

THE ALT-RIGHT

By

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The Alt-Right, shorthand for The Alternative Right, has become a new amorphous player on the U.S. political scene and is tugging at the hearts and minds of American Republican voters, primarily white millennials who have a college education.

The term was coined by Richard B. Spencer in 2010, an editor of *The American Conservative*, when he launched the Conservative Right blog.

The Alt-Right is not a political party and it has no formal organization or formal ideology. So far, it is not even considered a movement by most observers. It relies on the Internet, blogs, podcasts and various social media to allow its adherents, often anonymously, to express their views and to encourage discussion. Using the hash tag #AltRight, its adherents have become surprisingly effective proliferating their views and in forcing these views into the political mainstream.

While its primary focus is to promote extreme conservatism and to protect “white identity”, it is sometimes easier to describe what its followers are against rather than what they support.

Its founder claims the Alt-Right is redefining categories for a new kind of conservatism. The movement, to extent it can be said to be a movement, denounces political correctness. It is against both legal and illegal immigration and it is against free trade. Various spoke persons have expressed views associated with white supremacy, anti-Islamism, anti-feminism, anti-Semitism, and right wing populism.

During its short life span, it has succeeded in attracting the support of a large number of far right publications and a growing stable of well-known proponents for the far right. Clearly, the Alt-Right is very savvy in using technology to spread its messages and leverage its influence on a much wider audience.

Chief among Alt-Right's most vocal and visible supporters is the Breitbart news organization which, until his death in March 2012, was run by Andrew Breitbart, a far right conservative and former editor of the Drudge report. He was succeeded by Stephen Bannon another high profile spokesperson for the far right.

There is general agreement that Donald Trump is a "hero" in the eyes of the Alt-Right supporters. There is no evidence, however, that Trump explicitly endorses the Alt-Right or its ideology, informal or otherwise. Nevertheless, there is no denying that many of Trump's policies have much in common with the views of most Alt-Right devotees.

Also, it should be noted that when Trump juggled his campaign team for the third time, he appointed Breitbart's Chairman, Stephen Bannon, as his new campaign chairman.

It is difficult to determine what influence, if any, the Alt-Right will have on the current election. However, in the aftermath of the election when the Republican Party tries to redefine itself to be relevant, it will be interesting to see what role the Alt-Right plays during this process.

Since the Republican party is badly split and since the Tea party has faded into the distance, there is clearly room for a third party that better captures the mood of a large number of the disenfranchised Republicans.

Could the Alt-Right become that party?