

# The Danger of Critical Race Theory

By Marc A. Thiessen, Columnist, The Washington Post

Critical race theory, [Professor Allen Guelzo of Princeton] [Guelzo says](#), is a subset of critical theory that began with Immanuel Kant in the 1790s. It was a response to — and rejection of — the principles of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason on which the American republic was founded. Kant believed that “reason was inadequate to give shape to our lives” and so he set about “developing a theory of being critical of reason,” Guelzo says.

But the critique of reason ended up justifying “ways of appealing to some very unreasonable things as explanations — things like race, nationality, class,” he says. Critical theory thus helped spawn totalitarian ideologies in the 20th century such as Marxism and Nazism, which taught that all human relationships are relationships of power between an oppressor class and an oppressed class. For the Marxists, the bourgeoisie were the oppressors. For the Nazis, the Jews were the oppressors. And today, in 21st century America, critical race theory teaches that Whites are the oppressors.

In CRT, “**all White people are instinctively white supremacists**,” Guelzo says, adding, “I say ‘instinctively’ because this is not a function of reason.” This is why its advocates talk about “systemic racism” — a CRT term that has crept into our public discourse and has even been [embraced](#) by President Biden. “*Systemic sounds like systematic, except of course that it isn’t*,” Guelzo says. “*When you try to find something that is systematic, then you have to go find evidence.*” But “*systemic implies something so deep and so instinctive that you’re not even conscious of it. ... [that] there is an instinctive bias that is built into people of certain colors.*”

CRT **rejects democracy as a “relic of Enlightenment reason,”** Guelzo says, and argues that **White people “use tricks like democracy and the search for truth ... to exploit and oppress and dominate people of color.”** Don’t take his word for it. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, authors of “[Critical Race Theory: An Introduction](#),” [state](#) that “*critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law.*”

Because **critical theory rejects reason**, it cannot be questioned. Under this rubric, Guelzo says, the only purpose of questions is to serve the interests of the oppressive class, and “any answer you come up with, which doesn’t speak in terms of some hidden structure of oppression, can simply be dismissed as part of the structure of oppression.” For example, “*if you believe, as the Nazis did, that the Jews are responsible for all political and economic events, then my pointing out that the overwhelming majority of political leaders are not Jews merely shows that I am either a dupe of the Jews or that I’m in on the fix.*” Similarly, if you question whether all White people are oppressors, “the questioning itself is an example of how you’re in on the oppression.”

For advocates of CRT, the only solution to systemic oppression is the “inversion of color power,” Guelzo explains. So **while most Americans oppose racial discrimination, critical race theory embraces it.** Ibram X. Kendi, one of CRT’s leading advocates, [openly declares](#): “*The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination. The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination.*”

This is the opposite of what the civil rights movement stood for. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. **did not argue that America was systemically racist; he argued that racism was un-American.** He appealed to the Enlightenment ideals contained in what he called our “magnificent” Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and declared **his goal was to take “the whole nation back to those great wells of democracy, which were dug deep by the Founding Fathers.”** King argued Bull Connor, head of the Birmingham, Ala., police, and the Southern racists were violating the **principles of the American founding.** But **critical race theory argues the opposite** — that Connor was the fulfillment of the American founding, because **America was founded to perpetuate white supremacy.**

Why is this dangerous? As Richard M. Weaver famously said, “[Ideas have consequences.](#)” **Critical theory has led to the rise of ideologies that have killed millions.** “*We have paid severe prices at those moments when*

*people have lost faith in reason and decided to defect to something else,” Guelzo says. “Those are the moments when genocide rears its hideous head.”*

By **rejecting reason**, he argues, critical race theory could provoke a backlash that drives others “into **equal, but opposite irrationality**” such as “genuine white supremacy. ... If your critical race theory is impervious to questioning and evidence, then fine: I will retreat into my critical race theory and it too will be impervious to evidence and the questioning. **At which point then the only solution becomes violence.**”

**This is why CRT is so dangerous — and must never be used to indoctrinate America’s children.**