

## Alt Right: A Primer on the New White Supremacy

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One of the 2016's most popular extremist phrases is "alt right." The term originated with extremists but has increasingly found its way into the mainstream media.

Alt right is short for "alternative right." This vague term actually encompasses a range of people on the extreme right who reject mainstream conservatism in favor of forms of conservatism that embrace implicit or explicit racism or white supremacy.



ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt explains what the alt right believes, and why it's so dangerous, on MSNBC.

People who identify with the alt right regard mainstream or traditional conservatives as weak and impotent, largely because they do not sufficiently support racism and anti-Semitism. Alt righters frequently disparage the conservative movement by using the derogatory term "[cuckservative](#)," popularized in 2015. The term "cuckservative," a combination of "conservative" and "cuckold,"

is used by white supremacists to describe a white Christian conservative who promotes the interests of Jews and non-whites over those of whites.

Though not every person who identifies with the alt right is a white supremacist, most are and “white identity” is central to people in this milieu. In fact, alt righters reject modern conservatism explicitly because they believe that mainstream conservatives are not advocating for the interests of white people as a group.

### **How did the term alt right originate?**

White supremacist [Richard Spencer](#), who runs the National Policy Institute, a tiny white supremacist think tank, coined the term “Alternative Right” as the name for an online publication that debuted in 2010. The online publication changed hands in 2013 when Spencer shut it down. It was soon re-launched by Colin Liddell and Andy Nowicki, who were former writers for *Alternative Right*. Spencer went on to found another online journal, *Radix*. Both *Alternative Right* and *Radix* act as forums for racists, anti-Semites and others who identify with the alt right.

“Alt right” is not the only phrase used to describe this movement. Some of its adherents use other, similar phrases, such as the “New Right” and the “Dissident Right.” They all refer to the same race-infused brand of extreme conservatism.

### **What is the ideology of the alt right?**

Alt right adherents identify with a range of different ideologies that put white identity at their centers. Many claim themselves as Identitarians, a term that originated in France with the founding of the *Bloc Identitaire* movement and its youth counterpart, *Generation Identitaire*. Identitarians espouse racism and intolerance under the guise of preserving the ethnic and cultural origins of their respective countries. American Identitarians such as Richard Spencer claim to want to preserve European-American (i.e., white) culture in the U.S. As Michael McGregor, a writer and editor for *Radix* wrote in an article in the publication, Identitarians want “the preservation of our identity--the cultural and genetic

heritage that makes us who we are.” Identitarians reject multiculturalism or pluralism in any form.

Others in the alt right identify as so-called radical traditionalists, people who want to preserve what they claim are traditional Christian values but from a uniquely white supremacist perspective. The [Traditionalist Youth Network](#) is a group that espouses a white supremacist form of Christianity and promotes “family and folk” and separation of the races.

Some in the alt right identify as white nationalists, who want to preserve the white majority in the U.S., claiming that whites losing their majority status is equivalent to “white genocide.” They favor propaganda on subjects such as immigration and “black crime” as “evidence” of this ostensible ethnic cleansing of whites.

Everyone under the alt right umbrella shares a fixation on white identity. Different segments of the alt right may refer to themselves as neo-reactionaries (those who reject liberal democracy and ideas associated with the Enlightenment. Some neo-reactionaries refer to their theories as the “Dark Enlightenment.”) Others may call themselves “race realists” or alternately “HBD” advocates, a reference to human biodiversity (those who believe that one’s race governs traits such as behavior and intelligence—with non-whites being inferior to whites). However they define themselves, alt righters reject egalitarianism, democracy, universalism and multiculturalism.

A number of alt righters are also blatantly anti-Semitic and blame Jews for allegedly promoting anti-white policies such as immigration and diversity. Alt righters mock conservative support of Israel as anti-white. The woman behind the alt right Twitter handle recently wrote, “I support ALL Jews living in Israel or a defined area.”

**Who makes up the alt right?**

The alt right is an extremely loose movement, made up of different strands of people connected to white supremacy. One body of adherents is the ostensibly “intellectual” racists who create many of the doctrines and principles of the white supremacist movement. They seek to attract young educated whites to the movement by highlighting the achievements and alleged intellectual and cultural superiority of whites. They run a number of small white supremacist enterprises that include think tanks, online publications and publishing houses. These include *Radix* and Washington Summit Publishers, both run by Richard Spencer; Counter Currents Publishing, run by Greg Johnson; American Renaissance, run by [Jared Taylor](#); and The Right Stuff, a political and social blog with a number of contributors.

Another strand of the alt right consists of younger, social media-savvy racists. In recent months, a number of these alt righters have promoted Donald Trump’s\* presidential bid, seeing the populist candidate as someone tougher than so-called “cuckservatives,” thanks to his controversial stands on issues ranging from immigration to Muslims in America

Alt righters like to try to use terms such as “culture” as substitutes for more lightning rod terms such as “race,” or promote “Western Civilization” as a code word for white culture or identity. They do not make explicit references to white supremacy like the “14 words” a slogan used by neo-Nazis and other hardcore white supremacists. The “14 words” refers to the expression, “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.” Even though alt righters share the sentiment behind the “14 words” they’re more inclined to talk about preserving European-American identity.

### **What is the impact of the alt right?**

Though the alt right is not a movement, per se, the number of people who identify with it is growing. It includes a number of young people who espouse racist and anti-Semitic beliefs. It has a loud presence online. The intellectual racists who identify as part of the alt right also run a growing number of publications and

publishing houses that promote white supremacist ideas. Their goal is to influence mainstream whites by exposing them to the concept of white identity and racial consciousness.

The term “alternative right” is a conscious attempt by these people to stake out part of the conservative spectrum and to claim that they deserve a voice in conservative conversations. The alt right label explicitly avoids the use of the word “race” and conjures rebel or anti-establishment figures—often attractive to youth. This is an attempt by white supremacists to infiltrate conservative conversations that have largely deliberately excluded them in recent decades.

\*As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Anti-Defamation League does not support or oppose candidates for political office.

**‘They are anti-Semitic, they know what they’re doing is anti-Semitic, but they think it’s funny. Even though the alt-right rejects mainstream conservatism, they still want to be a part of the conversation. That’s why they’re calling themselves the alternative-right.’—Marilyn Mayo, research fellow, ADL Center on Extremism, from an interview with The Toronto Star**