

Forschungsgruppe Europäische Gemeinschaften (FEG)

Arbeitspapier Nr. 22

Clyde W. Barrow

# God, Money, and the State

The Spirits of American Empire



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# **God, Money, and the State**

**The Spirits of American Empire**

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## 1. The Three Logics of American Empire

*"In God we Trust."*

- Official Motto of the United States of America

*"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

- Francis Bellamy (1892) and U.S. Congress (1954)

*"God Bless America., land that I love..."*

- Irving Berlin (1938), America's unofficial "national anthem"

*"God money I'll do anything for you  
God money just tell me what you want me to  
God money nail me up against the wall  
God money don't want everything he wants it all"*

- Nine Inch Nails, Head Like a Hole (1989, by Trent Reznor)

On December 2, 2002, *The New York Times* reported that Karl Rove, President George W. Bush's leading political advisor, had admitted to engineering the hiring of Ralph Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition, by the Enron Corporation. Rove's admission was made in the midst of a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission investigation into Enron's illegal accounting practices and the discovery that it had monopolistically manipulated wholesale energy supplies to create an artificial "energy shortage" in California that brought the state's utility industry to the brink of financial collapse, while generating enormous illegal profits for Enron. Enron paid Reed as much as \$10,000 to \$20,000 monthly during the period between his hiring in September of 1997 and the company's collapse in late 2001.

Reed was hired by Enron just when President Bush was organizing his U.S. Presidential campaign and Rove's associates openly admit that the high paying consulting job with Enron was a way of firming up Reed's support for Bush's candidacy at a time when other Republicans were trying to win support from key leaders of America's Christian Right. Reed threw his support behind the Bush campaign in 2000 and most experts agree that Reed's endorsement played an important part in the President's primary victories and contributed to his success in the general election.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> When reporters asked Reed about his relationship with Enron, he denied that his hiring was a form of political patronage and instead claimed that his consulting work for the company involved helping "with an Enron campaign in Pennsylvania to win a central role in the state's electricity market." There is nothing in Reed's background that qualified him as an expert on electric power so most astute observers concluded that his consultancy with the company was a patronage appointment designed to cement Enron's connections to the highest circles of U.S. state power, including access to Vice President Dick Cheney, who has refused to disclose any details about his contacts with Enron during the critical period when he was shaping the Bush Administration's national energy policy.

It is no longer surprising to a cynical American electorate when politicians and corporate executives collude to serve each other's mutual interests,<sup>2</sup> but much of the public was shocked to discover that moralizing leaders of the Christian right had also become inside players in the Washington power game as high paid consultants to the political and corporate establishment, which hardly modeled the ethical standard set by Jesus Christ, who so plainly said that:

“No one can serve two masters.. You cannot serve both God and Money.”<sup>3</sup>

The direct collusion between God, Money, and the State exemplified in the Ralph Reed incident is not unprecedented in American history, but rather illustrates the central thesis of this paper. The political development of American Empire, which has received so much attention in recent scholarly literature, occurs at the peculiar conjuncture of three “logics” which develop independently at the cultural (ideological), political, and economic levels of the American social formation, but which periodically intersect to generate violent outward thrusts of political expansion, which simultaneously advance the interests of the economically dominant class and its political elite with the legitimating cultural underpinnings of religious messianism.

My thesis is consistent with a Marxian structuralist analysis, which claims that the development of a individual social formations should be conceptualized in terms of the interactions between an economic base, legal and political superstructures, and the forms of social consciousness peculiar to that social formation with the economic being determinative “in the last instance.” In general, each level of a concrete social formation has its own internal logic or historical rhythm that is relatively autonomous from the other levels of the social formation. The relative separation of the economic, political, and ideological structures means that each level of a social formation develops according to its own internal time sequence, but each level periodically “intervenes” through its effects in other structures to create what Nicos Poulantzas calls:

“...the unstable equilibrium of correspondence/non-correspondence of levels dislocated in their own time sequences, this equilibrium is never *given* by the economic as such, but is maintained by the state....*the state has the particular function of constituting the factor of cohesion between the levels of a social formation.*”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1969); G. William Domhoff, *The Powers That Be: The Processes of Ruling Class Domination in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

<sup>3</sup> *Holy Bible* (King James version), Matthew 6:24.

<sup>4</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: Verso, 1978), p. 44.

This paper argues that Empire is the particular state form that provides a factor of cohesion to the American social formation. This state form was consciously designed by the Founders of the American republic and linked culturally to an American civil religion that is routinely invoked by American political leaders to legitimate the expansion of Empire. Thus, a first component of this larger thesis rests on the observation that American political culture is periodically “overdetermined” at the ideological level by recurring cycles of evangelical religious messianism. These cultural cycles – or the logic of messianism -- are described by historians of religion and American culture as “Great Awakenings” that periodically sweep through the American population and typically last for two to three generations (40 to 60 years). These Great Awakenings have been imbued with a sense of messianic national mission since the first English settlement of the American continent. It is widely agreed that the United States is now in the midst of its Fourth Great Awakening.

Second, political historians have often observed that American political life is characterized by the ebb and flow of periodic populist revolts followed by long periods of democratic acquiescence and unfettered capitalist accumulation.<sup>5</sup> Paradoxically, most American “revolutions” are strikingly anti-statist and culturally conservative beginning with the American Revolution (1776-1783), which was followed by the Great Revolution (1800-1808), the Jacksonian Revolution (1828-1836), the Populist Revolt (1892-1900), the New Freedom (1912-1920), and more recently the “Reagan Revolution” (1980-1988). Finally, I conceptualize the phases of American capitalist development according to the periodization developed by the social structure of accumulation theorists (SSAT).<sup>6</sup> SSA theory emphasizes that specific *historical* processes of capital accumulation can only be sustained to the extent that cultural values, forms of business organization, government policy, law, educational institutions (i.e., superstructures) are compatible with the requirements of each new phase in the accumulation process. The interconnected matrix of economic, social, and political institutions that support capital accumulation through a particular state form is called a social structure of accumulation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> James Allen Smith, *The Spirit of American Government* (New York: Macmillan, 1907).

<sup>6</sup> David Gordon, “Stages of Accumulation and Long Economic Cycles,” in T. Hopkins and I. Wallerstein, eds., *Processes of the World System* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980), pp. 9-45; Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon, and Thomas E. Weisskopf, *After the Wasteland: A Democratic Economics for the Year 2000* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), Chap. 2.

<sup>7</sup> For comparison, see, David M. Kotz, “A Comparative Analysis of the Theory of Regulation and the Social Structure of Accumulation Theory.” *Science and Society* 54, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 5-28.



Quite simply, when the three logics of messianism, empire, and capital accumulation coincide and reinforce each other at particular historical conjunctures they explode in violent projections of American military power. These bursts of Empire building occur when the cultural background (e.g., a Great Awakening) of American politics intersects with the economic interests of the dominant class, who are able to deploy a political system structured for the creation of Empire. These periods continue until one or more of the logics exhausts itself in the moral disillusionment or political defeat of messianic evangelists; in military defeat or a political regime change; or the successful re-stabilization of American capitalism on the basis of a new social structure of accumulation.

## 2. The Logic Messianism

When the Massachusetts Bay colonists sailed for America on March 22, 1630, John Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts, left stately homes and financial security to sail into a dark and frightening American wilderness. It was a place where the approximately 700 Puritan colonists knew they faced the daily prospect of death by disease, starvation, and Indian attack. As they contemplated this prospect on their voyage to the New World, Governor Winthrop wrote and delivered a sermon entitled “A Modell of Christian Charity.” Winthrop admonished the Puritan immigrants that the purpose of their voyage was to increase the body of Christ in America and to preserve themselves and their children from the corruption of an evil old world they were leaving behind. In making the trip to a New World uncorrupted by Mammon, the colonists were making a covenant to obey the commandments of God and if they did so the Lord would surely bless them in the new land so long as they continued to follow Him.<sup>8</sup> In a passage that has echoed across the centuries, Governor Winthrop told the Puritan settlers that if they maintained Christian faith he was certain that:

“...the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us as his own people and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways...We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when he shall make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations, ‘the Lord make

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<sup>8</sup> John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity; Written on Board the Arbella, on the Atlantic Ocean (1630),” in Perry Miller, ed., *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), Chap. 2.

it like that of New England'. For we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill.

The eyes of all people are upon us.”<sup>9</sup>

In forging this special covenant with God, Winthrop and the Puritan colonists created a key element of American cultural identity, which is periodically reaffirmed in the cycle of religious Great Awakenings that most often erupt during periods of cultural or social dislocation. Winthrop’s metaphor of Christian America as a city on a hill became a motif that has inspired American literary and political thought across three centuries as succeeding generations of Americans inherited the idea that their country was intended by Providence to serve as a moral example -- a beacon of light -- to the rest of the world.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, some years later, Winthrop wrote in his journal that the “Godly people in New England begin now to apprehend a special hand of God in raising this plantation.”<sup>11</sup>

### **2.1. The Great Awakenings**

The Great Awakenings that have often drawn on Winthrop’s imagery in fiery jeremiads against America’s “moral decline” have been a powerful and constituting element of American political culture. William G. McLoughlin, one of the most renowned historians of American religion, points out that “Great awakenings are not periods of social neurosis (though they begin in times of cultural confusion)” and they may appear quite bizarre or even frightening to non-Americans. However, McLoughlin insists that Great Awakenings develop according to their own cultural logic and are not the results of depressions, wars, or epidemics, but of “critical disjunctions” in Americans’ self-understanding of what it means to be American. McLoughlin points out that these periods of religious revivalism are not brief outbursts of mass emotionalism by small or isolated groups of American society, but the effect of profound cultural transformations affecting all Americans and extending over a generation or more.

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<sup>9</sup> Winthrop’s imagery was taken from the *Holy Bible* (King James’ version) Matthew 5:14. Winthrop also tells of the ill consequences that will befall the Puritans if they fail to keep their covenant: “Thus stands the cause between God and us...Now if the Lord shall please to heare us, and bring us in peace to the place wee desire, then hath hee ratified this covenant and sealed our Commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it; but if wee shall neglect the observation of these articles which are the ends wee have propounded, and, dissembling with our God, shall fail to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnall intentions, seeking greate things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely breake out in wrathe against us; be revenged of such a [sinful] people and make us knowe the price of the breache of such a covenant.....Soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our God in this worke wee have undertaken, and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.”

<sup>10</sup> A small reminder of this inheritance is that the Massachusetts State Capitol in Boston, birthplace of the American Revolution, still sits atop “Beacon Hill.”

However, the Great Awakenings operate on an irregular cycle which sometimes precede and sometimes overlap with the great popular revolts in American political history. For instance, the origins of the American Revolution (1776) can be traced to the latter part of the First Great Awakening (1720-1770), which carried word of Winthrop's American "covenant" across the thirteen colonies to forge a unique sense of messianic national identity prior to the Revolution. The earliest stirrings of the First Great Awakening began in New Jersey in the 1720's with the evangelical preaching of Theodorus Frelinghuysen, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. In New England, it was started in 1734 by the rousing preaching of Jonathan Edwards. The revival in the Middle Colonies was again ignited in New Jersey by Presbyterian ministers trained under William Tennent. His son Gilbert Tennent became the leading figure of the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies. Other preachers followed and with the ecumenical tour of George Whitefield (1739-41), the famous Methodist preacher from England, the isolated currents of revivalism were united and carried into all the colonies. The revival reached the South with the preaching (1748-59) of Samuel Davies among Presbyterians in Virginia, while Baptist preachers had great successes in North Carolina in the 1760s, which was then followed by the rapid spread of Methodism shortly before the American Revolution. Aside from reaffirming a religious thread in American culture, the First Great Awakening served to increase contact between the colonies and create institutional (church) interests that were inter-colonial in character. The spread of evangelical Protestant denominations led to an increase in hostility to the Anglican Church and to the royal officials who supported it, while encouraging a more democratic spirit in religion.<sup>12</sup>

Shortly after the Constitution of 1789 explicitly re-founded the nation on the logic of Empire (see below), a Second Great Awakening (1790-1850) followed settlers westward and infused them with a renewed sense of "manifest destiny." Following the Civil War (1861-1865), a period of rapid industrialization (1870-1893), and the closing of the frontier (1893) that fulfilled this manifest destiny, a Third Great Awakening (1890-1930) supplied the cultural background that launched America on its global crusade "to make the world safe for democracy."

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<sup>11</sup> John Winthrop, *A Journal of the Transactions and Occurrences in the Settlement of Massachusetts and the other New England Colonies, from the Year 1630 to 1644* (Hartford: Elisha Babcock, 1790).

<sup>12</sup> See Alan E. Heimert and Perry Miller, eds., *Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences* (1967); Charles H. Maxson, *The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1920); Wesley M. Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965); Edwin S. Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (New York: Harper, 1957); Richard L. Bushman, ed., *The Great Awakening* (New York: Atheneum, 1970); Darrett B. Rutman, *The Great Awakening* (Huntington, N.Y.: R.E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1977).

Most cultural and religious historians agree that America entered a Fourth Great Awakening (or its fifth if one includes the Puritan Awakening) sometime in the late 1950s or early 1960s. McLoughlin argues that Americans have for some time been “in a difficult period of reorientation, seeking an understanding of who we are, how we relate to the rest of the universe, and what the meaning is of the manifold crises that threaten our sense of order at home and our commitments as a world power abroad.”<sup>13</sup> In many respects, contemporary Americans have been grappling with all the same phenomena and issues that have confused them in the past – immigration, cultural diversification, the country’s place and destiny in the world (i.e., empire), and the meaning of economic prosperity (i.e., materialism) in a nation whose identity derives from a covenant with God.

In one of the most ambitious efforts to understand the current Great Awakening, Robert William Fogel suggests that we need to understand the developmental pattern of these recurring political-religious cycles, which he suggests emerge and dissipate in three phases. A Great Awakening begins with a phase of religious revival. The religious revivals are followed by a phase of rising political activity. A final phase occurs when the new ethics and politics of the religious awakening come under increasing challenge within society and the political coalition promoted by the awakening goes into decline.<sup>14</sup>

## ***2.2. The Fourth Great Awakening***

The most recent phase of religious revivalism was ignited in the late 1950s by the Billy Graham Evangelical Crusade (BGEC) (1956 – 1979). As the BGEC and other evangelical “crusades” gained momentum during the 1960s, conservative Protestant church leaders in the United States, including foreign mission executives, pastors, and denominational leaders, increasingly saw a need to clarify the burgeoning movement’s theological positions. The ideological turning point in this early revival phase was reached at the Congress on the Church’s World Wide Mission held in Wheaton, Illinois from April 9 to 16, 1966. The meeting was sponsored by the Foreign Missions Association (FMA) and the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) and

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<sup>13</sup> William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 16-7-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), see, [http://www.csp.org/chrestomathy/revivals\\_awakenings.html](http://www.csp.org/chrestomathy/revivals_awakenings.html)

<sup>14</sup> Robert William Fogel, *The Fourth Great Awakening & the Future of Egalitarianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). I have significant reservations about Fogel’s periodization of the Great Awakenings, which he suggests last about 100 years each in contrast to most historians who put them at 40 to 60 years. He also proposes an explanation of the Great Awakenings that is oddly a technologically determinist one. Nevertheless, his identification of the “three phases” is compelling and persuasive.

was convened at the headquarters of the Billy Graham Evangelical Association (BGEA). The Congress was attended by 938 delegates from 258 mission boards active in 71 countries. One of the end results of the Congress was a statement of theological principles called “The Wheaton Declaration” that was unanimously adopted by the delegates.<sup>15</sup>

The stated rationale for the Congress was the need to reconsider Christianity’s “worldwide mission” in the emerging context of globalization, which at the time was an idea scarcely being discussed by scholars, public officials, or even the executives of multi-national corporations. The *Declaration* essentially proclaimed a global Christian crusade among evangelists with its statement that:

“On this shrinking planet, with all human affairs moving toward an age of universality never previously witnessed, many voices call for a religion that has universal validity. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the message that has this validity....God is sovereign in our times. We believe in Him, in the progress of His gospel, and in His triumph in history.”<sup>16</sup>

The Congress was nominally apolitical,<sup>17</sup> although it explicitly recognized that in the future evangelical Protestants would need “to apply Scriptural principles to such problems as racism, war, population explosion, poverty, family disintegration, social revolution, and communism.”<sup>18</sup> The *Declaration* also envisioned a more “militarized” version of the evangelical crusade with its claim that the smaller world created by globalization:

“...is hostile to the Church because it is hostile to God. His Church is at war...In our age, however, this hostility has been intensified by the rise of atheistic communism, extreme nationalism, resurgent ethnic religions, secularism, and corrupted forms of Christianity.”<sup>19</sup>

As a church at war with other religions, the Congress concluded that evangelicals “have an obligation to examine religious movements that challenge the uniqueness and finality of Biblical Christianity,” while noting in particular (and well before Samuel Huntington) that “Non-Christian

<sup>15</sup> *Wheaton Declaration: Subscribed by the Delegates to the Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission* convened at Wheaton, Illinois, April 9-16, 1966, see, <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/docs/wd66/b01.html>. A copy of the Declaration can also be found in the published proceedings of the Congress, *Study Papers: Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission, April 9-16, 1966, Wheaton, Illinois.*, Glen Ellyn, Illinois: Scripture Press Foundation, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 7.

<sup>17</sup> “The Congress, due to inherent limitations, was unable to discuss some important subjects of current interest...Nothing was said about the Jews. War and peace were not discussed. Communism as such was not on the agenda. The role of the United Nations and China’s relation to it and the world were excluded. The Congress deliberately limited its discussions,” *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

religious systems, such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism in their new missionary vigor pose an oppressive threat to the growth of the Church.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, in declaring a new crusade at both home and abroad, the *Wheaton Declaration* reaffirmed its signatories “...trust in the sovereign God, His triumph in history, and the victory of His Church,” while noting that “The Scriptures emphatically declare that Christ will return when the gathering of his true Church is completed. All human history shall be consummated in Him.”<sup>21</sup>

Although one could easily dismiss the new crusade as the mere rantings of a few evangelical Protestant ministers (and many did), the Reverend Billy Graham was a long-time associate of Richard Nixon, who would be elected President of the United States only two years after the *Wheaton Declaration*. After the political and cultural turbulence of the 1960s, America’s first humiliation in modern war (Vietnam), followed by the chronic economic dislocations of the 1970s, the restoration of America’s covenant with God assumed the form of a “return to traditional American values.” As the Christian “New Right” became more politicized and applied “Scriptural principle” to American politics, its moral and cultural agenda would help propel the Republican party – long known as the party of business -- to long-term majority status in American politics.

America’s Fourth Great Awakening entered its explicitly political phase in 1979 when the Reverend Jerry Falwell joined forces with several Republican party strategists, including Paul Weyrich, Richard Viguerie, and Howard Phillips to found the Moral Majority. By 1981, the Moral Majority had become the new crusade’s “disciplined, charging army.”<sup>22</sup> The key tenets of the Moral Majority’s political philosophy was “to defend the free enterprise system, the family, and Bible morality.”<sup>23</sup> Its long-term political goal was to politicize and unify a frustrated and fragmented fundamentalist religious community and mold it into a powerful voting bloc behind the Republican party. Strategists such as Viguerie saw an opportunity to break the New Deal political coalition by diverting the nation’s domestic political agenda away from economic and distributive issues to social and cultural issues by bemoaning America’s moral, political, and military “decline” as a fall from the grace of the covenant. The Moral Majority appealed mainly to Protestants, but it invited all morally conservative Americans who believed in its tenets, including orthodox Jews, Catholics, and Mormons to join it as political allies. The Moral Majority played a significant role

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 25, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Frances Fitzgerald, “A Disciplined, Charging Army,” *The New Yorker*, May 18, 1981.

in the 1980 elections that launched the Reagan Revolution through its strong support of conservative candidates. It lobbied for prayer and the teaching of creationism in public schools, while opposing homosexual rights, abortion, sex education in the schools, pornography, and the Equal Rights Amendment for women. It supported a strong national defense, was strongly pro-Israel, and stridently anticommunist in its foreign policy positions, such as opposing the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties (SALT).

The Moral Majority claimed a constituency of 50 million supporters, who turned out in large numbers for the 1980 election that elected Ronald Reagan to the U.S. Presidency. Falwell estimated that the Moral Majority's political campaign added 3 to 4 million registered voters to conservative causes in 1980 and raised \$11 million for lobbying efforts in 1984. At its peak, the organization was raising \$350 million to \$500 million a year. The Moral Majority's broad conservative agenda was the basis for its initial appeal to so many people, but this same multiplicity of issues eventually led to its fracture.<sup>24</sup> Fundamentalists and conservatives with narrower interests became increasingly frustrated with the Moral Majority's diffuse platform, as well the numerous political misstatements and embarrassments by its leaders. Many of its leaders left the Moral Majority to form more focused splinter groups, such as Operation Rescue (anti-abortion), and this fracturing gradually drained membership and resources from the Moral Majority until Jerry Falwell terminated it in 1989.<sup>25</sup>

The vacuum created by the Moral Majority's demise was quickly filled by the Christian Coalition of America, which was founded by Pat Robertson in 1989. The Christian Coalition calls itself "the leading grassroots organization defending our Christian heritage."<sup>26</sup> According to Pat Robertson, its minister/economist founder, the Christian Coalition was established:

"...as a pro-family citizen action organization to impact public policy on a local, state, and national level. The Coalition also serves to teach Christians effective citizenship, and to promote Christian values in government."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> John Saloma III, *Ominous Politics* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> Richard John Neuhaus and Michael Cromartie, eds, *Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1987).

<sup>25</sup> Gustav Niebhur, "Why 'Moral Majority,' A Force for a Decade, Ran Out of Steam," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 25, 1989. See,

[http://www.publiceye.org/research/Group\\_Watch/Entries-92.htm](http://www.publiceye.org/research/Group_Watch/Entries-92.htm)

<sup>26</sup> See, <http://www.cc.org/>

<sup>27</sup> Pat Robertson, "Message from the Founder," see, <http://www.cc.org/aboutcca/patmessage1.html>

Pat Robertson attempted to complete the union of evangelical messianism and the Republican party by challenging George H. Bush in the 1992 Republican party primaries, by labeling him (correctly) as a representative the party's "old" corporate establishment, who was timid in pursuing the New Right's cultural agenda. There was growing concern among evangelicals and other cultural conservatives that the party's corporate establishment had delivered on the conservative economic agenda (i.e., Reaganomics), but had failed to deliver any significant victories on the new social and cultural agenda.<sup>28</sup> In a 1992 fundraising letter for his U.S. Presidential campaign, Robertson wrote:

"The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians."<sup>29</sup>

Despite Pat Robertson's intellectual clumsiness, the jumble of ideas contained in this and many other such statements resonated with much of America and certainly with the Christian Coalition's followers. For instance, the Reverend Bill Banuchi, Executive Director of the New York chapter of the Christian Coalition states emphatically that "in a Socialistic America the Government will place itself in the seat of Almighty God and claim to be the Supreme Power over all the people. This is already happening....This was never the intent of the founders [of the American Republic]."<sup>30</sup> In yet another exemplary sermon delivered on January 27, 2002 by Jennifer Mills-Knutsen, a Christian Coalition minister, a basic theme of the new crusade was reiterated:

"...a battle is brewing. We, donning crosses and carrying bibles, live in the serpent's lair. At the crossroads of humanity, we will face armies of stars, crescents, Buddhas and Krishna. Victory is the only way forward. Our side must eliminate the other for all time.... Startling words? Yes, but throughout its 2000-year history, Christianity has often

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<sup>28</sup> For example, Ralph Reed, former president of the Christian Coalition notes "that sentiment in the religious conservative community very different from a Wall Street or Chamber of Commerce style Republican in the Buchanan candidacy of 1996 where he really made an issue out of the treatment of workers and how we had to take care of those who are being left behind. You know, again, you can debate and Republicans do debate whether he is right or wrong on the merits of trade policy and integration policy, but there's no doubt about the fact that the rhetoric and the political style of a Buchanan, who is a religious conservative candidate, is very different from a Wall Street style candidate," see, "Church and State," Transcript of an Interview of Ralph Reed by David Geren, June 6, 1996, PBS, see, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/gergen/reed\\_6-6.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/gergen/reed_6-6.html)

<sup>29</sup> Pat Robertson quoted in <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/7027/quotes.html>

<sup>30</sup> Reverend Bill Banuchi quoted in <http://www.nychristiancoalition.org/ABG2000.htm>



envisioned itself in this way—dominating the world in Christ’s name, converting all to one mind.”<sup>31</sup>

With doctorate in hand, Ralph Reed succeeded Pat Robertson as head of the Christian Coalition and he echoed this grand messianic vision for the Christian New Right in his book *Active Faith* (1996). Reed quite self-consciously understands the current Great Awakening as a continuation of America’s cycle of religious revivalism and a reaffirmation of its special covenant, but he argues that the current awakening “is on a scale that is almost without precedence....when Jerry Falwell founded the Moral Majority, he was literally leading a people out of the wilderness.”<sup>32</sup>

### 3. The Logic of Empire

It is perhaps G.W.F. Hegel who best captures the American political theodicy in his *Philosophy of History*. Hegel considered the State “the perfect embodiment of Spirit,” but in *The Philosophy of History*, he also historicizes this abstract philosophical claim by identifying “the definite *substance* that receives the form of universality” in the State with “the Spirit of the People....which erects itself into an objective world.” However, because the State is an *abstraction* (i.e., an Idea) in Hegel’s system, he points out that “it is only by a Constitution that the *abstraction* - the State - attains life and reality” in historical time.<sup>33</sup> Constitutions concretize the idea of the State as a real historical embodiment of the spirit of a people. Significantly, Hegel argued that America did not have a “real” state to fully embody and actualize the spirit of its people and, therefore, at the time he wrote, the United States existed outside the dialectic of historical time as seen from Europe. Thus, in a wonderfully prophetic passage Hegel points to America as “the land of the future, where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the World’s History shall reveal itself.”<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Jennifer Mills-Knutsen, “The Old South Church in Boston: Cosmopolitan Christianity?”, see, <http://world.std.com/~eshu/osc/sermons/jmk27jan02.htm>

<sup>32</sup> Reed observes that “the electorate that was mainline Protestant, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, had declined from about 40 percent in 1960 to about 20 percent today, whereas, the percentage of the electorate that was self-identified, evangelical or fundamentalists, had doubled to 25 to 30 percent of the electorate. That’s a critical moment in the American history where the evangelical vote becomes more important than the mainline Protestant. It’s more energetic, it turns out in larger numbers, and of course the critical hard political fact is that it used to be an overwhelmingly Democratic constituency. And, of course, today it’s overwhelmingly Republican,” see, “Church and State,” Transcript of an Interview of Ralph Reed by David Geren, June 6, 1996, PBS, see, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/gergen/reed\\_6-6.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/gergen/reed_6-6.html)

<sup>33</sup> George W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1991), pp. 17, 50, 74, 43-44.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

Hegel observes that the dialectic of history moves from East to West and, consequently, America was a vast empire yet to be realized at the end of history.

This idea has been recaptured in many respects by Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's *Empire*, which identifies the American Revolution "as a moment of great innovation and rupture in the genealogy of modern sovereignty."<sup>35</sup> Instead of the indivisible unity proclaimed by Bodin, Grotius, Hobbes, Rousseau and virtually all modern political theorists, the U.S. Founding Fathers insisted on the divisibility of sovereignty and thus, according to Hardt and Negri, arrived at the idea that "power can be constituted by a whole series of powers that regulate themselves and arrange themselves in networks" [i.e., federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty].<sup>36</sup> Equally significant to their analysis, is a point so obvious that it has never received much attention from students of American political thought; namely, that the Founders "'science of politics' was also inspired by imperial Rome," which "grounded more solidly the republican process of the mediation of social powers and brought it to a conclusion in a synthesis of diverse forms of governments."<sup>37</sup> Hardt and Negri argue that because of the fusion of republicanism and empire in the U.S. Constitution "the new U.S. concept of sovereignty opens with extraordinary force toward the outside...this notion of sovereignty is its tendency toward an open, expansive project operating on an unbounded terrain."<sup>38</sup>

Hardt's and Negri's most remarkable insight is their observation that the U.S. Constitution – the concrete embodiment of the spirit of its people – was designed as an empire, which if combined with messianic religious zeal (idea) and an expansive commercial interest provides the synthetic *Aufhebung* for explosive projections of American power when these forces combine at critical historical junctures. American political theorists have published innumerable books and essays on the *Federalist Papers* and the political thought of the Founding Fathers, but overlooked in this vast literature is that in 1788 *The Federalist Papers* refer to the United States as an "empire" eight separate times in various contexts. These were references to a country with 3 million inhabitants (compared to Great Britain's 8 million) divided among 13 independent states, which were barely held together by a confederate constitution and a central "state" that had no army, no navy, was on verge of financial collapse, and potentially on the verge of political dissolution within a matter of months.

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 160.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

Yet, in the opening paragraph of *Federalist No. 1*, Alexander Hamilton observes that in the vote to ratify the proposed Constitution, the American people were being called upon to decide “the fate of an empire in many respects the most interesting in the world.” In *Federalist No. 14*, James Madison argues that the ratification votes were to decide whether the inhabitants of the 13 States were to “be fellow citizens of one great, respectable, and flourishing empire.” Likewise, in *Federalist No. 22*, Hamilton refers to the “American empire” and still elsewhere he describes the United States as “an immense empire” (No. 28) or simply as “the empire” (No. 53). Madison also describes the United States as “this great empire” (No. 40).

At same time, Hamilton chastises leading opponents of the proposed Constitution for flattering “themselves with fairer prospects of elevation from the subdivision of the empire into several partial confederacies than from its union under one government” (No. 1) and dismisses “the ideas of men who speculate upon the dismemberment of the empire” (No. 13). Upon reviewing the Constitution of 1789, Thomas Jefferson, who would later author the document’s Bill of Rights, wrote: “I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self government.”<sup>39</sup>

From its founding, the United States was described as “the empire” and in the *Federalist Papers* the word “empire” appears 35 additional times (beyond those referring to the United States) most frequently for purposes of analyzing the strengths of the proposed Constitution based on the successes and failures of ancient and modern empires, including the Athenian, Roman, Carthaginian, Ottoman, German, and British Empires. Seventeen of these thirty-five additional references to empire are to the German Empire, which serves as their model of too little central authority over the sovereign states that compose it, while there are thirty-two additional references to the Roman Republic (30) and the Roman Empire (2), which as Hardt and Negri point out, serves as the Founder’s model of a well-balanced and expansive republican empire.

Yet, what hubris could lead a small group of men, in a largely agrarian society, in a remote part of the world to believe that America was an empire? The answer is the form of government both existing and proposed for the United States. The state form created by the U.S. Constitution was expansive in its design and capacity to absorb new or additional sovereignties into a confederated structure that organized a network of sovereignties both horizontally (new States) and vertically

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>39</sup> See, Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

(federalism). Indeed, the Founding Founders go to great lengths in *The Federalist Papers* to defend themselves against the charge that their proposed Constitution creates a “national state,” but instead as Hamilton writes (quoting Montesquieu):

“I mean a CONFEDERATE REPUBLIC. ‘This form of government is a convention by which several smaller STATES agree to become members of a larger ONE, which they intend to form. It is a kind of assemblage of societies that constitute a new one, capable of increasing, by means of new associations, till they arrive to such a degree of power as to be able to provide for the security of the united body.’ The definition of a CONFEDERATE REPUBLIC seems simply to be ‘an assemblage of societies,’ or an association of two or more states into one state. The extent, modifications, and objects of the federal authority are mere matters of discretion. So long as the separate organization of the members be not abolished; so long as it exists, by a constitutional necessity, for local purposes; though it should be in perfect subordination to the general authority of the union, it would still be, in fact and in theory, an association of states, or a confederacy” (No. 9).<sup>40</sup>

The Constitution of 1789 establishes a form of political association that is designed for expansion and empire by the simple accretion of additional States seeking access to its protection and prosperity.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, in *Federalist No. 43*, Madison suggests that the Constitution’s provision for adding new States is one of its chief strengths, since Madison clearly anticipates the addition of “new States” starting with “the Western territory” which “is a mine of vast wealth to the United States” (*Federalist No. 38*). Moreover, if this concept of accretion is stretched only minimally beyond the written provisions of the Constitution then it is capable of almost endless expansion through adjustments in how power is distributed through the various nodes (States) of that network. Thus, Hardt and Negri are correct in their observation that the American form of political association was designed as a form of global Empire with no natural limits or boundaries, par-

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<sup>40</sup> Indeed, in their inaugural and state of the union addresses, most U.S. presidents from George Washington until the Civil, continued referring to the United States as “the Confederacy.”

<sup>41</sup> The Founder’s understanding of empire is consistent with the contemporary work by historians of international relations, who define an empire as “a major actor in the international system based on the subordination of diverse elites who – whether under compulsion or from shared convictions – accept the values of those who govern the dominant center or metropole.” The advantages of being a member state in an empire is that it provides a wider “coordination of economic exchange and security guarantees welcomed by its less powerful members states, who preserved their autonomy and played a role in collective policymaking,” see, Charles S. Maier, “An American Empire? The Problems of Frontiers and Peace in Twenty-First Century World Politics,” *Forum* (November/December 2002): 28-31. (reprinted from *Harvard Magazine*).

ticularly given Hamilton's flexible interpretation that "the extent, modifications, and objects of the federal authority are mere matters of discretion."

Moreover, the Founders of this empire were not subject to the illusion that either republican empires or commercial empires were peaceful by nature. Hamilton explicitly dismisses the notion that "the genius of republics (say they) is pacific" or that "the spirit of commerce has a tendency to soften the manners of men, and to extinguish those inflammable humors which have so often kindled into wars." He notes, to the contrary, that:

"Sparta, Athens, Rome, and Carthage were all republics; two of them, Athens and Carthage, of the commercial kind. Yet were they as often engaged in wars, offensive and defensive, as the neighboring monarchies of the same times...and Rome was never sated of carnage and conquest. Carthage, though a commercial republic, was the aggressor in the very war that ended in her destruction" (*Federalist* No. 6).

Thus, it is notable that the very first policy recommendation contained in George Washington's first annual address to the U.S. Congress was that:

“Among the many interesting objects which will engage your attention that of providing for the common defense will merit particular regard. To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace. A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite...”<sup>42</sup>

In Washington’s address and that of virtually every President thereafter were constant references to the depredations of “hostile tribes of Indians” and reminders “that we ought to be prepared to afford protection to those parts of the Union [that were subject to attack], and, if necessary, to punish aggressors.”<sup>43</sup> After establishing a professional standing army in the United States during his tenure, Washington wrote to Congress in his last year of office that U.S. trade to other parts of the world:

“will always be insecure and our citizens exposed to the calamities from which numbers of them have but just been relieved. These considerations invite the United States to look to the means, and to set about the gradual creation of a navy...so that a future war of Europe may not find our commerce in the same unprotected state in which it was found by the present.”<sup>44</sup>

Quite literally, the first and last policy decisions of America’s first president were to establish the military foundations of an expanding agrarian-mercantile empire. It is to Hardt’s and Negri’s credit that their analysis of globalization captures this “spirit of empire” in the U.S. Constitution, but what is missing in their analysis is the extent to which this conception of empire was also fused with a sense of messianic religious destiny that is often described by scholars as America’s “civil religion.” John Jay, who would become first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, was convinced that “this country and this people seem to have been made for each other, and it appears as if it was *the design of Providence*, that an inheritance so proper and convenient for a band of brethren, united to each other by the strongest ties, should never be split into a number of unsocial, jealous, and alien sovereignties” (*Federalist No. 2*, italics added). Likewise, in calling upon the people of New York to carefully consider their vote on the proposed Constitution, Hamilton observes that:

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<sup>42</sup> George Washington, “First Annual Message to Congress,” New York City, Federal Hall, Wall & Broad Streets, January 8, 1790,

see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/gw1/speeches/gwson1.htm>

<sup>43</sup> George Washington, “First Annual Message to Congress,” New York City, Federal Hall, Wall & Broad Streets, January 8, 1790, see,

<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/gw1/speeches/gwson1.htm>

<sup>44</sup> George Washington, “Eighth Annual Message to Congress,” December 7, 1796,

see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/gw1/speeches/gwson8.htm>

“...it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force. If there be any truth in the remark, the crisis at which we are arrived may with propriety be regarded as the era in which that decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we shall act may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind” (*The Federalist* No. 1).

The imperial Constitution was ratified, of course, and in his last message to Congress in 1796, President George Washington reaffirmed the centerpiece of America’s civil religion by noting that:

“The situation in which I now stand for the last time, in the midst of the representatives of the people of the United States, naturally recalls the period when the administration of the present form of government commenced, and I can not omit the occasion to congratulate you and my country on the success of the experiment, nor to repeat my fervent supplications to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and Sovereign Arbiter of Nations that His providential care may still be extended to the United States, that the virtue and happiness of the people may be preserved, and that the Government which they have instituted for the protection of their liberties may be perpetual.”<sup>45</sup>

It should come as no surprise that in his own inaugural address John Adams, the second President of the United States (1796-1800), when referring to the Revolution of 1776 invoked the blessing of “an overruling Providence which had so signally protected this country from the first....And may that Being who is supreme over all, the Patron of Order, the Fountain of Justice, and the Protector in all ages of the world of virtuous liberty, continue His blessing upon this nation and its Government and give it all possible success and duration consistent with the ends of His providence.”<sup>46</sup> In comparison to these statements, it can hardly be described as “extreme” or “outside the mainstream” of American political culture, when the evangelist Pat Robertson (and former U.S. Presidential candidate) declares on television’s *The 700 Club* that the Constitution of the United States “is a marvelous document for self-government by the Christian people. But the

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<sup>45</sup> George Washington, “Eighth Annual Message to Congress,” December 7, 1796, see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/gw1/speeches/gwson8.htm>

<sup>46</sup> John Adams, “Inaugural Address,” 1797, see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/ja2/speeches/inaug1.htm>

minute you turn the document into the hands of non-Christian people and atheistic people [e.g., communists] they can use it to destroy the very foundation of our society.”<sup>47</sup>

Hardt and Negri offer a concise and remarkably incisive periodization of U.S. Constitutional development based on the expansion of Empire. They argue that U.S. Constitutional history should be divided into four phases or regimes, which each “marks a step toward the realization of imperial sovereignty.”<sup>48</sup> A first phase extends from the Declaration of Independence (1776) to the Civil War and Reconstruction (1870), which includes the founding of the empire, most of its territorial expansion, and culminates with the establishment of a “real” state (in Hegel’s terms).<sup>49</sup> A second “extremely contradictory” phase “straddles the turn of the century” (1890-1920), but begins with Theodore Roosevelt’s imperialist doctrine and concludes with Woodrow Wilson’s messianic campaign to “make the world safe for democracy.” A third phase moves from the New Deal and the Second World War through the heights of the Cold War, while a fourth phase begins with the social movements of the 1960s and continues through the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European bloc. While Hardt and Negri are not aware of it, their periodization of U.S. political development and empire overlaps to a remarkable degree with the nation’s cycle of Great Awakenings identified by religious historians, as well as the periodization of social structures of accumulation proposed by radical political economists.

What is also unfortunate in Hardt’s and Negri’s analysis is the absence of a single reference to the work of Charles A. Beard, whose general history on *The Rise of American Civilization* would have added so much to the historical content of their insight.<sup>50</sup> Beard’s general history was organized around two theses, which complement and deepen Hardt’s and Negri’s concept of the American empire. Beard argues that the United States has always “been a world power, as far as has been necessary, from the beginning of our history....the protection of our government has steadily advanced with the extension of our material interests.”<sup>51</sup> Indeed, by 1914, in his *Contemporary American History*, Beard observed “signs that the United States was prepared eco-

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<sup>47</sup> Pat Robertson on The 700 Club, December 31, 1981, see, <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/7027/quotes.html>

<sup>48</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 168.

<sup>49</sup> See, Richard Bense, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>50</sup> Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

<sup>51</sup> Charles A. Beard, *American Government and Politics*, 1st edition (New York: Macmillan, 1910), p. 331.



nomically to accept that type of imperialism that had long been dominant in British politics and had sprung into prominence in Germany, France, and Italy.”<sup>52</sup>

The core of Beard’s economic interpretation of American empire was an extension of his dialectical theory of American political development. Beard concluded that, when applied to concrete policies, there had always been two competing ideas of national interest associated with the Jeffersonian and the Hamiltonian visions.<sup>53</sup> Both visions were fundamentally expansionist in their objectives. Going back to the earliest days of the American Republic, the Jeffersonian political constituency and its economic concerns were essentially agrarian. Their expansionist aims were oriented toward the acquisition of land and territory within the continental domain of North America for the purpose of enlarging a self-sufficient independent agrarian civilization. In fact, Beard argues that when the Democratic-Republicans came to power in 1800, its leaders embarked on a massive program of territorial expansion that he calls “agricultural imperialism.”

The central objective of agricultural imperialism was to satisfy the land hunger of agrarian constituents and to thereby strengthen their agrarian social base and promote the agrarian/landed social structure which Jeffersonians envisioned as the future of the American republic. The concrete results of this foreign policy were the Louisiana Purchase (1803), the War of 1812, the Florida Purchase (1819), the annexation of Texas (1845), the Mexican War (1846-1848) and the annexation of the California and New Mexico Territories, settlement of the Northwest Boundary Dispute (1846), the Gadsden Purchase (1854), and the Alaska Purchase (1867). Beard concludes that after the closing of the frontier in 1893, agricultural imperialism, as such, came to an end, i.e., the policy of physical conquest, occupation, and settlement of new lands by Americans was exhausted.

The spirit of empire was realized in America’s westward expansion and as millions of Americans acquired land for the first time, their civil religion was reaffirmed by Andrew Jackson and democratized in the culture of manifest destiny. Andrew Jackson, who most symbolized the democratic revolution in America, affirmed in his first inaugural address that:

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<sup>52</sup> Charles A. Beard, *Contemporary American History, 1877-1913* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1914), p. 202.

<sup>53</sup> See, Clyde W. Barrow, *More Than a Historian: The Political and Economic Thought of Charles A. Beard* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2000), Chaps. 3-5.

“firm reliance on the goodness of that Power whose providence mercifully protected our national infancy, and has since upheld our liberties in various vicissitudes, encourages me to offer up my ardent supplications that He will continue to make our beloved country the object of His divine care and gracious benediction.”<sup>54</sup>

This reaffirmation of civil religion in the era of agricultural imperialism was of course popularized in the 1840s in the concept of “manifest destiny,” which seemed to visibly unfold the spirit of empire in a relentless westward migration. The phrase manifest destiny was coined by the American journalist and diplomat John Louis O’Sullivan in two 1845 editorials in the *United States Magazine* and *The Democratic Review*, which called for the annexation of Texas.<sup>55</sup> In framing what one historian calls “the philosophy that created a nation,” O’Sullivan wrote that it is “the right of our manifest destiny to over spread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative development of self government entrusted to us.” He went on to propose that:

“The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High -- the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere -- its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation an Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God’s natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood -- of ‘peace and good will amongst men’. . . Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be *the great nation* of futurity?”<sup>56</sup>

The idea of manifest destiny was later used by expansionists in all political parties to justify the acquisition of California and the Oregon Territory and by the end of the 19th century the same phrase was being used to justify the proposed annexation of various islands in the Caribbean Sea

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<sup>54</sup> Andrew Jackson, “First Inaugural Address,” delivered Wednesday, March 4, 1829, see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/aj7/speeches/jackson1.htm>

<sup>55</sup> Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); J. Michael T. Lubragge, “Manifest Destiny: The Philosophy That Created a Nation,” see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/usanew/E/manifest/manif1.htm>

<sup>56</sup> John L. O’Sullivan, *The Democratic Review* (July/August 1845). In a different version of the same editorial, the pertinent passage appears as “The American people having derived their origin from many other nations, and the Declaration of National Independence being entirely based on the great principle of human equality, these facts demonstrate at once our disconnected position as regards any other nation; that we have, in reality, but little connection with the past history of any of them, and still less with all antiquity, its glories, or its crimes. On the contrary, our national birth was the beginning of a new history...we may confidently assume that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity.

and the Pacific Ocean. For example, in referring to the imminent annexation of Texas, while building on Madison's idea of an extended confederated republic, President James Polk proclaimed "that our system may be safely extended to the utmost bounds of our territorial limits, and that as it shall be extended the bonds of our Union, so far from being weakened, will become stronger."<sup>57</sup>

Despite the messianic and self-righteous appeals to Providence, Charles Beard was far from sanguine about what it had taken to "win the west." Beard suggested that America's continuous involvement in warfare for purposes of acquiring or defending land -- literally since the time of its earliest settlement -- had produced a "war spirit" among the American people that only seemed to grow stronger as it was woven into the messianic fabric of American political culture. The westward migration brought human carnage and environmental destruction on a massive scale as American settlers moved across successive frontiers like locusts, who stopped only long enough to pillage the land and to remove, kill, or marginalize the native inhabitants. Indeed, on the eve of World War I, Beard lectured student pacifists in his classes that "it was an illusion to think of Americans as a pacific people; they are and always have been one of the most violent peoples in history."<sup>58</sup> Similarly, on the eve of the Second World War, Beard reiterated his claim that war has "always been popular in the United States."<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, he informed his students, the warlike and expansionist thrust of American political culture made it easy for the capitalist and political classes "to divert the nation's attention from the 'problems of national life'."<sup>60</sup>

In contrast to the Jeffersonian agrarians, however, Alexander Hamilton's followers and their economic interests were fundamentally commercial in nature. Consequently, Hamiltonians always sought access to the overseas carrying trade, to foreign markets as an outlet for manufactured goods and, eventually, to opportunities for direct foreign investment of American capital. However, it was not until after Reconstruction and the end of U.S. territorial acquisition, that the United States pursued an aggressive policy to promote full-scale industrialization. By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States had become a predominantly industrial nation and, ac-

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<sup>57</sup> James K. Polk, "Inaugural Address," Tuesday, March 4, 1845, see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/usanew/P/jp11/speeches/polk.htm>

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Freeman, *An American Testament*, p. 107. Kennedy, *Charles A. Beard and American Foreign Policy*, p. 7, fn. 19, observes correctly that "Beard was not a pacifist in a philosophical or religious sense." More than four months before his death in 1948, for example, Kennedy notes that "Beard expressed annoyance over a remark in *Newsweek* magazine that 'sets me down as an old-time pacifist. I have been many things but never a pacifist.'"

<sup>59</sup> Charles A. Beard, *A Foreign Policy for America* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p. 73.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas C. Kennedy, *Charles A. Beard and American Foreign Policy* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Presses of Florida, 1975), p. 17.

According to Beard, this shift in the national economic base brought with it a change in the dominant foreign policy. In Beard's view, the rise of "industrial imperialism" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (phases two to four in Hardt's and Negri's periodization) was promoted by an alliance of manufacturers, traders, ship-owners, financiers, and naval officers.<sup>61</sup> Although the historical foundations of industrial imperialism could be traced back to the Hamiltonian system of protectionism and a strong navy, it achieved dominance as a foreign policy only during the 1890s under the Presidency of William McKinley with strong support from individuals like Theodore Roosevelt, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and Albert J. Beveridge, a leading U.S. Senator.

On the cusp of the Spanish-American War, newly elected President William McKinley shifted American foreign policy toward the new era of commercial imperialism by virtually echoing the now ancient words of Governor John Winthrop. In his inaugural address, McKinley declared that: "Our faith teaches that there is no safer reliance than upon the God of our fathers, who has so singularly favored the American people in every national trial, and who will not forsake us so long as we obey His commandments and walk humbly in His footsteps."<sup>62</sup> However, in what must be one of the most belligerent screeds in U.S. history, Senator Albert J. Beveridge gave prominent expression to the new imperialism in an 1898 campaign speech entitled, "On the New American Empire":<sup>63</sup>

"IT IS A NOBLE LAND that God has given us; a land that can feed and clothe the world...It is a mighty people that He has planted on this soil; a people sprung from the most masterful blood of history....It is a glorious history our God has bestowed upon His chosen people...a history heroic with faith in our mission and our future; a history of statesmen who flung the boundaries of the republic out into unexplored lands and savage wildernesses; a history of soldiers who carried the flag across the blazing deserts and through the ranks of hostile mountains, even to the gates of sunset; a history of a multiplying people who overran a continent in half a century...a history divinely logical....It is a world question Shall the American people continue their resistless march toward the commercial supremacy of the world?...And shall we reap the reward that waits on our discharge of our high duty as the sovereign power of earth....But a war has marked it, the

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<sup>61</sup> Fred Harvey Harrington, "Beard's Idea of National Interest and New Interpretations," *American Perspective* 4 (1950), p. 336.

<sup>62</sup> William McKinley, "First Inaugural Address," Thursday, March 4, 1897, see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/wm25/speeches/mckin1.htm>

most holy ever waged by one nation against another--a war for civilization, a war for a permanent peace, a war which, under God, although we knew it not, swung open to the republic the portals of the commerce of the world...It means all this tomorrow, and all this forever, because it means not only the trade of the prize provinces but the beginning of the commercial empire of the republic...It is the tide of God's great purposes made manifest in the instincts of our race, whose present phase is our personal profit, but whose far-off end is the redemption of the world and the Christianization of mankind...Fellow Americans, we are God's chosen people"<sup>64</sup>

However, as a late entrant onto the world stage of imperialism, the United States encountered a world that had been conquered already and divided among the European powers and, as a consequence, it was forced to abandon the policy of overt territorial acquisition for an exceptional policy of neo-imperialism. For Beard, the exceptional features of America's commercial imperialism were defined by three characteristics. First, it was based on controlling sea lanes, rather than territories. Beard traced the historical origins of this strategy to Commodore Perry, the first naval officer to publicly advocate a policy of imperialism and to act on it independently by opening Japan to American trading vessels (1854). Almost two decades later, Admiral Meade, again acting on his own authority seized Tutuila (Samoa) and negotiated a treaty for a naval base that gave the U.S. Navy an advance position in the South Pacific. However, Beard considered Alfred Thayer Mahan, also a naval officer, as the individual who did most to sell the idea of sea power and empire to the U.S. President and Congress. Acting under the spell of the so-called Mahan thesis, the United States asserted its strategic control of important sea lanes in the Spanish-American War (1898), particularly in the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Basin, by taking control of Hawaii, the Philippines, Guam, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. These two American lakes were then joined strategically by taking over and completing the Panama Canal project (1904), which required the United States' first involvement in a covert operation to separate Panama from Columbia.<sup>65</sup> The

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<sup>63</sup> Albert J. Beveridge, "On the New American Empire; a speech delivered in Indianapolis, Indiana, on September 16, 1898," *Annals of America*, Vol. 12 (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1968), pp. 198-202.

<sup>64</sup> Albert J. Beveridge, "On the New American Empire; a speech delivered in Indianapolis, Indiana, on September 16, 1898," *Annals of America*, Vol. 12 (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1968), pp. 198-202.

<sup>65</sup> Beard described the post-1897 period of American diplomacy as the intensification of an earlier Hamiltonian conception of foreign policy, but he did not consider it a radical departure from the past. Many diplomatic historians of the period claimed that the closing years of the 19th century marked a "new era" in American foreign policy. However, Beard insisted that dollar diplomacy "resembled in many respects the philosophy of policy expounded by leaders in the establishment of the American Republic," see, Charles A. Beard, *The Idea of National Interest: An Analytical Study in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 111.

Mahan strategy was explicitly resurrected by President Ronald Reagan with his commitment to rebuilding America's post-Vietnam military strength around a 600 ship navy.

The open door policy was a second characteristic of America's exceptional imperialism. Rather than seeking to monopolize access to colonial markets, America's late entry onto the world stage placed it in the position of seeking to open foreign markets to free and fair competition with its European rivals. Beard often claimed that this exceptional strategy also reinforced the habitually moralistic overtones of American imperialism, because it allowed U.S. leaders to play the role of world liberator, i.e., freeing colonies from European masters (e.g., Cuba, Philippines) and domestic dictators (e.g., Panama). This allowed American statesmen and corporate elites to conceal their economic and political aims behind populist rhetoric such as "making the world safe for democracy," while the domination of foreign economies through direct investment and foreign loans could be presented under the ideological rubric of development aid and assistance.<sup>66</sup>

In this manner, the interests of the United States are carried by business corporations into places where the possibility of actually defending such rights is remote, or where doing so inevitably requires the use of military force and persistent police actions throughout the world. Indeed, capital exports and the penetration of foreign markets had effectively extended the Fifth Amendment and the obligation of contract clause "to ships upon the high seas; commodities in warehouses and shops abroad; capital invested; mines, factories, and other plants owned in part or wholly by American citizens or corporations; concessions already won and in process of winning; lands, forests, houses, and other property owned in foreign places by American citizens and corporations; overseas possessions, protectorates, and spheres of influence and penetration against foreign governments; and similar rights, titles, and privileges *in esse* or *in posse*." Significantly, Beard found that "in promoting and defending the national interest so conceived" interested parties expect the American state to employ all the engines of State to protect their interests and despite verbal concessions to peace, the final sanction of American activities abroad remains the U.S. Navy.<sup>67</sup>

Third, the opening of markets to non-colonial entrants paradoxically provided the early foundations for American neo-imperialism (i.e., dollar diplomacy) through foreign direct investment and foreign loans, which began in the 1890s as Great Britain and Spain were pushed from Latin

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<sup>66</sup> Martin J. Sklar, *The United States as a Developing Country: Studies in U.S. History in the Progressive Era and the 1920s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Chap. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Charles A. Beard, *The Open Door at Home* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), pp. 40-43.

America. By relying on capital investment rather than military occupation as a strategy of territorial and economic penetration, Beard emphasized that American “imperialism does not rest primarily upon a desire for more territory, but rather upon the necessity for markets in which to sell manufactured goods and for opportunities to invest surplus accumulations of capital.” Hence, the chief prerequisite of the American form of imperialism “is not the annexation of colonies, but ‘free trade’ and security of direct foreign investments, and the ability to repatriate profits.”<sup>68</sup> The current phase of economic globalization and its attendant network of confederated regulatory institutions is simply a continuation, if not a culmination, of this strategy of American empire.

At the same time, this three-pronged neo-imperialist strategy has enabled U.S. foreign policy-makers to position the United States as a “leader of the free world” by protecting and policing sea lanes from control and domination by expansionist powers; to claim that it was liberating subjected peoples from control by European or other despotic powers; and to insist that it was investing in the economic future of less developed countries, rather than exploiting them or rendering them dependent on U.S. economic, financial, and military power. To this extent, U.S. imperialism has always been a Janus that appears menacing and deadly to its victims and competitors, but benign and generous to the American public.

However, these imperial thrusts tend to occur when the configuration of economic, political, and cultural forces is synchronized so that a triggering event sets in motion a violent outward projection of American power that allow Americans initiate offensive actions under the rubric of “national defense.” The American Revolution is triggered by the Stamp Act and the “Intolerable Acts.” The War of 1812 is ostensibly to stop the impress of U.S. sailors by the British navy. The acquisition of Florida (1819) occurs after Andrew Jackson invades it to “protect” U.S. citizens settling illegally in Spanish territory. The Mexican War begins after U.S. troops are attacked while illegally occupying Mexican territory (southern Texas) ostensibly to protect “American” citizens. The Spanish-American War (1898) begins after an explosion of unknown origins sinks the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor. The United States mobilizes for World War I after the sinking of the Lusitania, while more recently Pearl Harbor, the Gulf of Tonkin, the World Trade Towers, and many more incidents have provided the short-term rationale for war. Some of the incidents are real, while others are fabricated or exaggerated misrepresentations of reality. Beard’s concept of a triggering event was not meant to suggest that U.S. Presidents deliberately

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<sup>68</sup> Beard, *Contemporary American History*, pp. 202, 224.

plunge the country into wars simply to divert attention from economic crisis or the failure to achieve promised social reforms. Instead, it was to point out that in international relations incidents and provocations are an almost daily occurrence so that any government can quickly magnify one of them into a just cause for war.<sup>69</sup>

The most recent imperial project was launched during the Reagan Revolution and it too has occurred at a time when economic crisis, political messianism, and religious awakening have intersected as a synchronized social force to both stimulate and legitimate a global imperial thrust. The political crystallization of these synchronized forces began to appear in a 1982 preview of President Ronald Reagan's "evil empire" speech, where he renewed the "special relationship" between Great Britain and the United States by announcing that "the emergency is upon us." Reagan announced "a crusade for freedom" and a "global campaign for democracy" that would establish the "conditions of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries." He appealed for the aid of Great Britain in particular because it was "the cradle of self-government" and the origin of "the great civilized ideas: individual liberty, representative government, and the rule of law under God."<sup>70</sup>

The following year, Reagan developed these ideas further in his globally publicized evil empire speech delivered at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals. In this speech, Reagan emphasized that the crusade for freedom could not be reduced to an economic struggle between capitalism and communism, nor viewed only as a political struggle between democracy and totalitarianism, since "the basis of those ideals and principles...is grounded in the much deeper realization that freedom prospers only where the blessings of God are avidly sought and humbly accepted." He claimed that "the American experiment in democracy rests on this insight." He pointed to the fact that "the Declaration of Independence mentions the Supreme Being no less than four times," while "'In God We Trust' is engraved on our coinage. The Supreme Court opens its proceedings with a religious invocation. And the members of Congress open their sessions with a prayer."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Charles A. Beard, "National Politics and War," *Scribner's Magazine* 97 (February 1935): 65-70.

<sup>70</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Speech to the House of Commons, June 8, 1982," see, Internet Modern History Sourcebook, see, <http://www.mere-christianity.org/Freedoms-Documents/Evil%20Empire%20Speech.htm>

<sup>71</sup> Ronald Reagan "The Evil Empire Speech," Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals Orlando, Florida, March 8, 1983, see, <http://www.mere-christianity.org/Freedoms-Documents/Evil%20Empire%20Speech.htm>.



In the Evil Empire Speech, Reagan reaffirmed the American covenant by declaring “war against communism not simply [on the basis] that it was an alternative economic and political system, but because it posed a fundamental threat to Christianity” and “we will never abandon our belief in God.” Thus, the Reagan Revolution was not only a war for capitalism and democracy; it was a struggle against “the aggressive impulses of an evil empire...the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.”<sup>72</sup> When having won the war against the evil of a godless Communism, the inauguration of George H. Bush continued the long tradition of American civil religion by calling attention to the fact that “I have just repeated word for word the oath taken by George Washington 200 years ago, and the Bible on which I placed my hand is the Bible on which he placed his...my first act as President is a prayer.”<sup>73</sup>

Thus, in responding to an incident that shocked the faith and confidence of the American people on September 11, 2001, it was hardly idiosyncratic that his son, President George W. Bush, would continue the crusade for Christianity and capitalism with the announcement that “our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil.”<sup>74</sup> In the year leading up to the U.S.-Iraq War, Bush described the state of the union in the following way:

“Deep in the American character, there is honor, and it is stronger than cynicism. And many have discovered again that even in tragedy – especially in tragedy -- God is near. In a single instant, we realized that this will be a decisive decade in the history of liberty, that we’ve been called to a unique role in human events. Rarely has the world faced a choice more clear or consequential...We stand for a different choice, made long ago, on the day of our founding. We affirm it again today.”<sup>75</sup>

## 4. The Logic of Capital Accumulation

It is hardly peculiar to observe that the Keynesian Welfare State, as a particular social structure of accumulation, organized class relations and capital accumulation in the United States from ap-

<sup>72</sup> Ronald Reagan “The Evil Empire Speech,” Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals Orlando, Florida March 8, 1983, see, <http://www.mere-christianity.org/Freedoms-Documents/Evil%20Empire%20Speech.htm>.

<sup>73</sup> George H. Bush, “Inaugural Address,” Friday, January 20, 1989, see, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/usanew/P/gb41/speeches/bush.htm>

<sup>74</sup> George W. Bush quoted in Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence, “The Biblical Sources of the Crusade Against Evil,” *Religious Studies News* (April 2003).  
Online at [http://www.sbl-site.org/Newsletter/05\\_2003/Jewett.html](http://www.sbl-site.org/Newsletter/05_2003/Jewett.html)

<sup>75</sup> George W. Bush, “State of the Union 2002,” January 29, 2002, see, [http://odur.let.rug.nl/usanew/P/gwb43/speeches/state\\_union\\_2002.htm](http://odur.let.rug.nl/usanew/P/gwb43/speeches/state_union_2002.htm)

proximately 1940 to 1979. The economic and political “contradictions” in this SSA begin to unravel from 1966 (Vietnam War) to 1979 (2<sup>nd</sup> Oil Crisis) and IT finally collapsed during the 1980s when a new business ascendancy successfully “rolled back” the welfare state in domestic policy, while reinvigorating American economic and military hegemony on a global scale.<sup>76</sup>

A central principle of SSA theory is that as the structural form of capital accumulation changes (e.g., from competitive to corporate), the “non-economic” or superstructural institutions that once supported and reinforced capital accumulation and class hegemony eventually become fetters on the process of capitalist development. This neo-Marxian or post-Marxian theory emphasizes that capital accumulation is supported by a range of other institutions, including taxation, tariffs, public education, transportation infrastructure, central banking and currency institutions, property law, contract law, etc. When these institutions support capital formation and facilitate economic growth, there is a long-wave of expansion as capitalists gain confidence in the system and begin to invest in the economy. As the economy undergoes technological or other changes, the earlier SSA either loses its economic effectiveness or political legitimacy, which leads to declining business confidence and investment.

This contradiction between the forces and relations of production results in a “accumulation crisis” that is always the prelude to a transition from one SSA to another.<sup>77</sup> Thus, SSA theory explains accumulation crises as the structural effect of an emerging disjuncture between the changing requirements of capital accumulation and the organization, institutions, and policies that facilitate accumulation in conjunction with the state and ideological apparatuses. In this context, newly ascendant fractions of the capitalist class find that social institutions (e.g., the family), cultural orientations (e.g., consumer preferences), governmental institutions (e.g., law, foreign policy), and educational policies (e.g., curricula) must all be comprehensively reconstructed to reestablish the functional integration of the capitalist *system* and, thereby, catalyze a new long-

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<sup>76</sup> Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *The Breaking of the American Social Compact* (New York: New Press, 1997); Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *The New Class War: Reagan's Attack on the Welfare State and Its Consequences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

<sup>77</sup> James O'Connor, *Accumulation Crisis* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984); James O'Connor, *The Meaning of Crisis: A Theoretical Introduction* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon, and Thomas E. Weisskopf, Thomas E., “Power and Profits: The Social Structure of Accumulation and the Profitability of the Postwar U.S. Economy,” *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 18, Nos. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 1986): 132-67.

wave of economic growth. Business leaders must therefore initiate movements to redesign cultural, political, and social institutions to create a new social structure of capital accumulation.<sup>78</sup>

The outcome of each major accumulation crisis is not merely a “recovery” period in the business cycle, but a fundamental restructuring of the economic, ideological, and political relations that constitute capitalist society. Historically, most SSA theorists have argued that specific social structures of accumulation exist as approximately 50-year periods of growth and decline, while all agree that United States capitalism entered an accumulation crisis in the mid- to late 1970’s. This accumulation crisis required a fundamental reconstruction of the political and social institutions of American capitalism, including the international configuration of American global hegemony.

A common feature of capitalist states is their tendency to institutionalize a hierarchical and horizontal distribution of state power (e.g., federalism and separation of powers) so that the various levels and branches of the state apparatus institutionalize “differential access to the state apparatuses and differential opportunities to realize specific effects in the course of state intervention.”<sup>79</sup> State power is institutionalized asymmetrically through the state apparatus to the extent that each level or branch of an apparatus constitutes the major power base of contending classes and class fractions within the state.<sup>80</sup>

Following World War II, the hegemony of American finance-capital was institutionalized in a state-capitalist form of accumulation. It should be emphasized that in this context, the concept of finance capital does not refer exclusively to persons or institutions in the financial sector, but designates the asymmetrical balance of power between interlocking financial and non-financial sectors of the monopoly capital. This state-capitalist social structure of accumulation – frequently called the Keynesian Welfare State -- was structured, first, on a partnership between government and monopoly capital (e.g., tariff protection and subsidies) and, second, on a series of “historic accords” or class compromises embodied in institutions such as collective bargaining, the minimum wage, social security, unemployment insurance, and other labor protections that were rarely extended beyond the monopoly sector in the United States.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), especially, Chap. 9.

<sup>79</sup> Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State* (New York: New York University Press, 1982), p. 224.

<sup>80</sup> Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, p. 132.

<sup>81</sup> James O’Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1973); Samuel Bowles and Gintis, *Beyond the Wasteland* (New York: Anchor Books, 1984).

This social structure of accumulation and its state form collapsed in the United States between 1973 and 1979 for three reasons: (1) the profits-squeeze generated by the success of working class struggle under the Keynesian Welfare State, (2) the oil price shocks of 1973 and 1979, and (3) the unforeseen impact of economic globalization on the domestic U.S. economy. A great deal has been written about the first two events, which led the hegemonic fraction of finance capital to become increasingly restless with the historic accords that structured the Keynesian Welfare State. However, I want to suggest that it was the unforeseen impact of economic globalization — largely a strategic miscalculation by monopoly capital -- that was the final blow to the old social structure of accumulation and one that propelled the dominant capitalist fraction to reconstitute itself on an even more globally oriented basis.

At the end of World War II, the Council on Foreign Relations, the leading corporate liberal foreign policy organization, was long convinced of both the economic and political advantages of free trade. It was a vehicle for satisfying mass consumer preferences in the U.S. at low prices, a way to contain or isolate Soviet influence, and a way to attach Europe and the developing countries to the U.S. sphere of economic and political influence.<sup>82</sup> Following World War II, the U.S. economy accounted for 45% of world gross domestic product and as Christoph Scherrer observes the United States was able to exercise “its economic hegemony notably by opening its own market.”<sup>83</sup> Access to the U.S. domestic market is highly coveted by companies in Germany, Japan, South Korea, and many other nations that have built export-based economies in the post-war period that are highly dependent on access to U.S. markets.

Moreover, the post-war opening of the U.S. market was a major catalyst to the process of economic globalization and, in this respect, it should be emphasized that globalization is not a technologically determined event, but a policy process and a process of new institution building that is creating a new social structure of accumulation. From the U.S. perspective, three key events in this process were the breakdown of the Bretton Woods agreement, the Kennedy Round (1963-1967) of the GATT, and the Tokyo Round (1973-1979) of the GATT negotiations. The financial sector of the U.S. finance capital bloc has fared quite well over the long-run from the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates and regulated capital flows. The new sys-

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<sup>82</sup> Joseph G. Peschek, *Policy-Planning Organizations: Elite Agendas and America's Rightward Turn* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

<sup>83</sup> Christoph Scherrer, “Double Hegemony? State and Class in Transatlantic Relations,” Pp. 47-71 in Martin Beckman, Hans-Jürgen Bieling, Frank Deppe, eds., *The Emergence of a New Euro Capitalism?: Implications for Analysis and Politics* (Marburg, Germany: Forschungsgruppe Europäische Gemeinschaft (FEG), 2003).

tem of floating exchange rates, combined with the supremacy of the U.S. dollar have placed Wall Street financial firms, the U.S. Federal Reserve, and the U.S. Treasury at the center of a new global financial network that is also closely linked to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, where the United States government continues to exercise considerable leverage.<sup>84</sup>

for this reason, Christoph Scherrer argues that “the liberal world-market order of the post-war era may be interpreted as a project of internationally-oriented capital fractions in the United States (notably New York banks and law practices as well as transnational corporations from the various sectors). These fractions succeeded in hegemonically integrating into their project important groups in the United States on the one hand, and --- through the resources of the US government – the other capitalist industrial nations on the other.”<sup>85</sup>

However, the resurgent global hegemony of the U.S. financial sector stands in sharp contrast to the fate of the “old” industrial sector that had previously constituted the “junior partner” in the hegemonic bloc that constituted finance capital. The international protections long enjoyed by this state-monopoly sector were severely eroded by the Kennedy and Tokyo Rounds, which resulted in significant tariff reductions and the easing of non-tariff barriers. However, as Stan Luger demonstrates in his analysis of the U.S. automobile industry, executives in the monopoly-industrial sector had grown highly arrogant and complacent about their position in the U.S. domestic market.<sup>86</sup> They soon discovered that U.S. industry dominated its own domestic market because it was heavily protected against international competition (i.e., tariffs, quotas, and technical standards) and the recipient of indirect state subsidies (e.g., tax treatment), which had allowed these sectors to become highly inefficient, non-innovative, or sub-standard in quality by international standards. This sector of the finance capital bloc was simply unprepared to face real competition on a global scale. This situation was most visible in the United States’ deteriorating balance of trade in goods, which first turned negative in 1971 and has recorded a deficit every year since 1976.

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<sup>84</sup> Hans-Jürgen Bieling, “The New European Economy: Transnational Power Structures and Modes of Regulation,” Pp. 28-46 in Martin Beckman, Hans-Jürgen Bieling, Frank Deppe, eds., *The Emergence of a New Euro Capitalism?: Implications for Analysis and Politics* (Marburg, Germany: Forschungsgruppe Europäische Gemeinschaft (FEG), 2003), pp. 38-40.

<sup>85</sup> Christoph Scherrer, “Double Hegemony?,” p. 52; See, Stephen Gill and David Law, *The Global Political Economy: Perspectives, Problems, and Policies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); Stephen Gill, *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>86</sup> Stan Luger, *Corporate Power, American Democracy, and the Automobile Industry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

In contrast, firms based in the export-driven economies of Germany and Japan were in a much better position to compete in those sectors as they rapidly penetrated U.S. markets for automobiles, steel, textile machinery, and consumer electronics, among others. The textile and apparel industries rapidly also lost market share to firms in East and South Asia despite continuing protections. The shock effect on the industrial sector had two significant repercussions politically. Beginning in the mid-1970s, U.S. corporations launched a massive new business mobilization that was signaled by the creation of the U.S. Business Roundtable (1975), the reinvigoration of groups like the Committee for Economic Development, and a massive infusion of new money into political campaigns made possible by the passage of the Federal Election Campaign Acts of 1971 and 1974.<sup>87</sup>

The most visible consequence of the new business mobilization was Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 on a platform that promised to roll back the welfare state and return the country to traditional American values; thus unifying the corporate establishment and the new Christian Right in a mutual economic-cultural assault on the Keynesian Welfare State. The Presidential administrations of Ronald Reagan (1980-1988) and George H. Bush (1988-1992) were broadly committed to a set of policies that sought to stimulate new private investment in the U.S. economy and to minimize the role of government in economic regulation and the provision of social welfare.

The short-term impact of the Reagan Revolution was seven years (1983-1990) of virtually uninterrupted economic growth (recession in 1981-82 and again 1990-91) and an increase in the GDP from \$4 trillion to \$5 trillion dollars (although real median household income declined for most Americans). Unemployment fell from more than 11% in 1981 to 5.2% prior to the 1990-91 recession. Inflation declined from 11% in 1981 into a 2% to 3% range by 1990. Factory capacity utilization rose from 70% to 84% during the same period. Thus, using basic measures such as GDP growth, unemployment rates, inflation rates, and capacity utilization, the Reagan Revolution was highly successful in achieving its stated economic objectives, particularly considering that union density also declined from 23.3% of the total U.S. workforce in 1983 to 18.3% in 1990,<sup>88</sup> while

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<sup>87</sup> Thomas Byrne Edsall, *The New Politics of Inequality* (New York: W.W. Norton, Inc., 1984).

<sup>88</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 200*, 122<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Austin, Texas: Hoover's Business Press, 2002), Table No. 628, p. 411.

the distribution of wealth and income reached unprecedented levels of inequality due to a massive redistribution of income from labor to capital engineered by the Reagan tax cuts of 1981-84.<sup>89</sup>

While the domestic policies of the U.S. Keynesian Welfare State were explicitly designed to deflect socialism in the United States,<sup>90</sup> its post-war foreign policy was explicitly designed to contain Communism (Truman Doctrine). The aggressive neo-conservative agenda advanced by Reagan's election was not only based on a commitment to roll back the welfare state, but a commitment to rollback "the evil Empire" and to defeat Communism. This strategy involved unprecedented "peacetime" military expenditures and covert engagements throughout the world. By the end of George H. Bush's term as President, Communist regimes and insurgency had been eliminated throughout Latin America (excepting Cuba), China and Vietnam were liberalizing foreign investment rules and reintroducing markets, the Berlin Wall had fallen, and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were engaged in a transition to capitalism.

However, a second political effect of industrial sector's deterioration was a growing perception among economic, political, and intellectual elites that Germany and Japan were again emerging as the respective centers of European and Asia-Pacific regional economic blocs capable of challenging U.S. economic dominance.<sup>91</sup> By 1990, the U.S. economy was only 22% of gross world product compared to 45% in 1946. More notably, Japan and the European Union (EU) were capturing larger shares of the world market for high technology and medium technology and had begun to penetrate the U.S. domestic market in these sectors.<sup>92</sup> Thus, in reaction to a perceived movement toward "closed regionalism" by Europe and Japan, as well as the developing countries of Africa and Latin America (e.g., Mercosur, SADC), the hegemonic fraction of American capital was again forced to turn outward by promoting GATT's Uruguay Round (1987-1994), which not only lowered average tariffs in the advanced industrial countries, but widened the scope of liberalization to trade in services, while expanding the WTO's coverage to 144 of the world's 190 countries.

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<sup>89</sup> Robert B. Avery and Gregory E. Elliehausen, "Financial Characteristics of High Income Families," *Federal Reserve Bulletin* 72, No. 3 (March 1986): 163-77; Robert S. McIntyre and David Wilhelm, *Money for Nothing: The Failure of Corporate Tax Incentives, 1981-1984* (Washington, D.C.: Citizens for Tax Justice, 1986).

<sup>90</sup> James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900-1918* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

<sup>91</sup> Michael E. Porter, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* (New York: The Free Press, 1990); Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Capitalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992); Lester Thurow, *Head to Head: The Coming Economic Battle Among Japan, Europe, and America* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1992).

<sup>92</sup> Sylvia Ostry, "Technology Issues in the International Trading System." Pp. 145-70 in OECD, *Market Access After the Uruguay Round: Investment, Competition and Technology Perspectives* (Paris, 1996).

However, it is one thing to dismantle a social structure of accumulation; it requires far more vision to build a new one. While the Reaganauts were largely self-satisfied with restoration of *laissez-faire* policies and continually diverted popular attention from their domestic policies with military adventures, the resurgent bloc of newly internationalized finance capitalists were by no means convinced that the United States was in a position to maintain either its economic or political hegemony in the context of economic globalization. The power bloc of corporate liberal finance capitalists was finally fractured and reconstituted as U.S. industrial firms collapsed, pursued international mergers and trans-nationalization, reconstituted their technological base, or were replaced in the bloc by newly emergent high technology and service firms.

By the early 1990s, finance capitalists, academics, and many government officials, had concluded that the U.S. economic base would have to be reconstituted to compete primarily in the more advanced “post-industrial” sectors of the global economy, such as high technology, financial services, and professional services, where U.S.-based companies could still maintain a competitive advantage. Thus, the strategic objective of U.S. competitiveness strategies has been to facilitate and support the continued development of domestic high-wage sectors such as financial, professional, and business services and advanced technology in telecommunications and information processing, computer-assisted manufacturing, and other high technology industries.

A historic shift in this direction was signaled by Bill Clinton’s election in 1992, which was the first national victory for the self-proclaimed “New Democrats,” whose ideological lineage originates in the “Atari Democrats” of the late 1970s, and who were so designated because of their antipathy to trade unions, their receptiveness to proposals for social spending reductions, and their belief that the future of the U.S. economy depended on the expansion of the high technology and professional service sectors. Thus, when Clinton was elected U.S. President in 1992, the new administration openly distanced itself from the state-centered policies of the Keynesian New Deal liberals by referring to themselves as “New Democrats” committed to a peculiarly American philosophy of “neo-liberalism.”<sup>93</sup> While American neo-liberals have often proclaimed the “newness” of their economic philosophy, in practice the Clinton Administration largely continued and

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<sup>93</sup> The term neo-liberal is employed in its contemporary “American” usage, rather than its classical “European” meaning. See Dolbeare and Medcalf (1993, 72-83) who define neo-liberalism in its American usage as an ideological orientation that seeks to promote social justice and equity through state action while accepting the principle that such policies depend on the expansion and profitability of the private sector. Unlike neo-conservatives who advocate a *laissez-faire* economic policy or socialists who advocate public and social ownership of the means of production, neo-liberals advocate a state “industrial policy” organized through government-business partnerships.



built upon the bi-partisan policies established during the first Bush Administration. These policies included fiscal restraint and trade liberalization (NAFTA and WTO),

The net result of these cumulative developments is that the United States has emerged from the last three decades of economic and social turmoil as an American superstate that is by “far and away the most powerful country in the world, with no serious rivals in the economic, political, or military realms.”<sup>94</sup> By 1997, the Japanese and German economies combined were only 56 percent as large as the U.S. economy, while the Japanese, German, British, and French economies combined were still only 87% as large as the U.S. economy.<sup>95</sup> During the 1990s, a ten-year cycle of uninterrupted productivity and GDP growth actually widened the economic gap between the United States, Europe, and the rest of the world as the rate of U.S. economic growth exceeded both the European and the world average.<sup>96</sup> In fact, from 1990 to 1998, the United States reversed a four-decades long trend of its economy shrinking as a share of world gross domestic product so that during this time the U.S. economy not only grew in absolute terms – to a currently \$11 trillion gross domestic product (2002) – it increased proportionately from 22 percent to 25 percent of world gross domestic product.<sup>97</sup>

Indeed, economic globalization and its auxiliary supra-national institutions are largely extensions of the internationalization of U.S. capital accumulation, and to a lesser degree of Europe and Japan, and may certainly be viewed as a new phase of neo-imperialism. In this respect, the “new” world order is an excrescence of the American superstate, and its junior partners, and it is the current state form in which American hegemony has been reconstituted and reproduced on a global scale. Gindin and Panitch conclude that “recent tensions between Europe and the United States [e.g., Iraq, punitive tariffs] revolve around the role of the American state as acting on behalf of the particular interests of American capital as opposed to acting in the interests of global capital; and, in broader terms, acting as the embodiment of an all-too-often chauvinist definition of American national interests as opposed to the larger neo-imperial interest.”<sup>98</sup> Even Martin Shaw, a leading proponent of the global state thesis, acknowledges that “for most sections of the Ameri-

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>95</sup> G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America? Power and Politics in the Year 2000*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1998), pp. 298-99.

<sup>96</sup> Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, “Euro-Capitalism and American Imperialism,” Pp. 72-98 in Martin Beckman, Hans-Jürgen Bieling, and Frank Deppe, eds., *The Emergence of a New Euro Capitalism? Implications for Analysis and Politics* (Marburg, Germany: Forschungsgruppe Europäische Gemeinschaft (FEG), 2003), pp. 81-91 for a review of indicators documenting the resurgence of U.S. economic strength and comparative advantage in the 1990s.

<sup>97</sup> World Bank, *1999 World Development Indicators* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1999).

<sup>98</sup> Panitch and Gindin, “Euro-Capitalism and American Imperialism,” p. 95.

can power elite, world politics are still primarily understood in terms of its ‘national’ interest; common Western and global interests are subsumed into it. The ‘international community’ is seen to a considerable extent as an adjunct of American policy, not the other way round.”<sup>99</sup>

Insofar as the role of the state is to organize the interests of capital as a whole, the American superstate’s current imperial project is a significant failure to realize to those interests on a global scale. However, at the turn of the century, U.S. military expenditures were nearly double those of Japan, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom combined and were nearly equal to the military expenditures of the rest of the entire world combined and this rate of military spending was achieved by committing only 4 percent of U.S. G.D.P. to these expenditures (which is less than the 6% to 7% committed during the Cold War).<sup>100</sup> Moreover, these expenditures do not even begin to capture the immense technological gap between the United States and any potential military competitors. Thus, Domhoff concludes that “the most likely result of this unrivaled power is that the American foreign policy establishment will intervene militarily anywhere in the world that it chooses” to protect “American” interests.<sup>101</sup> The only foreseeable limit to this economic and military power will be the internal contradictions of the hegemonic bloc and the tendency of messianic state elites to over-reach until disciplined by some disastrous military adventure. This latter scenario has been predicted (incorrectly thus far) in every U.S. military expedition from Haiti to Kosovo to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gulf (U.S.-Iraq) War.

## 5. The End of a Messianic Era

The messianic component of the American ideology inherently goes beyond the immediate economic interests of American capital as well as the political interest in defending democracy against totalitarian regimes elsewhere in the world. This ideology is prone to carry both state elites and the popular multitude beyond the rational limits of *Realpolitik* and capital accumulation. The American social formation and its state are thus periodically “over-determined” at the ideological level, while the logic of empire designed into the U.S. Constitution facilitates this overdetermination with remarkable effectiveness. Yet, it is worth noting that the country’s major international wars tend to come at the end of messianic eras and bring them to a close, rather than

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<sup>99</sup> Martin Shaw, *Theory of the Global State: Globality as Unfinished Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 246.

<sup>100</sup> G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?*, pp. 298-99; Shaw, *Theory of the Global State*, pp. 204-05.

<sup>101</sup> Domhoff, *Who Rules America?*, pp. 299.

begin them, and here too a pattern emerges that explains this phenomenon in the exhaustion (or completion) of cycles.

First, it is worth observing that in an open letter to his friends, which was followed by an interview in the *Los Angeles Times* and an essay in the *Washington Post*, Paul Weyrich, an architect of the New Right's political strategy and president of the Free Congress Foundation, issued what one author has described as a jeremiad against the cultural decline of the American people. He noted correctly that conservatives had learned to win elections, but had never managed to enact their domestic social agenda. Weyrich argues that "politics has failed" and that the Christian Coalition has achieved little of its moral agenda, mainly because most Americans actually do not embrace their culture war.<sup>102</sup> He concludes at the beginning of the twenty-first century that politics has failed because of the collapse of American culture, which he describes as "an ever-wider sewer...a cultural collapse of historic proportions, a collapse so great that it simply overwhelms politics."<sup>103</sup>

Thus, Weyrich and his followers now favor a non-political direct action strategy called "separation," which is quite typical of the final phase in Great Awakenings, when they exhaust their political fervor and turn inward toward the development of "parallel institutions" such as home schools or Christian schools.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, as an organization, the Moral Majority came to an end in 1989, when the Reverend Jerry Falwell officially disbanded it. The Christian Coalition had to select its third president in only a decade after Pat Robertson's dismal showing in the 1992 Republican party primaries, followed by Ralph Reed's departure and integration into the mainstream corporate-Republican establishment. The evangelist Oral Roberts, like other university presidents, is now mainly concerned about the fiscal stability of Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma even to the extent that his webpage now primarily emphasizes fundraising for university scholarships, rather than a sweeping political or moral agenda. Similarly, after disbanding the Moral Majority, Jerry Falwell also turned his attention to expanding Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, which though it is still an important campaign stop in the Republic party's

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<sup>102</sup> Charles R. Kesler, "The End of the Moral Majority," see, <http://www.claremont.org/writings/990401kesler.html>. Article appeared originally in the April 1, 1999 online magazine IntellectualCapital.com

<sup>103</sup> Sara Fritz, "Culture Warrior Circles the Wagons in Wake of Religious Right's Defeat: Interview with Paul Weyrich," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1999, p. 3; Paul Weyrich, "Separate and Free," *Washington Post*, March 7, 1999, p. B-7.

<sup>104</sup> For example, see, Donald George Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War, with particular reference to the religious influences bearing upon the college movement* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965 [1932], where the second Great Awakening came to a close in the denominational college movement.

U.S. Presidential primary, Falwell has generally withdrawn from politics. Other evangelists of the Fourth Great Awakening have made less salutary exits from the national scene, including Jimmy Swaggart, who was discredited by a sex scandal followed by a well choreographed national television appearance where he said: “Forgive me Lord for I have sinned!” Jim and Tammy Faye Baker each served prison time for embezzling and misappropriating funds raised through their televangelism crusades.

This is a pattern that typically characterizes the end of a Great Awakening as its main leaders either withdraw in disillusionment over America’s materialism and perceived moral bankruptcy, are themselves morally or politically discredited,<sup>105</sup> or else incorporated back into the mainstream of American politics and culture. By this account, the third and final phase of the Fourth Great Awakening is drawing to a close and the political base for a global messianic crusade is withering quite rapidly. The Christian Coalition now claims only 1 million active members compared to the 50 million person mailing list (even if exaggerated) claimed by the Moral Majority.

In addition, the Fourth Great Awakening is not only approaching internal exhaustion, but its economic and political usefulness as a legitimating ideology for the dominant power bloc (finance capital/state elites) is waning with the stabilization of a new social structure of accumulation. While a clash of civilizations may coincide with the global economic interests of a particular industrial sector (i.e., oil and oil services), it is certainly counter-productive for the other leading sectors of capital with global interests, particularly at the very point when American capital’s global triumph is virtually assured for the time being. By almost any standard, the flexible regime of global accumulation has been successfully established and stabilized from the standpoint of American capital based on any number indicators such as labor productivity, declining union density, inflation, GDP growth, and the U.S. share of world GDP.

Moreover, a globally reconstituted American finance capital (which includes large high technology, service, and other transnational corporations) is now so deeply embedded in a network of transnational economic relations, international organizations, and supra-national forms of global governance that it should be more interested in strengthening the emergent framework of global

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<sup>105</sup> For instance, Jonathan Edwards’ prominent role in the First Great Awakening came to a sudden end despite the enthusiastic response to his preaching. His downfall came after a group of young people obtained a copy of an obstetrics book and looked at the illustrations of the female anatomy. Edwards responded to the incident by preaching against it and condemned those involved from the pulpit. As a result, he alienated the youth’s parents, who in good New England fashion, drove him from his ministerial position after which he was exiled to Stockbridge, Massachusetts to work with the Indians until his death.

legal institutions and multi-lateral enforcement mechanisms than in policing the new global system as a lone cowboy. In his analysis of “the global state” for instance, Martin Shaw suggests that a new global-Western state will successfully mediate these contradictions, because “the majority of large transnational corporations are American-based” and this gives the USA “a profound interest in the internationalization of law, especially commercial law.”<sup>106</sup> It would be foolhardy to predict a Pax Americana for as even Shaw argues the emergence of a new global state anchored by American military and economic power is still an unfinished revolution, but there is reason to believe that the most frightening aspects of America’s messianic mission, which logically ends only in the second coming of Christ -- the Apocalypse -- has at least been deferred to the next generation.

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<sup>106</sup> Shaw, *Theory of the Global State*, p. 250.

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