof of this can be found in Trump's original staff members, as Steve Bannon – a far-right populist and conservative “Christian” who openly described his website Breitbart.com as a “platform for the alt-right” – held an influential position as the President's Chief Strategist.¹⁹³ Bannon openly embraced a Spenglerian view of Western decline, proposing plans to open an “Academy for the Judeo-Christian West” for mid-career students described as “an initiative defending the Judeo-Christian foundations of Western Civilization.” His academy would teach pupils about the evils of abortion, how marriage has been “redefined”, and how Americans have leeches on the state, relying on it for welfare, entitlements and other assistance.¹⁹⁴ As an advisor to Trump, Bannon helped put into motion the right-wing populist and anti-immigration policies that have been the hallmark of Trump's presidency,¹⁹⁵ cited as the driving force behind Trump's travel ban on Muslim-majority countries. Now accused of fraud, arrested, and de-platformed, Steve Bannon was the in-house representative and legitimizer of far-right fringe politics and white nationalism.¹⁹⁶

Similarly, White House senior advisor Stephen Miller, an outed white nationalist,¹⁹⁷ continues to hold a position of power in Trump's Administration. Miller, whom Richard Spencer

¹⁹² Burley, Shane. Op. Cit. “The Autumn of the Alt Right.”

¹⁹³ “The Downfall of Steve Bannon.” *BBC News*, BBC, 20 Aug. 2020. Web.

¹⁹⁴ McCormick, Bill. “Steve Bannon's Dubious Crusade.” *America Magazine*, 6 Sept. 2019. Web.

¹⁹⁵ Hosenball, Mark. “Steve Bannon's Effort to Export His Fiery Populism to Europe Is Failing.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 2 Sept. 2020. Web.

¹⁹⁶ “Steve Bannon.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 20 Aug. 2020. Web.

¹⁹⁷ Hayden, Michael Edison. “Stephen Miller's Affinity for White Nationalism Revealed in Leaked Emails.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 12 Nov. 2019. Web.

has spoken of as a friend and colleague while attending university together,¹⁹⁸ is well-versed in the intellectual influences of the alt-right; an email leak of 900 messages exchanged between Miller and the editors at Breitbart saw Miller link sources from alt-right publications like InfoWars, VDare, and American Renaissance, as well as a recommendation from Miller of Jean Raspail's *Camp of the Saints*, a novel which depicts the downfall of Western Europe after opening its borders to sexually violent foreign refugees.¹⁹⁹ Openly praising Calvin Coolidge's Immigration Act of 1924 which severely restricted immigration, Miller has been the mastermind behind the Trump Administration's cruel border and immigration policy at the US/Mexico border, reportedly eagerly enforcing the zero-tolerance policy that separated 3,000 immigrant children from their families.²⁰⁰

Last but not least, President Trump himself was key in mainstreaming alt-right politics, referring to white supremacists and Neo-Nazis as "very fine people", echoing Nazi framing by making reference to immigrants "infesting our country", expressing concern about the threat of "America's vanishing white majority",²⁰¹ and suggesting that Jewish people "buy off politicians."²⁰² He has released ads featuring the faces of powerful Jewish political leaders and donors with a voiceover claiming they are part of a "'global power structure' that has 'robbed our working class' and 'stripped our country of its wealth'"²⁰³ taking directly from the alt-right playbook, and Trump continues to legitimize far-right beliefs – sometimes addressing them by

¹⁹⁸ DeGeurin, Mack. "America's Most Notorious White Nationalist Says He Knew Stephen Miller 'Quite Well' While They Were Members of a Duke University Conservative Club." *Insider*, Insider, 14 Nov. 2019. Web.

¹⁹⁹ Jones, Sarah. "Stephen Miller Sure Seems Like a White Nationalist." *The Cut*, The Cut, 13 Nov. 2019. Web.

²⁰⁰ Krawczyk, Kathryn. "Stephen Miller Reportedly Wanted to Separate Every Migrant Family That Crossed the Border." *Yahoo! News*, Yahoo!, 20 Aug. 2020. Web.

²⁰¹ Clark, Simon. "How White Supremacy Returned to Mainstream Politics." *Center for American Progress*. Web.

²⁰² Kessler, Glenn. "The 'Very Fine People' at Charlottesville: Who Were They?" *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 10 May 2020. Web.

²⁰³ Levin, Bess. "Trump Goes Full Anti-Semite in Room Full of Jewish People." *Vanity Fair*, Vanity Fair, 9 Dec. 2019. Web.

name as he did with the far-right militia group Proud Boys during the first 2020 presidential debate.²⁰⁴ The alt-right's concerns about the poisonous influence of Judaism and globalism and the purity of Western civilization were met and addressed by Trump, who used their same coded language, rejected political correctness, and believed in a nationalist solution to the decline of Western culture.²⁰⁵

The Future of the Alt-Right

Here, the question can be asked: if the alt-right went mainstream and was adopted by the Trump Administration, why would the movement be in decline? The answer is simply that Richard Spencer's vision of the alt-right could not keep up with the times. In the wake of the 2020 election, the perceived threat of a "new Red Scare" by the GOP, pushing back against democratic socialism on the left, has reignited old conservative fears about atheism, authoritarian control and a declining economy.²⁰⁶ The political narrative of American conservatism defined by a commitment to 'rugged individualism' and unquestioned liberty has been disastrous in the midst of a global pandemic, leading to dangerous anti-lockdown protests (often led by far-right groups)²⁰⁷ and lawsuits that claim state governments are violating the First Amendments by not letting Christians attend church.²⁰⁸ As we move into 2021, the evidence seems to point to an increasingly anti-intellectual, jingoistic, Christian nationalist vision of right-wing politics – a far

²⁰⁴ Gollom, Mark. "Trump's Proud Boys Remark Boosts Far-Right Group's Profile, Including in Canada, Experts Say" *CBCnews*, CBC/Radio Canada, 2 Oct. 2020. Web.

²⁰⁵ Harcourt, Bernard E. "How Trump Fuels the Fascist Right." *The New York Review of Books*. Web.

²⁰⁶ Smith, David. "America v Socialism': Conservatives Rage against the Left and Plot New Red Scare." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 1 Mar. 2020. Web.

²⁰⁷ Wilson, Jason. "Revealed: Major Anti-Lockdown Group's Links to America's Far Right." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 8 May 2020. Web.

²⁰⁸ Williams, Pete, and Rebecca Shabad. "Supreme Court Blocks NY from Enforcing COVID Limits on Churches." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 26 Nov. 2020. Web.

cry from Spencer’s vision of an highbrow, transnational right-wing party that builds its politics on the ideas of European leaders and philosophers.

What has emerged instead is a new wave of young ‘tradcats’ like Nick Fuentes who has expressed his support of right-wing authoritarianism, self-identifies as an anti-globalist Nationalist, a Catholic, and has vowed to take over the GOP.²⁰⁹²¹⁰ Fuentes, like most of his followers, are young, loud, angry and have repeatedly revealed through Tweets, interviews and commentaries that their knowledge of Christianity, history, and politics is significantly lacking, if not purposefully ignorant.²¹¹²¹²²¹³ They have capitalized on the foundation of metapolitics that the alt-right laid but have repurposed the message, framing their politics as a youthful crusade to protect a white Christian America, even against mainstream conservative Christians who don’t support their views.²¹⁴ And what is most concerning is that they have already begun to make their mark in US Congress, beginning with the November 2020 election of North Carolinian Republican and House Representative Madison Cawthorn, a 25-year-old zealous white Christian who has spoken openly about abolishing the separation of church and state, converting Jews and

²⁰⁹ Tanner, Charles, and Devin Burghart. Op. Cit. “From Alt-Right To Groyper: White Nationalists Rebrand for 2020 and Beyond.” 38-40.

²¹⁰ Tanner, Chuck. ““My Mission...is to Destroy the GOP,” Says White Nationalist Nick Fuentes” *Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights*, 25 Nov. 2020. Web.

²¹¹ @HeerJeet (Jeet Heer) “Someone obviously didn't finish reading a Mussolini biography.” Twitter, October 5th, 2020, 7:15 P.M. Web. Journalist Jeet Heer responds to a tweet from Nick Fuentes comparing Donald Trump to Mussolini after Trump survived COVID-19.

²¹² Drake, Matthew. “Three Myths About Christianity Debunked.” *BitChute*, commentary by Matthew Drake and Nick Fuentes, 30 October 2017. Web. Fuentes reveals his opinion that the biblical passage on the Tower of Babel supports an ethnonationalist vision of Christendom.

²¹³ @CalebJHull (Caleb J. Hull) “Here's Nick Fuentes denying that the Holocaust happened. Him and his followers are scum of the earth and their bad faith, anti-Semitic attacks should be shot down by the entire conservative movement.” *Twitter*, October 30th, 2019, 10:26 A.M. Web.

²¹⁴ “Groyper Army.” *Anti-Defamation League*. Web.

Muslims²¹⁵, and who Nick Fuentes has called “the living, breathing, blood of the traditional American nation.”²¹⁶

The next decade of American politics will be defining. The far-right has already begun the process of reinventing the Republican party, conservative values in America, Western civilizational history, and Christianity. At the 2019 Groyper Leadership Summit in Florida, Patrick Casey and Nick Fuentes discussed what happens “after Trump”, saying that “The only chance for America to be saved is if populism is able to move beyond Trumpism – is if someone comes along in 2024 that can carry the mantle of nationalism, strikes down globalism, and is able to get elected and actually make things happen once he gets in office.”

Groups like the Groypers and AIM are well on their way to infiltrating traditional right-wing circles and the alt-right helped them pave the way. Their politics are incredibly influential, not just for leaders in the movement, but for their increasingly young followers; I see their political talking points echoed by teenagers on TikTok, in comments on YouTube, and in livestreams on Twitch and Discord with underage players. They have successfully adopted internet culture and continue to appeal to the insecurity and anger of white kids in America, giving them a space to funnel their youthful anxieties into jokey anti-Semitism and a feeling of group belonging under the umbrella of white/Christian nationalism (whether they believe in it or not).

²¹⁵ Friedman, Gabe. “Madison Cawthorn Has Tried to Convert Jews to Christianity.” *The Forward*, 16 Nov. 2020. Web.

²¹⁶ TheReelDean. “Nick Fuentes on Madison Cawthorn.” *YouTube*, commentary by Nick Fuentes, 25 June 2020. Web.

Most of the Groypers and like-minded new rightists have already reached voting age, and in the near future, it is likely they will support someone considerably more dangerous than Donald Trump. While America has not yet integrated openly far-right groups into their political structure like some Western European countries,²¹⁷²¹⁸ the influence of these new right groups will certainly continue to grow unless conservative and Christian institutions push back, understanding these groups as a serious threat to democracy and openly disavowing white nationalism. Where the alt-right failed, the new wave of Christian far-rightists may succeed, and we must be prepared to accept that they may be the future face of conservative Christian politics.

²¹⁷ “Germany's AfD: How Right-Wing Is Nationalist Alternative for Germany?” *BBC News*, BBC, 11 Feb. 2020. Web.

²¹⁸ Maio, Giovanna De. “The Impact of COVID-19 on the Italian Far Right: The Rise of Brothers of Italy.” *Brookings*, Brookings, 30 Nov. 2020. Web.

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<https://twitter.com/nickjfuentes/status/1249838912266264577?lang=en>

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<https://quillette.com/2018/03/15/alt-right-gets-wrong-jews/>

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