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## **“One Nation under God?” : Ethnicity and Identity in Modern America**

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If a single reason were sought to explain the genesis of the American system of government, it would probably be found in the intellectual, socio-economic and religious climate which led to England's Glorious Revolution<sup>1</sup>. The Puritan dream of establishing a benevolent, egalitarian theocracy based on the teachings of the Old and New Testaments lay at the heart of this endeavor. Following years of bitter contention and open warfare, the most dramatic consequence of which was the beheading of Charles I in 1649, the latter eventually succeeded in shifting some of the power away from the king and into the hands of a representative parliament. Although the struggle between the Dissenters and the monarchy was renewed after the Restoration (1660), the definitive Protestant victory came in 1688 with the exiling of the Catholic King James II. This event was formalized in a remarkable document known as the *Bill of Rights* (1689)<sup>2</sup>. Radically bold for the time and of far-reaching importance, it served as a blueprint for the American Bill of Rights which was drafted only 102 years later.

Ironically, while the gains of the Glorious Revolution were steadily whittled away in England during the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Hanoverian kings, particularly George III, the zeal for political and religious reform remained alive and well in the colonies of British North America, partly as a consequence of a series of Protestant “revivals” or “awakenings” which occurred between 1730s and 1760s (Griffin 1999 : 27; Will 1995), partly because of the spreading ideals of the Enlightenment. Constant violations of the principles laid out in the English Bill of Rights, compounded by a host of other abuses of royal power, most notably the imposition of taxes upon the North American colonists without their having any representation in Parliament, finally led to the Revolution of 1776.

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1 More remotely, the ultimate source is in the Great Reformation itself

2 The Toleration Act, adopted in the same year, also guaranteed the religious rights of Catholics.

## Early American Institutions

It is important to recall that the Founding Fathers of the early American Republic had been British subjects and thought of themselves as such, the notion of “American” being unfamiliar at the time<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, as many of the colonists had left Great Britain because of religious or social injustice and economic deprivation, they were perhaps more sensitive to questions of religious and political rights than ordinary Englishmen. By and large, they felt that the political institutions of the motherland were tyrannical and strove to found their new government upon principles that would be diametrically opposed to those of the English monarchical system. This meant essentially two things. First, the future executive’s temporal power had to be strictly limited by an elected body representing the people (i.e. the Congress) and, secondly, unlike the British State, neither the Anglican Church nor any other Christian denomination would be considered the established religion of the nation. In fact, although Anglicanism had originally been proclaimed the official religion of the Virginia colony, its status was lost after the first “Great Awakening” of 1738, (Griffin op. cit.; cf. Section 16 of the Virginia Constitution below). In summary, the foundation of the United States is a logical consequence of the continuity of political and religious thought of the 17<sup>th</sup> century English Protestant Dissenters in British North America.

A brief outline of the parallels between the English Bill of Rights of 1689 and the American Bill of Rights of 1791 should suffice to clarify the degree to which the latter is indebted to the former. In the preamble to the English Bill of Rights it is written that the document was prepared “in order to such an establishment as that their (Protestant) religion, laws, and liberties might not again be in danger of being subverted.” Although it is not specifically included as one of the articles of the English Bill of Rights, the fears expressed by the authors relate directly to usurpation of power and other abuses by the King who, once again, was also the head of the Anglican Church, the established state religion of the United Kingdom. It was to avoid this aberration that the Founding Fathers’ wrote the First Amendment :

*“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”*

The first Amendment rights regarding freedom of speech and the right of the people to assemble and to petition the government stem from the English Bill of Rights : Articles 9 (“that freedom of speech shall not be impeached...”) and Article 5 (“That it is the right of subjects to petition the king...”).

Article 7 of the English Bill of Rights also stipulates, “that the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defense suitable to their conditions and allowed by law.” This is the obvious source of the Second Amendment : “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” The logic behind this “right” is not specifically to protect the citizen and his family from criminals as it is often interpreted today, but rather to serve as the last rampart in the defense of liberty in face of a tyrannical state.

Article 10 of the English Bill of Rights also guarantees “that excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted”. This corresponds almost word for word to the Amendment 8 to the United States Constitution : “Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.” Other articles of the English Bill of Rights stipulate the individual’s right

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<sup>3</sup> The first use of “American” with the meaning of a colonist of British or European origin occurs in 1765 (OED), 11 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

to a fair trial, the selection of jurors, etc. and these are also echoed in the various Amendments to the US Constitution.

The English Protestant origins of the first ten American Amendments are thus undeniable and must be understood in the context of contemporary British politics and society. These laws were geared to curb the absolute power of the monarchy at both the temporal and spiritual levels. It is thus essential to consider the crucial role of religion in American society before going further.

## **Religion and the American State**

First, it should be underlined that by “religion”, the Founding Fathers were thinking first and foremost of Christianity, preferably under its Protestant form but also its Catholic form. This becomes clear when one examines the writing of contemporary participants in this constitutional adventure. For example, in a speech to the US military (October 11, 1798), John Adams, the second President of the United States, says :

*“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with the human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge or gallantry would break the strongest chords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made for a religious people. It is wholly incompatible to the government of any other.”* (Federer 1994)

Unlike Rousseau, who believed that man was born innocent and later fashioned by the social forces around him, Adams, like most of the Founding Fathers<sup>4</sup> was convinced that man was inherently sinful. If given unlimited power, he would certainly abuse that power. It is this fundamental philosophical belief that underpins the entire American system of “checks and balances”. As a devout Protestant, John Adams certainly considered the term “religious”, as used above, to be synonymous with Christianity. To have been more explicit would have been redundant. The following passage seems to bear this out (ibid) :

*“The Christian religion is, above all the religions that ever prevailed or existed in ancient or modern times, the religion of wisdom, virtue, equity and humanity...”* (John Adam’s Diary : July 26, 1796)

The passage concerning freedom of religion as expressed in the Virginia State Constitution provides further evidence of this mindset. Thoroughly inspired by Locke’s writings<sup>5</sup>, it is one of the earliest State constitutions and demonstrates that, for its writers, the “religion” of the commonwealth was equated with Christianity.

*“Section 16. Free exercise of religion; no establishment of religion.*

*That religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance... And the General Assembly shall not prescribe any religious test whatsoever, or confer any peculiar privileges or advantages on any sect or denomination, or pass any law requiring or authorizing any religious society, or the people of any district within this Commonwealth, to levy taxes on themselves or others...”*

This is significant because neither the Virginia State Constitution nor the US Constitution itself advocate the “separation of Church and State” as is often believed today. As we have seen, in

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<sup>4</sup> One important exception is Jefferson who has often been described as a deist.

<sup>5</sup> To be fair, King James II, a Catholic, expressed a similar view in his Declaration of Indulgence (April 4, 1687) 2 years before Locke’s *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Cheyney 1908 : 539).

the minds of the Founding Fathers, it was quite the opposite. Their primary objective was simply to avoid the situation which existed in England where the sovereign was (and is) also the nation's spiritual leader. Furthermore, it is also necessary to point out that John Locke also believed that the duty of a Christian required him to accept those of other faiths :

*“Those whose manners are pure and blameless, ought to be upon equal terms with their fellow-subjects. Thus if solemn assemblies, observation of festivals, public worship, be permitted to any one sort of professors; all these things ought to be permitted to the presbyterians, independents, anabaptists, Armenians, quakers, and others, with the same liberty. Nay, if we may openly speak the truth, and as becomes one man to another, neither pagan, nor Mahometan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth because of his religion. The Gospel commands no such thing.”* (Horton and Mendus 1991 : 51)

However, even if he accepts the right of “pagans” and “Jews” to build houses of worship, he sets strict conditions for this. They can do this only as long as they are “honest, peaceful, and industrious” and, he adds, “if these things may be granted to Jews and pagans, surely the condition of any Christians ought not to be worse than theirs, *in a Christian commonwealth*” (our italics). Put another way, the people of the commonwealth should tolerate non-Christian religions but it must not be forgotten that the commonwealth is, first and foremost, a Christian entity.

As we shall see, American identity today is still largely conditioned by two interrelated concepts : one's religion (or lack of it) and ethnicity (or refusal of it). It is to the latter point that we shall move now.

### **The Origins of WASP Ethnicity**

We now shall attempt to demonstrate that the religious beliefs of the early colonists, if analyzed as a constituent element of a culturally determined value system, can be viewed as a simple extension of ethnicity. Fishman (1992 : 4) describes ethnicity in the following terms :

*“both the sense and the expression of “collective, intergenerational cultural continuity,” i.e. the sensing and expressing of links to “one's own kind (one's own people),” to collectivities that not only purportedly have historical depth but, more crucially, share putative ancestral origins and, therefore, the gifts and responsibilities, rights and obligations deriving therefrom.”*

This perception of shared ancestral origins often provokes a strong sense of moral attachment to the group. Language is often at the very center of the question of ethnicity and plays a profoundly symbolic role. In this context, religion can also be considered a powerful cultural corollary having a significant binding role by reinforcing a sense of origins, divine justification for the actions of the group and adding a sacred dimension to the concept of ethnicity. We shall see below that this was precisely the vision adopted by the New England Puritans.

Taking this idea of ethnicity a step further, John Edwards (1985 : 10-11) argues that it is intimately associated with the concept of “nation” : “Both ethnic group and nation are self-defined; the difference between them resides in the nation's possession of the additional ‘idea’, the conscious wish for self-control.” Some might see this as a form of politicized ethnicity. In other words, “nationhood” and “ethnicity” differ only in the sense that the former can be concealed behind the trappings of organized government. As we shall see, the identity of such an entity is thus dependent upon the sense of parity and “peopleness” (Fishman op cit. p. 70).

If one accepts this analysis, it becomes easier to understand how English Protestantism gradually came to fuse with a vision of the English “nation” as a purely ethnic Anglo-Saxon body whose God-appointed mission was to civilize the world. Although Anglo-Saxonism, as it is sometimes called, is often assumed to have emerged as a consequence of late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century

Romanticism, it is in fact much older than this and is intimately connected with the spread of Protestantism during the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and, especially the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

With its roots in 15<sup>th</sup> century Germany, the Protestant Reformation was marked by a growing desire among the Germans to cast off the yoke of Roman Catholic political and spiritual domination. Indeed, the conjunction of fervent religious feeling transmitted by Martin Luther, combined with the developing consciousness of the perceived ethnic and linguistic bonds uniting the Germanic-speaking peoples, bred feelings of hostility for their southern European neighbors, particularly the Italians, Spanish and French. In fact, the entire question is perhaps better understood in the context of emerging western European nation-states as they struggled for religious, political and socioeconomic hegemony. According to MacDougall (1982 : 42) :

*“German humanists believed that their glorious past had been ignored and slighted by the ancient writers as well as by contemporary Italian scholars. It was their self-appointed task to resurrect their history and demonstrate that it was as venerable and worthy of esteem as that of the Greeks or Romans. Furthermore, they would show that the Germany of antiquity lived on to flower in their own day.”*

Paradoxically, it was the first century Roman historian, Tacitus, who provided the Germans and, later, the English, with their *titres de noblesse*. In his classic book, *Germania*, he extols the moral<sup>6</sup> and martial virtues of the Germans and goes on at length describing their egalitarian institutions. He stresses one point in particular which was to have dire consequences centuries later – the racial purity of the Germanic peoples. Just as the Reformation was getting underway and Protestant ideas were spreading throughout Northern Europe, Tacitus’s book was translated into German by Konrad Celtis in 1500 thus sparking greater interest in Germanic ethnic pride. The result was the development of a feeling of hostility but also superiority towards their southern Catholic neighbors<sup>7</sup>.

### **Protestantism versus Catholicism**

During the Reformation and well afterwards, Tacitus’s condemnation of Roman slothfulness and immorality was seized upon as a useful source by the Germans and – as Protestant ideas spread to Great Britain – by Englishmen, to denounce the endemic corruption which permeated the Roman Catholic Church of the time. Furthermore, it was increasingly felt that, just as the Germanic tribes had swept away a decadent Roman Empire, so the Protestant Reformers would sweep away an equally decadent Roman Catholic Church.

A consequence of the fierce religious conflicts pitting Protestant against Catholic was the conscious attempt made by English Reformers to wipe away the traces of the Roman Catholic (and Irish) foundations of Christianity in England. Writing in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, John Bale, clergyman and ardent Anglo-Saxonist, was in the forefront of such efforts and endeavored to demonstrate that evangelical Christianity had first been introduced to England, not by St. Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury to be appointed by the Pope, but rather by Joseph of Arithmathea, who

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<sup>6</sup> In particular he stresses the virtue of Germanic women and the marital fidelity of both men and women alike. As a consequence, the roots of these moral values are thus pre-Christian.

<sup>7</sup> One of the most enduring ethnic stereotypes to have risen during this period was that of Germanic “masculinity” as opposed to Latin “femininity” (MacDougall *ibid.*). Even the great linguist, Otto Jespersen, uses these terms to describe the linguistic differences between French and English in his *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, The University of Chicago Press (1938, 1982).

thereby predated the arrival of the Pope's appointee by several hundred years (MacDougall op. cit. p. 34; Frantzen 1997 : 17-39)<sup>8</sup>.

Indeed, some 19<sup>th</sup> century historians would go so far as to claim that the English Church had been Teutonic and Episcopal since the very beginning on account of the lack of a fixed hierarchy in Anglo-Saxon society, a hierarchy which characterized the Roman Catholic Church. According to this view, the original faith of the early English Christians had thus been corrupted by Rome<sup>9</sup>. It was therefore the duty of Englishmen to reclaim their religious and cultural heritage that had been contorted by the ungodly papists.

English Protestants came to vaunt what they claimed were the Germanic origins of the English Church and especially English political institutions, a historical position that was to be maintained until the present day. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, for instance, as the conflict between the Parliament and King Charles I gradually reached the crisis stage, the Puritan supporters of Parliament came to view this political body (despite its French linguistic origins!) as the incarnation of the Anglo-Saxon Witenagemot. This primitive Anglo-Saxon council, in which all freemen participated, was held to be thoroughly democratic, kings being elected officials who governed only during times of war, another echo from Tacitus (Mattingly op. cit. p. 107)<sup>10</sup>. This was, of course, an ideal argument for Puritans seeking to limit the power of the English sovereigns who were resolute defenders of the Divine Right of Kings, a system perceived to be a holdover from Norman-French times and directly reminiscent of the worst of Catholic excesses. Louis XIV's outrageous abuses of political and religious authority only lent credence to this sentiment.

The invention of English ethnic identity was grounded, to a large extent, in the rejection of French cultural, religious and linguistic domination that had marked English history since the time of the Norman Conquest. Popular dislike of the Catholics and anything "Latin"<sup>11</sup> reached new lengths. English writers sought new ways to highlight the racial purity of the English people. In his *St Edwards Ghost or, Anti-Normanisme* (1647), Richard Hare considered the Norman French to be "the off-souring, the drosse of the Teutonic and Gallic nations". He was also among the first to write that the Anglo-Saxons had killed off or hounded the Brittonic Celts out of England (ibid. p. 61) thereby preserving the purity of English blood. By the same token, the myth about the extermination of the Celtic Britons is at the root of a tradition which provided historical support and, consequently, a political rationale for the racial separateness of the "Anglo-Saxon" English and the "Celtic" Welsh, Scottish and Irish, a myth that has divided the British people until the present day.

*"Such is the transcendent quality of our Mother Nation (Germany)...we being flesh of her flesh, bone of her bone, yea, of the most ancient and noble of her tribes (according to the Germanes opinion) ... our Progenitors that transplanted themselves from Germany hither, did not commix themselves with the ancient inhabitants of the Countrey the Brittaines (as other Colonies did with the Natives in those places where they came) but totally expelling them, took the sole possession of the Land to themselves, thereby preserving their blood, lawes and language incorrupted."*

The Christian vision of social egalitarianism as reflected in the New Testament was seized and expanded upon by English Puritans... but within an Anglo-Saxonist framework. The main

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<sup>8</sup> Gereint Gruffydd (1960 : 49) also points out that a similar myth had found favor among the Welsh whereby the Bible had been translated into Welsh before Joseph Arithmathea had introduced evangelical Christianity to Wales. Religion was thereafter "corrupted by the Romish innovation of Augustine". This story presumably arose for similar reasons.

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, a Celtic version of this idea developed in Protestant Wales. Since the both the Welsh Brythons and the Anglo-Saxon English were thought to be the descendants of Gomer and ultimately, Noah, rival claims were made that the language of heaven had been Celtic and Germanic respectively.

<sup>10</sup> This idea reappears in form of Article 6 of the English Bill of Rights. The danger to democracy of a standing army during times of peace is also acknowledged in the U.S. Constitution. At the height of the Cold War, President Eisenhower made a well-known speech warning the American people of the potential dangers of such a situation.

<sup>11</sup> Outside of the classical authors, of course, who continued to be venerated.

tenets of Anglo-Saxonism as applied to England, were summarized by H. MacDougall in his *Racial Myth in English History* (1982 : 2) and provided a convenient justification for later British colonialism around the world and, eventually, served as the foundation for the American notion of Manifest Destiny :

*“1) Germanic peoples on account of their unmixed origins and civilizing mission, are inherently superior to all others, both in individual character and in their institutions.*

*The English are, in the main, of Germanic origin, and their history begins with the landing of Hengist and Horsa at Ebbsfleet, Kent, in 449.*

*The qualities which render English political and religious institutions the freest in the world are an inheritance from Germanic forefathers.*

*The English, better than any other Germanic people, represent the traditional genius of their ancestors and thereby carry a special burden of leadership in the world community. ”*

Given the main precepts of this ideology, with its insistence on free political institutions, the moral and racial superiority of the English as well as their civilizing mission, it is not difficult to understand how Protestantism and Anglo-Saxonism came to be so inextricably confused and intertwined. The myth of the WASP had been born. For the early British colonists of North America, the so-called “melting pot”, as it is now called, was to be a strictly British/European-Protestant broth. Any other more extravagant recipes were strictly forbidden and severely punished as can be seen from these 17<sup>th</sup> century King’s laws (Rose 1976 : 17, 19) :

*“September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1630 : Hugh Davis to be soundly whipped before an assembly of Negroes and others for abusing himself to the dishonour of God and shame of Christians, by defiling his body in lying with a negro; which fault he is to acknowledge next Sabbath day. Statues 1 :146*

*1662 Act XII : Negro womens children to serve according to the condition of the mother : Whereas some doubts have arisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a negro woman should be slave or free, Be it therefore enacted and declared by this present grand assembly, that all children borne in this country shall be held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother, And that any christian shall committ ffornication with a negro woman or man, hee or shee soe offending shall pay double the ffines imposed by the former act. Statutes 2 : 170 ....*

*1670, Act XII : What tyme Indians to Serve : Whereas some disputes have arisen whither Indians taken in warr by any other nation, and by that nation that taketh them sold to the English, are servants for life or terme of years, It is resolved and enacted that all servants not being christians imported into this colony by shipping shall be slaves for their lives... ”*

Although slavery was not an economic necessity in the northern colonies, Griffin (1999 : 19-20) points out that it was in fact the Puritans who were the first to offer religious justification for slavery as an institution. It was their arguments which were to be adopted decades afterwards by the southern plantation owners. He quotes John Saffin, a Bostonian, who wrote the “Treatise on the Defense of Slavery” in 1701 :

*“It was Saffin’s position, following Eaton, Winthrop, and Mather, that the Puritans were serving God’s predetermined plan for a Christianized America, because slavery was part “of the divine Wisdom of the most High, who hath made nothing in vain, but hath Holy ends in all his Dispensations to the children of men.” Saffin believed that by enslaving “strange” Africans, the Puritans were fulfilling the law of God in Leviticus that “no heathen” should defile the homeland of the chosen.”*

With their emphasis on the Christianizing and civilizing mission of the English, New England Protestants likened themselves to the ancient Jews. Just as the latter had been defined by the Old Testament as the chosen people of God, so the Puritans believed that they, as the followers of Christ, were the new chosen people of New Testament. In settling New England, which they also called “New Canaan” or “New Zion”, their objective was to found a perfect English Christian nation.

Nevertheless, Anglo-Saxonism was an ideology shared by other Protestant groups such as the Anglicans. The slave-based economic system which had been established in Virginia, and which progressively spread to other southern colonies as they were founded, was to remain a scourge which has plagued the social development of the country until the present day. The perceived racial inferiority of non-WASPs - particularly non-Europeans - was accepted as a concrete fact. Ricard (1999 : 40) describes its American manifestation in the following terms :

*“Writers or scholars like Emerson, Herman Melville, Theodore Parker, George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, and William Hickling Prescott celebrated all the more confidently national achievements by races whose superior characteristics were attested by scientific research. Nation, language and race were quite happily confused and rolled into one...”*

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just as the “Anglo-Saxon” English had thought of themselves as the best of the Germans, the many Americans had now come to see themselves as the best of the “Anglo-Saxons” (ibid. p. 41). After all, had the Americans not succeeded in founding a “heaven-rescued” nation which was graced with the freest institutions the world had ever known? It was clear to many Americans that the Germanic torch had changed hands.

Indeed, Thomas Jefferson had seen the Americans as the direct inheritors of the Anglo-Saxon culture, language and government. When he founded the University of Virginia, for instance, the “Anglo-Saxon” language (i.e. Old English) was established as a main course – along with the required reading of the Bible. VanHoosier-Carey (1997 : 160) writes :

*“For Jefferson, the Anglo-Saxon form of the English language contained all of the Anglo-Saxon characteristics that had given birth to democracy and common law centuries before. He believed that these original democratic elements could be transferred to the modern student through the study of the Anglo-Saxon language. After absorbing these elements, the student could then trace the changes in English from that period to the present day and thereby, gain a corresponding understanding of the developments of English social, political, and legal customs up to the American Revolution. Studying this early English grammar and vocabulary as well as its subsequent changes would provide insight into the relationship between Anglo-Saxon cultural institutions and their descendants. Jefferson felt that this was the perfect training for an American citizen.”*

Significantly, Frantzen (cited in VanHoosier-Carey, ibid.) notes that Jefferson, had proposed having Hengist and Horsa appear on the official seal of the United States. The symbolism behind this was patent. Just as it was believed that the Anglo-Saxons had exterminated and driven the Celtic Britons out of England, so the descendants of these Germanic warriors would drive the Indians out their way in their conquest of North America.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, being an American implied belonging to the WASP mainstream, that is to say, being a descendant of one of the original British or Scots-Irish Protestant settlers or, at the very least, having Western European heritage. Hall (1997



: 143) provides further evidence of this belief in the following extract from an 1852 lecture by Princeton-educated John Seely Hart, an ardent American proponent of Anglo-Saxonism :

*“We, Englishmen and Americans, are lineal descendants from the Saxons, and our language, it can not be too often repeated, is the Saxon language. The English language, whose history we are now sketching, though it has received large admixtures from various sources, is in the main the same that was spoken by Hengist and Horsa, and by their countrymen along the southern shores of the Baltic, before their arrival in England in the fifth century.”*

This belief in shared ancestry and common cultural and political ideals as well as the goal of the joint civilizing mission of the British colonialists and American WASPs, endured well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century as is suggested by Robert Bridge’s poem entitled “To the United States of America” written upon its entry in the First World War in 1917 :

*“Brothers in blood! They who this wrong began  
To wreck our commonwealth, will rue the day  
When first they challenged freemen to the fray,  
And with the Briton dared the American.”*<sup>12</sup>

## Demography

The demographic trends in the early British colonies explains how such beliefs had come to anchor themselves so firmly in North America. During the earliest stages of the colonization period, 1607 to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the English, Welsh, Scottish and Ulster (Scots-Irish) Protestants<sup>13</sup> were by far the dominant ethno-cultural and political forces in the British colonies. It was these British settlers who created the new American cultural model(s) to which later immigrants were forced to adapt. This continued until demographics finally began to tip the scale in favor of the non-WASP incomers during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even after the colonies achieved their independence, roughly 85% of the 3,172,000 colonists of European origin living in North America in 1790 were of British or Scots-Irish Protestant origin (cf. Bailyn 1986; Bonnet, Reiman and Serandour 1972 : 9)<sup>14</sup>. A further 10% were of German background, often Amish or Mennonite pacifists, supplemented by a smattering of mainly French, Dutch and Swedish Protestants. Catholics were also present, mainly in Maryland and the Carolinas but even here they were swallowed by a waves of later Protestant arrivals (Bailyn op.cit.).

Naturally, it must not be forgotten that a huge, 757,208 strong African population (of whom 697,681 were slaves) lived and labored side-by-side British and Irish indentured servants in the southern colonies during the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Bonnet, Reiman and Serandour, op.cit.). Nevertheless, it must also be recalled that their desperate social conditions allowed them little or no say in the development of the mainstream cultural model and political institutions which came to dominate the colonies. The Native American Indians, who were kept out of the system altogether, fared no better.

It is the arrival of over a million destitute Irish Catholics to the United States during the 1840s and 1850s that marked the first important rupture in relative religious and cultural harmony that had characterized the young American Republic since its inception<sup>15</sup>. Regarded with utter

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12 The so-called “special relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States is a direct consequence of this sentiment.

13 Although it is obvious that the Welsh, Scots and Irish were not “Anglo-Saxons”, they were part of the British colonial effort. Much to the chagrin of modern Celtic nationalists, “Briton” came to be equated with “English”.

14 The latter accounted for approximately 25% of all British colonists during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Bailyn 1986)

15 On account of the horrifying conditions on board the immigrant ships, over 40,000 Irish died during the crossings or shortly after landing in America (Sowell 1981 : 22).

disdain by the WASP majority<sup>16</sup>, the Irish Catholics arrived at a time when the United States was in one of its most active phases of geographic expansion. Sowell (1981 : 35) points out that low social status explains the striking fact that, as late as the 1860s, the “intermarriage rate” of the Irish in Boston was the “lowest of all immigrant groups – and even lower than black/white intermarriage at the same period.”

The second event to disrupt the WASP hold on power was a consequence of the American Civil War (1861-1865), arguably the most cataclysmic event in US history. President Lincoln’s 1863 Emancipation Proclamation<sup>17</sup> led to the freeing of 4 million African slaves, an event which ushered in a long and painful national struggle for social and racial equality that has left indelible scars on the nation to the present day. Theoretically, at least, Black Americans now had the same rights under the Constitution as any other WASP citizen.

If the slave narratives are anything to go by (cf. Hurmence 1984), the Reconstruction period which followed the war created a situation which may actually have worsened racial relations between whites and blacks. Although Lincoln had officially pardoned the southern veterans of the Confederate armies, it is sometimes forgotten that many southern leaders were denied their civil rights under section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment which stipulated that military officers or elected officials having participated in the “rebellion” would be barred from any military, state or federal offices. Furthermore, for 11 years, the 1867 Military Reconstruction Act effectively denied the Southern states a voice in the Union by dividing the entire region in 5 military districts. The practical effect of these decisions meant that, while the occupying Union army permitted Blacks to hold a certain number of political positions in the South<sup>18</sup> and while they placed their own people (i.e. carpetbaggers) in places of power, the former southern political and military leadership was denied this possibility. The effect of this disastrous policy was immediate and resulted in the founding of the KKK in 1866 by former Confederate General N.B. Forrest. Their objective was simple : to terrorize the newly freed Blacks (and any other outsiders) from exercising their civil rights.

Yet, despite the social unrest, the Civil War provoked a rush towards all-out industrialization in the victorious North the likes of which had never been seen. By 1900, for instance, the US was producing as much steel as Germany and Great Britain combined. The enthusiastic mood of the period is captured in the speech of a former Union officer at a Banquet of the Army of the Potomac (Chicago, 1894) :

*“We want this Nation to be independent of the whole world. A Nation, to be ready to settle questions of dispute by war (our italics) should be in a condition of absolute independence. For that reason, I want all the wheels turning in this country, all the chimneys full of fire, all the looms running, the iron red hot everywhere. I want to see all mechanics having plenty of work with good wages and good homes for their families, good food, schools for their children, plenty of clothes, and enough to take care of a child if it happens to take sick. I am for the independence of America, the growth of America, physically, mentally, and every other way.”*<sup>19</sup>

However, the wheels had to be turned and the looms had to be run by massive numbers of new workers. With hundreds of thousands of British subjects immigrating to the South Welsh coal fields at home or to other commonwealth nations such as Australia and Canada, millions of

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<sup>16</sup> Sowell (1981 :27) argues that in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Boston free blacks “were in general economically better off than the Irish.”

<sup>17</sup> Sowell (ibid. p. 184) points out that over 500,000 African Americans were already free by this time.

<sup>18</sup> By 1872, around 330 Black men were active in the various southern state legislatures. In 1876, one year before the end of Reconstruction, there were only 80. By 1900, there were none. (Source : United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Voting Section; introduction to voting laws.)

<sup>19</sup> From the file retrieved from Book Stacks Unlimited, Inc.

[ftp.books.com/eBooks/Nonfiction/History/Speeches/army\\_of\\_.txt](ftp.books.com/eBooks/Nonfiction/History/Speeches/army_of_.txt)

destitute southern and eastern Europeans immigrants - mainly Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Jews – flowed into the United States where they settled in the burgeoning northern cities.

Although many American industrialists may have considered the arrival of these new immigrants as a necessary evil to keep the growing number of mills and factories running, then as now, they welcomed the never-ending flow of cheap labor. Negative attitudes about the rising number of non-WASPs in the United States were widespread by this time and are reflected in the remarks of the noted English historian and champion of Anglo-Saxonism, Anthony Freeman. After a visit to the United States in 1881 he had this to say : “This would be a grand land if only every Irishman would kill a Negro, and be hanged for it” (MacDougall 1982 : 101).

## **The public school system**

As the nation grew into a formidable industrial power, the political and economic forces gradually shifted away from the WASP dominated rural areas to the major northern cities. In the meantime, the foreign-born population grew steadily, gradually concentrating in the cities. The 1900 census shows that the US population stood at 75 million of whom 10 million were recent immigrants. Ten years later, the figure stood at 13 million foreign born (US Bureau of the Census 1999)<sup>20</sup>.

It must be stated, nevertheless, that throughout this period the vast majority of the new immigrants, regardless of their origins, wanted their children to blend into the culture they entered and to become “Americans”. Generally, they readily accepted the unwritten rule of the time : acculturation could only come through the mastery of the English language. Thousands of newcomers even anglicized their family names in a bid to better fit the WASP model and most made the conscious decision to abandon their former national identities. This was, of course, encouraged by the fervent nationalism which characterized all major Western nations at the time.

With the arrival of millions of new immigrants, the need to forge a coherent American identity became of paramount importance. This was accomplished largely through the nation’s schools. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century 31 out of the 45 states had public schools. By 1918 every state in the Union had a public school system. Many states, however, had inherited public school systems that had roots in colonial times. The colony of Massachusetts, for instance, had created its first public school system as early as 1642, the objective of which was to teach children, apprentices and servants “to read the English tongue”, and acquire “knowledge of the Capital Lawes : under penaltie of 20 shillings each for each neglect therein.” They were also to be taught the “principles of Religion”<sup>21</sup>. This explains why Protestantism was such a prevalent part of the education system of all the states until recently. This situation must thus be considered to be an inheritance rather than a modern deviation. Given the fact that the WASPs still held the reigns of power, the public school was perhaps the most powerful tool at their disposal for integrating the children of new immigrants into American society.

Acculturation towards the WASP model was accomplished in a variety of ways. A very important part of the indoctrination of new immigrants was determined by the thoroughly Euro-centric content of the curriculum, another cultural inheritance. History courses, for instance, were designed to highlight the achievement of European, British and, later, American heroes. Literature classes began with the ancient classics and moved on to cover traditionally revered French, German, British and American writers.

Indeed, until the 1963 Supreme Court Decision to ban school prayer and mandatory reading from the Bible in public schools<sup>22</sup>, children in every classroom of public schools across the

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<sup>20</sup> Mexicans did not arrive in large numbers until after the Mexican Revolution in 1919. The trickle turned into a flood after 1964 when Johnson abolished the Bracero program.

<sup>21</sup> Internet site : [schoollaw1642.html](http://schoollaw1642.html) : 2002

<sup>22</sup> 1963 : US Supreme court decision : *School District of Abington Township versus Schempp*

nation began the day with the Protestant version of the Lord's prayer. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance which is still recited every morning :

*"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God<sup>23</sup>, with liberty and justice for all."*

Patriotic songs such as "America the Beautiful", "God Bless America" and so on were sung on every possible occasion. Religious allusions are omnipresent as can be seen in these verses of the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner" :

*"Blessed with victory and peace  
May the heaven-rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made  
And preserved us a nation.*

*Then conquer we must  
When our cause it is just  
And this be our motto  
"In God is our trust"*

Slowly but surely the underlying symbolism of the lyrics of such songs, combined with the lessons learned in the schools entered the subconscious minds of the young.

### **Towards a new American Identity**

Despite these efforts, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the problem with this ethnically and religiously determined concept of "national" identity was that an increasing proportion of the population of the United States now consisted of huge numbers of non-Protestants, non-Caucasians and even non-Christians. The latter, in particular, were relegated to a kind of identity no-man's land. Officially they were American "citizens", but, in fact, few WASPs considered them to be full-fledged members of the American "nation" – often quite the contrary.

Nowhere were such attitudes harsher than in the South where, as a consequence of the emancipation of the African-American slaves and the effects of Reconstruction, Jim Crow Laws had been established to prevent minorities from voting. The result of these state laws was that by 1940 only 3% of the Black population in the South had been registered to vote. By 1965, the statistics for registered black voters ranged from 6.7% in Alabama to a maximum of 37.3% in South Carolina<sup>24</sup>. American Indians did not obtain the right to vote before 1924 - the state of Arizona maintained the barriers until 1948. The list of such injustices is long and the ethnic pecking order well known.

### **The Decline of Anglo-Saxonism**

In addition to the demographic changes described above, a number of other crucial factors combined to precipitate the weakening of the WASP grip on power. One of the most dramatic and conclusive was the rise of Nazi Germany and its virulent brand of Teutonism. Unlike the Anglo-Saxonists, however, it is important to point out that the Nazi Teutonists rejected Christianity altogether (Jesus, after all, was a Jew) and had planned to eliminate it over the long-term. Their murderous methods, which had led to the physical extermination of entire peoples whom they had

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<sup>23</sup> The phrase "under God" was added at the insistence of President Eisenhower during the 1950s.

<sup>24</sup> United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, voting section; introduction to voting laws.

judged to be racially impure, shocked even the most hardened Anglo-Saxonists in Britain and America. The ultimate paradox was that both the United States and Great Britain found themselves locked in a crusade against a supremely racist Teutonic state that shared an ideology closely resembling their own. Yet, in order to mobilize their populations during the long bloody struggle, allied propaganda portrayed the British Empire and the United States as the defenders of democracy, human rights and western civilization. Liberal intellectuals were not slow in picking up on this contradiction and the issue attracted increasing attention after the war.

Naturally, those who were most sensitive to this were the colonial peoples themselves as well as American citizens of non-European and/or non-Christian origin. As a result, the economic and military weakness of Britain and France following the Second World War was exploited and, between 1945 and 1965, nearly all of the colonies had achieved full independence, often at the cost of tremendous bloodshed. Although the United States had officially stood against colonialism, as the Cold War turned hot, it slowly began to assume the imperial role formerly enjoyed by the British and the French. In turn, the Americans too came to be seen as neo-colonialist imperialists by many Third World peoples.

Just as former colonial peoples had succeeded in obtaining their political freedom and, no less important, asserting their cultural identities, non-European Americans drew important lessons from these colonial struggles in their attempt to achieve social and legal parity with white Americans. During the Civil rights period, for instance, Martin Luther King's non-violent tactics were inspired, not only by his profound Protestant faith, but also by Gandhi's successful actions against the British which he employed with great effect in his marches across the southern United States. Furthermore, the systematic and often brutal repression of peaceful demonstrations by southern white police and taunting white crowds convinced left-leaning and liberal Christian whites, as well as Jews and other minorities, that it was the Black protestors who held the moral high ground in the struggle for human and civil rights. For the first time, the American WASP culture and political "establishment" came under ferocious attack from human rights organizations around the world. This situation was also effectively exploited by the Soviet propaganda machine and their leftist allies in Western Europe giving the struggle an international dimension.

Furthermore, even though the problem of racism was far from being limited to the South, the northern-based media did much to portray southern whites as the champions of a primitive form of Anglo-Saxonism. The power of this message was reinforced in the nightly television news when viewers across the nation witnessed the racial violence for themselves. Civil rights activists very quickly focused their attacks on the most vocal and brutal of these groups, in particular the KKK and others who were in the forefront of the struggle against civil rights. In the end, the association between southern WASP identity and the KKK, sounded the death-knell of WASP identity wherever it existed. Now anyone who appeared to defend traditional "American values" ran the risk of being openly accused or, at least suspected, of being a racist.

## **The 1960s**

One of the most socially significant occurrences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States which precipitated the decline of WASP ideology was the doubling of the number of American universities between 1945 and 1965. The direct consequence of this was the democratization of higher education. For the first time in American history, massive numbers of young people from working class families, both WASPs and non-WASPs (mainly Catholics and Jews according to Khleif 1978), were granted access to higher education. The significance of this fact was two-fold : firstly, the dispensation of learning had, once and for all, been taken out of the hands of the WASP élite<sup>25</sup> and, secondly, knowledge had now become a powerful driving force in the development of

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25 Nearly all of the older American Universities - Harvard, Princeton, Yale - had firm Protestant bases.

the US economy. After the signing of the 1964 and 1965 civil rights acts by Congress, increasing numbers of Blacks, Hispanics and Indians<sup>26</sup> began to enter, not only the university system, but all areas of the economy<sup>27</sup>. The seeds of social plurality had been planted.

According to Fogel (quoted in Will 1995), after World War II, institutions of higher learning were still under the influence of the Protestant-inspired social gospel movement which held that it was a Christian's duty to repair social ills and protect the victims. It was this belief that had been largely responsible for the abolitionist movement prior to the Civil War as well as Prohibition<sup>28</sup>. Such a stimulus for social change was given new impetus by the spread of socialism, an ideology which was gaining in popularity on campuses and learned circles. Although during the Cold War it was taboo to publicly articulate leftist ideas, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, many intellectuals were secretly attracted by the egalitarian and universal principles advocated by socialism. It goes without saying that the American capitalist system itself was also in the crosshairs of this liberal attack.

Once combined, these forces created an electric atmosphere on many campuses across the United States which encouraged students to mobilize politically in an effort to change the policies of the federal and state governments. The university system thus served as a platform for the expression of many of the most radical ideas of the 1960s.

The most remarkable consequence of this radicalization was the manner in which the intellectuals and students undertook the systematic destruction of each of the tenets of Teutonism and Anglo-Saxonism outlined above by MacDougall (op. cit.). As a WASP dominated nation, American society as a whole had come to be identified with each of them.

Not surprisingly, the first point to come under attack was the notion of the white ethnic and cultural superiority. The consequences of Nazism had sensitized the public to horrors of fascist and racist doctrines and the fact that there existed a direct ideological link between the latter and an institutionalized program of segregation and discrimination directed against minorities within the United States repulsed and shamed many Americans, regardless of their origins. These discriminatory policies were effectively countered by the civil rights movement and, eventually, by the Federal government itself.

The second point was the supposed moral integrity of the WASP. A particularly sensitive issue in this regard was the sexuality of women (cf. Mattingly 1979). During the 1960s, Women's groups launched an all out assault on traditional sexual morals and were very vocal in attacking the allegedly oppressive role of the white male over the centuries. Just as he had exploited the ethnic minorities, it was claimed, he had also cruelly dominated women, denying them their full potential and using the Christian notion of sexual morality as a tool to control women. The birth control pill, provided them with the ultimate weapon in their war against sexism and led directly to the sexual revolution. It was in this climate that the US Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973.

The gay liberation movement developed in the wake of this struggle for women's rights. Homosexuals and lesbians also targeted the religiously-based WASP moral code which had established laws banning and vilifying their sexual practices.

Another of the tenets of Anglo-Saxonism described by MacDougall (op. cit.) was the WASP civilizing mission. Once again, this was intimately linked to the brand of militant Protestantism and the colonialist mindset exported by the British as they fanned out over the world.

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26 S. Cornell (1986) writes "The late 1950s and early 1960s saw the beginning of change in American Indian leadership and its activity. During the 1950s the number of Indians enrolled in college in the United States substantially increased. Only 385 American Indians were attending post-secondary institutions in 1932; thanks in part to the post-World War II GI Bill, that number had swelled to 2,000 by 1957. On campuses, off reservations, educated Indians from different tribes began to discover one another."

27 The Equal Rights Act in tandem with Affirmative Action contributed significantly in this regard.

28 Championed by the Women's Christian Temperance Movement, Prohibition has often been mocked as a ridiculous effort. Nevertheless, from 1920 until 1933, the cases of alcohol related disease dropped significantly throughout the country (Doctor John Pierre German, Kettering Hospital, Ohio, personal communication 2001)

It was also one of the more arrogant characteristics of WASP culture which had so exacerbated colonial peoples over the centuries. Indirectly bound to this was Tacitus' portrayal of the Germanic male as the archetypal soldier. The warrior ethic and the glorification of war was certainly still deeply ingrained in the American mentality and, with the Vietnam War raging throughout this period, the question of the moral implications of the fighting were on everyone's mind. The Anti-War movement, which was largely inspired by pacifists of all colors, was perhaps the most instrumental factor in ending the war in Vietnam as the following statement by Dean Rusk, former Secretary of State suggests :

*"If we had seen 50,000 people demonstrating around the headquarters in Hanoi calling for peace, we would have thought the war was over and we might have been right. Well, they could see 50,000 people demonstrating around the Pentagon. So I think those dissenters in this country, whatever their motivations, in effect said, "Just hang in there, gentlemen, and you will win politically what you could not win militarily." (Koppel, T. (1986) *America and the World : 1961-1975*, ABC documentary)*

The Vietnam War played a tremendously important role in that it acted as a catalyst in mobilizing anyone even remotely opposed to the "WASP establishment". As we have seen, the latter was being increasingly held responsible for a panoply of social ills. In radical circles, American actions in Vietnam were seen to be just another example of neo-colonialist interventionism on the part of white supremacists in which the victims were, once again, Third World populations.

The long-term consequence of these focussed attacks on WASP values and institutions have been dramatic and the effects are still felt to this day, political correctness being one of the consequences. During the 1960s and 1970s, with the direct and indirect support of the campus-based intellectual community, millions of young white students turned their backs on their own cultural traditions<sup>29</sup>, especially against the idea of white ethnic superiority. In so doing, a counter-culture was spawned which openly challenged the traditional American WASP cultural values that had provided stability in the nation for centuries. For the first time, millions of Americans came to see their country through the eyes of the perceived victims of racism and, as in Europe, the idea of belonging to an oppressed group became something of a fashion<sup>30</sup>.

Drugs as well as extravagant dress, beards and long hair became symbolic, but very powerful elements of the revolt. The revolutionary mood that prevailed is captured in the following extract from a brochure published by the Young Socialist Alliance. It was handed to the author by anti-war demonstrators in Washington DC in 1971 :

*"A whole generation of youth threatens to turn its back on the ideology and on the political and academic mouthpieces of America's rulers. The "silent generation" has given way to its rebellious opposite... This new radicalism is not a strictly American phenomenon. It is part of a world-wide radicalization of youth. It is young people who have made up the vanguard and the ranks of the international struggle against the aggression of US Imperialism in Vietnam... It was the young people of France who in 1968 sparked the biggest general strike in history. This upheaval put the overthrow of capitalism on the agenda in an advanced capitalist country for the first time in decades... The expanding layer of revolutionaries on the campuses must draw lessons from the mistakes and successes of the past and current struggles in order to*

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<sup>29</sup> For many, this rebelliousness lasted only the time they were at University. For others, the rejection was permanent.

<sup>30</sup> This may explain the resurgence in interest in white ethnic communities, many of which had suffered discrimination at the hands of WASPs. Chief among these are the Celtic cultural groups : the Welsh, Irish and Scots. (cf Michael Hechter's (19\*\* ) *Internal Colonialism*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul. Interestingly, the celebration of European ethnicity is not a problem if it is splintered. There are countless Lithuanian, Polish, Scottish or German cultural festivals all across the United States and are not generally considered to be expressions of white racism. Celebrating Western Civilization or collective European culture or ethnicity would almost certainly viewed as racist.

*build the most effective movement which can link up with struggles off the campus, among workers, women, and the Black and Brown communities.”*<sup>31</sup>

Considering the political and social climate of the time, particularly on college campuses, those who did not outwardly condemn WASP America and the capitalist system were perceived to be direct or indirect supporters of the “establishment” and in favor of the exploitation of Third World populations abroad and minorities at home. The consequence of this was the growth of what came to be called “multiculturalism”, a concept which called for the political, cultural and social empowerment of the traditional minorities. The idea could only work, of course, if the whites were prepared to share power with them. The question, then, was how to accomplish this goal peacefully. New York Times journalist, William Pfaff (2002) appears to share this analysis :

*“Multiculturalism is partly a response to the civil rights struggle in the United States and to the Vietnam War. Americans and Europeans were held to owe apologies and reparations to the former colonial peoples, now seen as victims of exploitation and a “racist” view of history. Multiculturalism was to provide Westerners with a re-evaluation of formerly neglected or despised cultures. In practice, multicultural education was well-meant but superficial and often ignorant, with unfortunate consequences not only on school policy, but on immigration policy.”*

Given the emotional intensity of the attacks directed against them from all sides, the defenders of traditional American (i.e. WASP) values and society were clearly on the defensive and have remained so until the present day. Although they do not necessarily define themselves in such terms, the last bastion of WASP culture became limited socially to working class towns all around the country and, geographically, to areas centered in the rural South, Midwest and West, the so-called Bible belt.

In such regions, which are essentially white and often strongly Protestant, people reacted bitterly to the attacks upon the country’s foreign policy and the patriotic and moral values that were at the core of their identities. Without specifically referring to WASPs, Nixon called them “the silent majority”. It was in such regions that the government and its (conservative) policies were and are most strongly defended.

Of crucial importance was the fact that, by the 1970s, a new liberally-minded intelligentsia had come to dominate the countries’ universities and media<sup>32</sup>. For the most part, they had largely abandoned the defense of traditional American (i.e. WASP) culture and value systems (linked to Protestant Christianity in particular) which gradually came to be considered the preserve of uncultivated provincials or working class whites.

Since the 1960s, the media and countless Hollywood films consistently portrayed the latter as intellectually limited or, at the very best, behind the times. The southern “racist” has become a stock character and has been ridiculed in countless films<sup>33</sup>. “Rednecks”, “crackers”, “hicks” were and still are terms of abuse which are openly used without any thought given to the fact that this is also a form of intolerance that can be just as a hurtful and culturally destructive as the racist insults that were once hurled at African Americans, Hispanics or Asiatics. Just as with any kind of negative stereotyping, this has certainly played a powerful role in stigmatizing rural American culture in general and, on account of the legacy of slavery, southern culture in particular<sup>34</sup>. The underlying logic appears to be that they deserve it.

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31 Internet site : Book Stacks Unlimited, Inc. [ftp.books.com/eBooks/Nonfiction/History/Speeches/army\\_of\\_.tx](http://ftp.books.com/eBooks/Nonfiction/History/Speeches/army_of_.tx)

32 A poll taken during the 1972 presidential election showed that, while Massachusetts was the only state in the union to vote against Nixon, 73% of the media favored George McGovern.

33 To name a few : “Easy Rider”, “Deliverance”, “Mississippi Burning”, “Forrest Gump”, etc.

34 Statistics vary on the number of white Southerners who actually owned slaves prior to the civil War. The figure generally runs from 10% to 15%.



Interestingly, the incredible popularity of country music from the mid-1990s to the present throughout huge areas of the United States (except New England and the West Coast; cf. voting tendencies below)<sup>35</sup> could be interpreted as a popular reawakening and/or reaffirmation of the WASP cultural vision of America.

## **The Rise of Multiculturalism**

Just as in much of the western world, public school systems throughout the United States have promoted multiculturalism for many years in an effort stamp out racism<sup>36</sup>. One of the major objectives of the NEA, the largest teachers association in the United States, has been to reduce the Euro-centric approach that was once used to acculturate immigrant children. Now their objective is to balance the system so that all children, regardless of their origins, can be exposed to the varied cultures, histories and literatures of both European and non-European peoples. As an example, in March 2002, the NEA collaborated with more than 300 leading Hispanic activists to promote “Latino political empowerment” (some of whom would favor seeing the American Southwest back under Mexican sovereignty). Whatever the merits of the NEA’s approach, critics such as Pfaff (2002) have pointed out that multicultural policies have left both whites and minority children not quite knowing where or how they fit into American society as a whole. He points out, for instance, that the multicultural approach has been so effective in Britain that the British government has just rewritten its educational policy in order to re-instill “pride in white culture.”

*“Anti-racist education” in British schools seems to have so successfully indoctrinated students in the iniquities of Western civilization, colonialism and white racism that it has “left white students feeling they could not be proud of their own identity and culture,” according to new official guidance from the government.”*

Even if it would be preposterous to claim that racism has been eradicated, anti-racist education has nevertheless tempered what was once a overwhelming barrier to equality in American society. If Pfaff is correct, however, this has been accomplished at the expense of white ethnic identity. What seems to be replacing it is what many consider to be the violent, vulgar, intellectually sterile, secular culture that is being currently exported in many American films around the world and from which the essential elements of traditional morality have been stripped.

## **Christianity under Siege**

One of the main targets of the multiculturalist<sup>37</sup> camp has been Christian influence, especially as it is exerted by fundamentalist Protestants. Undeniably, the latter were and are still considered to be the staunchest defenders of traditional WASP values. They are also those who are the most militant in defending the idea of the United States as a Christian nation. The objective of their ideological opponents would thus seem to be the elimination of the last vestiges of WASP identity, especially the Christian component, as it continues to survive in America’s public institutions. The critics may be right in fearing their powerful political clout. George Will (1995) sets the number of members of what he calls the “enthusiastic churches” at around 60 million.

The conflicts surrounding the issue of religion have been fiercely fought and the battlefields have been courtrooms throughout the United States. Over the past 40 years, the most important and passionate debates have revolved around the Supreme Court decisions to abolish

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35 Mitchell, G. (1995) ARBITRON, R & R. : Ratings Report and Directory : Your complete Industry Resource Guide, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. and Nashville, ABC Radio Networks.

36 There are around 15,000 school precincts throughout the United States.

37 It is important to point out that many multiculturalists are also practicing Christians, albeit of a more liberal variety.

prayer in public schools ( *School District of Abington Township versus Schempp* 1963) and the legalizing of abortion (*Roe versus Wade* 1973 ). The issue of the teaching of “creationism” versus “evolution” is also part of an ongoing battle in which the Christians have been regularly defeated, most recently in Kansas.

Most issues, however, revolve around seemingly petty cases, such as periodic court decisions to remove nativity scenes from Town Hall lawns or to forbid the overt display of crosses on the chapels of American military bases. Fox News reported (March 25, 2002), for instance, that the American Civil Liberties Union<sup>38</sup> has threatened to file a law suit against the mayor of a small Florida town for her proclamation “banning Satan within the town limits”, presumably because the religious rights of Satan worshipers have been violated<sup>39</sup>.

In a similar vein, periodic attempts have also been made to ban the Pledge of Allegiance because of the controversial “one nation under God” passage. In nearly all cases, it should be pointed out, when such cases have been taken to court, the “separation of church and state” arguments have been generally successful in blocking any overt expression of Christianity in the public domain, even though there is no such prohibition in the U.S. Constitution. It appears obvious that we have moved light years away from the original spirit of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment.

It is significant perhaps that there have not yet been any serious attacks on such sacrosanct rituals as the “oath of office”, when the newly elected president swears, with his hand on the Christian Bible, that he will uphold the Constitution of the United States. The lyrics of the national anthem and other patriotic songs as well as the motto on the dollar also come to mind, but these may be on a future target list.

The tenacity with which opponents of (fundamentalist) Christians pursue such cases, regardless of how overtly trivial they may appear, sheds light on the real objective. In fact, the crucial question here is whether the institutions of the United States will retain their former Christian character, with all the spiritual and cultural implications that this entails, or will it become a secular multicultural state? If the fundamentalist Christians are defeated, their opponents seem to believe, the entire WASP edifice (along with a small collection of hardcore racists) will crumble and a more equitable and representative system can replace it. The question is of great importance because the outcome will eventually determine the nature of American society. It is this issue we shall discuss next.

## **The Choices**

In the very broadest of terms, there are two possible political models for the United States : the “Nation” model versus the “State” model of government. The former reflects the American system as it survived from its inception in colonial times until the 1960s and is defined in terms of the inheritance of values and traditions of the dominant WASP ethnocultural group. The “State” model, although it officially draws its inspiration from the U.S. Constitution, is more recent (at least in terms of its application) and advocates a more open “multicultural” model where the “State” is composed of several or even a multitude of ethnic groups, all being equal partners of an integrated whole.

The “State” model has been officially promoted by both Democratic and Republican politicians since the 1960s and is reminiscent of Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech in which he imagines the races living harmoniously in a color-blind society. According to this concept, the inhabitants of the State are viewed as free citizens of a democracy who are protected

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38 The ACLU is a politically liberal organization dedicated to blocking any government decisions that it considers infringe on citizens’ (and non-citizens’) rights.

39 In some politically correct circles, even saying “Merry Christmas” in public has been frowned upon because it might be offensive to non-Christians.

under the law to express and preserve their cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Despite the ethnic diversity of the State, it is felt that the common bond linking all Americans should include a shared respect for the values underpinning the US Constitution as well as those expressed in the American dream itself, that is to say, the belief in individual freedom and the ability to provide a better economic future for oneself and one's family as well as to live in peace and harmony, as equals, with one's neighbors. Indeed, many who embrace this model today would refuse the concept of "ethnic groups" or ethnically-based "nations" altogether, preferring to see American identity defined in universal terms on the basis of shared humanity. There is common ground in this view for the religious as well as for liberal agnostics and the vast majority of Americans, regardless of their origins, respect these ideals to varying degrees. Despite the obvious attractiveness of this model, however, it does mask certain subtle ambiguities which Fishman (1992 : 8-9) clarifies very well :

*"The theme of ethnic diversity and the sheer beauty of cultural pluralism provide an unending rhapsody. This view both tantalizingly merges with and also separates from general democratic principles, with the rights of man, and the unalienable privilege to be one's self, not only to be free but to be free to be bound together with 'one's own kind'. On the one hand, democracy also subsumes an alternative right, namely, to be free from ethnicity, i.e., the right and opportunity to be a citizen of the world rather than a member of one or another traditioned ethnic collectivity. On the other hand, democracy guarantees the right to retain one's ethnicity, to safeguard collective ethnic continuity, to enable one's children to join the ranks of 'one's own kind', to develop creatively, and to reach their full potential without becoming ethnically inauthentic, colorless, lifeless, worse than lifeless : nothingness."*

This situation has resulted in the development of dual identities which has left some wondering to whom they owe primary allegiance, to the State or to their ethnic or cultural group. The fact is, many if not most Americans consider this to be a non-issue since they are tied to both concepts and make little or no conscious distinction between the two. It is perhaps this fact that continues to hold the country together.

The underlying problem is linked to the symbolic perception of both models. For many whites, for instance, the State and the Nation are one and the same, as are concepts of citizenship and nationality. In the context of the models described above, a distinction can be made, however. As we have seen, the concept of the "Nation" is ethnically-determined and, by extension, so is "nationality". As such, it is paritary in the sense that it is associated with strong feelings of solidarity, affectivity as well as a visceral attachment to one's "nation" which, in turn, is perceived as a kind of extended family.

Being the "citizen" of a "State", however, is disparitary in that one's identity is legally defined and determined by a collectivity of faceless government institutions (i.e. being processed by the INS or IRS, obtaining a US passport, etc.) and one's ethnic origins are totally effaced. As such "citizenship" is characterized by a certain bureaucratic artificiality where identity is accorded by decree.

Khleif (1978 : 103-104) explains the appeal of ethnicity as opposed to the State concept of legally-sanctioned identity when he writes :

*"Ethnicity can be regarded as a search for roots, for identity, for creation of Gemeinschaft in the midst of Gesellschaft, for coping with issues of alienation in a mass society. The resurgence of ethnicity cannot only be understood as a tool for social mobility but can also as a widespread quest for community, a search for authenticity in the face of the overwhelming forces of modern life that are thought to be conducive to depersonalization, bureaucratization, and the unresponsiveness, on the one hand, and to the glorification of the trivial, the violent, and the absurd on the other. 'Too little' in the words of Novak (1976 : v) 'stands between the solitary individual and the bureaucratic power of the large modern state.'"*

In large geographical areas of the country, it is this ethnic vision of identity that prevails – consciously or unconsciously. For many whites, it still revolves around various strains of the American WASP “nation” model, WASP identity having been extended to those having any kind of (Western) European heritage. As we have said, the more militant among these range from politically conservative Christians to a tiny but violent racist fringe. For them, the idea of rejecting the country’s Christian foundations would spell the death of the United States as a nation, their Nation. As in the beginning, many see the American system of government as Christian in inspiration and believe it should not and cannot be interpreted otherwise. Attempts to secularize the United States are viewed by many with suspicion if not outrage. The idea of an America composed of ethnically and religiously diverse populations of Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims, each claiming equal status with Christians under the law and claiming American “nationality”, appears to many of them as anathema, although most dare not express this openly. The Constitution and America’s institutions, in their eyes, are direct products of their own cultural and historical traditions, not those of any other. In this sense their concept of identity is blatantly proprietary<sup>40</sup>.

Ironically, the same fear of alienation and loss of identity has affected numerous other ethnic communities in the United States. The more radical elements in the various minority groups, for instance, tend to stress their own ethnic uniqueness for fear of being swallowed up by the mainstream cultural or the “State” model alternative. The main difference between them and WASPs is that they make no claims about being the authentic representatives of the American Nation-State. On the contrary, their identities stem, at least in part, from their common rejection of the entire American WASP “Nation” model owing to the simple fact that the latter formerly spurned their cultures, their languages, their ethnic heritages and their religions, often in a brutal and demeaning fashion.

The Black Muslim movement is an interesting case in point because it rejects the two components of WASP identity at a core level, both in terms of ethnicity and in terms of religion. Despite occasional claims to the contrary, it is made clear in no uncertain terms that the enemies of the Black people are the Jews and the “blue-eyed devils” (or “foxes” as Malcom X said in one of his speeches). The growing number of young Black Americans who are converting to Islam could indeed be analyzed as a fundamental desire to embrace a religion which is practiced by non-whites and intimately associated with Africa. Such conversions could also be perceived as an outright symbolic rejection of Protestant Christianity which is so central to WASP identity<sup>41</sup>. By adopting Arabic names young African Americans can actually take a belated slap at the slave owners who imposed their culture, language, religion as well as the institution of slavery on their African ancestors. If this is the case, religion, once again, can be viewed as an extension of ethnicity.

Likewise, American Indian militants have also proudly trumpeted the inherent moral superiority of their traditional cultures and religions which, unlike the white European counterparts, are presented as being inherently respectful of people and the environment. Occasional, but spectacular, protests have focussed, once again, on WASP symbols - such as the burying of “Plymouth Rock” (Massachusetts).

Similarly, Hispanics also frequently use their animosity for the “gringos” as a uniting force in their own communities. Mexican-Americans in particular often express ambivalent attitudes about learning English, considering it as the language of an arrogant and imperialistic “Anglo” culture. This linguistic tension has sparked the foundation of a broad-based organization

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40 According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, a US anti-racist association which monitors hate groups throughout the country, the Council of Conservative Citizens web site explained the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on the World Trade Center in the following terms : “America is now drinking the bitter dregs of multiculturalism and diversity.” Michael Hill, President of the League of the South, wrote, “[T]his is America’s wake-up call to forsake its idolatry and to return to its true Christian and Constitutional foundations.” He describes the South as “Anglo-Celtic” and Christian.

41 It is important to recall that the vast majority of Black Americans are also Protestant Christians. Although the congregations are often segregated, these shared religious beliefs still play an important unifying role in America.

called “English Now”, the objective of which is to pass a law making English the official language of the United States. In the past, however, the US Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that such proposals are unconstitutional. From the point of view of the Federal Government, there is no official national language.

### **Ethnicity and the Political Parties**

The struggle for equal rights, combined with the search for identity, has been carried over quite naturally into domestic politics and the two major political parties have had an important role in promoting various aspects of the models discussed above. Generally speaking, although both parties vaunt the merits of the “State” model described above, it is obvious that the Republicans attract their strongest support from the defenders of the “nation” model, especially white conservatives, important segments of the business class and, more specifically, the Christian right. The Democrats are generally supported by a broad alliance of liberal whites, minority ethnic groups (excluding Asians) or what Reverend Jesse Jackson preferred to call the “rainbow coalition”. Feminists, ecologists and homosexuals also vote heavily in favor of the Democrats.

Nowhere has this division of the American electorate ever been more striking than in the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections. If one compares the results, it clearly confirms a growing rift in the country along ethnic, religious and also geographical lines. For instance, although the white vote tipped slightly in favor of the Republicans in 1996 with 43% for Clinton and 46% for Dole (9% for Perot), the 2000 election showed far more support for the Republicans with 54% of all whites voting for Bush and only 42% voting for Gore.

Although Will (1995) shows that the Protestant vote was evenly split during the 1982 Congressional elections, since then there has been a radical shift away from the Democrats. In 1996, only 36% of white mainstream Protestants voted for Clinton (53% for Dole and 10% for Perot). During the last election, 63% voted for Bush, 34% for Gore<sup>42</sup>. In 1996, white born-again Christians were even more anti-Democrat with only 26% voting for Clinton (65% for Dole, 8% for Perot)<sup>43</sup>. It should be recalled that this was prior to the Lewinski affair which further eroded his support among these voters. This seems to be confirmed by the 2000 election results where white Evangelical Christians and Mormons, for example, voted 84% and 88% respectively for Bush. In fact, as might be expected, the division of the electorate also shows growing polarization along the rural-urban divide with 59% of all rural dwellers casting their votes for G.W. Bush : he won in 28 states, mainly in the traditional Bible Belt. On the contrary, city dwellers as well as much of New England and the West Coast solidly support the Democrats.

The 1996 and 2000 elections show the minorities voting massively in favor of the Democrats. In 1996, for instance, 84% of Blacks voted for Clinton, 12% for Dole, 4% for Perot. During the last election, however, an amazing 90% voted for Gore and a mere 8% for Bush. Likewise, 72% of Hispanics voted for Clinton in 1996 (21% for Dole and 6% for Perot). Interestingly, the last election was marked by a slight shift in favor of the Republicans with 62% voting for Gore (35% for Bush)<sup>44</sup>. Among the minority voters, however, Asians are an important exception to this anti-Republican tendency as they vote nearly the same way as whites – 43% for Clinton, 46% for Dole and 9% for Perot in 1996 and 55% for Bush and 41% for Gore in 2000.

Women, regardless of ethnic origin, also tend to vote in favor of Democratic candidates with 54% voting for Clinton in 1996 (38% for Dole and 7% for Perot) and 54% for Gore in 2000. The statistics are reversed for men. In 1996, only 43% of all men voted for Clinton (44% for Dole

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42 Mainstream White Protestants make up 56% of the electorate, the religious right 14%, Catholics 25%, Jews 4%.

43 Will (1995) shows that during the 1982 congressional elections, the vote of the conservative Christian electorate was evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. By 1994, 74% were voting Republican.

44 His strongest support in the Hispanic community came from Mexican Americans in his home state of Texas and Cubans in Florida.

and 10% for Perot) while only 42% supported Gore (53% for Bush) in 2000. Feminists and gays also voted in record numbers for the Democrats, the latter having contributed heavily to both the Clinton and Gore campaigns.

Generally speaking, non-Christians show overwhelming support for the Democrats. In 1996, for instance, 78% of the Jewish voters supported Clinton (16% voted for Dole and 3% for Perot). 77% of the Jewish vote went to Gore (18% for Bush) in 2000. 80% of other non-Christians (mainly Muslims) also voted for Gore. Globally, 65% of non-believers voted for Gore, 35% for Bush.

Nevertheless, an interesting has shift occurred among Catholic voters during the last election. In 1996, Catholics leaned towards the Democrats with 53% voting for Clinton (37% for Dole and 9% for Perot). However, perhaps as an indirect result of the Lewinski scandal, in 2000, Roman Catholics broke with their pro-democratic traditions for the first time : 52% voted for Bush, 45% for Gore<sup>45</sup>.

The political polarization of the American electorate along ethnic and religious lines is now a blatant reality and appears to support the analyses presented above. For instance, a mere 15% of those who voted for Bush were non-whites or non-Christians. As Barone, Cohen and Cook (2002 : 28) expressed it, "Although they may be uncomfortable with the facts, Americans increasingly vote as they pray – or don't pray."

Both parties have their work cut out for them, however. The Democrats are in a position where they must respond to the complex needs of a growing urbanized, multi-ethnic and politically liberal electorate whereas the Republicans are in the unenviable position of defending the religious and moral values, as well as the economic interests, of an aging white middle and upper class.

## **The Future**

Once again, demography appears to be at the center of any debate on the evolution of American society. Two interrelated factors come into play : the current rate of immigration and the variable birthrates in the various ethnic communities. It is these factors which will determine the nature of American culture. Let us consider each point in turn.

Declining birthrates among middle class whites in particular, can be attributed, in large part to the gains made by the women's movement during the 1960s and 1970s, most notably in the area of contraception and abortion rights. Christian fundamentalists retort, however, that if the Supreme Court had not ruled in favor of abortion in 1973, there would have been over 40 million more Americans today (many of whom would have had their own children by now). The statistics show that 60% to 70% of these abortions were performed on white women<sup>46</sup>.

Furthermore, after the 1960s, immigration policies were altered to respect anti-racist legislation passed by Congress in the mid sixties. The consequence was a drastic reduction in the percentage of European-born immigrants to between 10% and 20% per year (US Census Bureau 2000). According to the 1990 census, for instance, out of a total number of 19.5 million foreign born American citizens, only 4.5 million were of European descent. Pfaff (2002) states that currently 55 million people, one-fifth of the American population, are either foreign born or are the children of foreign born immigrants, the majority of whom are of non-European origin.

The US Census Bureau (2000) demonstrates that there are already over 80 million Americans of Asian, African and Hispanic descent in the country and the number is rising quickly. Hispanics have now supplanted Blacks as the largest non-white minority group with 35 million

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45 These statistics are based on studies by Barone, Cohen and Cook (2002 : 27-28) and Wayne (2000 : 280-281).

46 These statistics are based on US Bureau of Statistics which indicate that an average of one million to one and a half million women have had abortions each year since 1973. The Alan Guttmacher Institute sets the total number of abortions between 1973 and 1996 at 38,010,378. These statistics also show that a steadily increasing number of minority women (approximately 40%) have had abortions over the past 10 years.

inhabitants. Very indicative of these trends is the population of 5 to 17 year old Americans of whom 20,285,273 out of 53,118,015 are non-whites<sup>47</sup>. Indeed, it has been predicted that, if the present demographic shift continues, whites will be a minority in the United States by 2050, if not sooner.

If this occurs, what will be the consequences in terms of national identity and even political stability? Pfaff (ibid.) provides the following assessment :

*“Nobody is making a choice about multiculturalism, or the nature of assimilation or non-assimilation. Sheer numbers have decided the matter. American society is adapting to the immigrants more than the immigrants are adapting to the United States.... In the United States, the process seems irreversible. The result implies continued evolution of American society away from its West European origins.”*<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

Given the low birth rate of the white American population, combined with the fact that the United States is the driving force behind the globalization effort (and that its business élite is, for the time being, directly benefiting from the profits it generates), it seems highly unlikely that there will be any change in US economic or immigration policies. The steady stream of cheap labor is also one of the major reasons (Pfaff op. cit.). Just as during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the economic ambitions of the American business class would seem to be stronger than any desire on their part to preserve the “Nation” model. On the contrary, it would appear that these business élites consider that the economic future lies, not in maintaining such a model, but rather in breaking down national barriers which might limit profits.

Under these conditions, it seems obvious that the multicultural “State” model offers the only possible alternative because, as we have seen, it is (at least in theory) inclusive and non-proprietary. The bad news for the advocates of this system, however, is that there is little evidence that Americans, regardless of their origins, are ready to abandon their respective ethnic camps. The latest 2000 census demonstrates that astonishingly few Americans are the children of “mixed race” marriages. For example, of the 53,118,014 young people between 5 to 17, only 1,276,978 claim to be of “two or more races (not including Hispanics)”. Although such statistics must be considered with considerable caution<sup>49</sup>, this suggests that the taboos forbidding ethnic mixing are still very formidable social obstacles. For this reason, the hope for a large scale ethnic fusion that many have dreamed of would appear unlikely, at least over the short term. Clearly, the sense of belonging and security offered by the ethnic group is currently a far more powerful force than was perhaps realized and simply denying this fact could have disastrous consequences in the future.

Another major difficulty multiculturalists will have to confront stems from the fact that the American political system, whether they like it or not, is indeed a product of enlightened Protestant

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47 US Census Bureau, Census 2000, summary file 1, Tables PCT12 and PCT12I

48 This should be interesting for Europeans for two primary reasons. First, the traditional ethnic and cultural bonds linking Americans and Europeans (despite their frequent rows) could eventually be weakened if current trends continue. This leads one to wonder what the political and economic relations between the two continents might be in the future. Secondly, Europe faces similar problems regarding massive immigration, a declining birth rate and a potential loss of its ethnic and cultural identities. One difference is that Christianity, as an active religious force, is essentially moribund in Europe. In a recent CNN television interview, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the UN, stated that Europeans had better educate themselves about the Muslim religion and culture since more than 20 million more North Africans are expected to enter Europe in the coming years. In his opinion, even if they wanted to, Europeans would be powerless to stop this. Naturally, racist groups on both continents play on rising fears of immigration and feelings of insecurity.

49 US Census Bureau, Census 2000, summary file 1, Table PCT120. Barone, Cohen and Cook (2002) note that Americans who claim to be the children of mixed race families account for only 2.4% of the total population. It is important to consider that all such concepts of ethnic origin are arbitrary and based not on scientific fact but rather on popular perceptions concerning the “putative ancestral origins” (Fishman 1992 : 4) of those answering the census.

Christianity. So are the foundations of American culture. Given the visceral attachment of a sizable portion of the population to the various strains of this religious tradition, the consequences of eliminating its influence could have far more dangerous repercussions than simply tolerating its existence.

A further irony is that while Anglo-Saxonism provided the ideological framework for racism in America, it is the symbiosis between the government's institutions and the historical religiosity of the American people that ultimately permitted the peaceful social and political empowerment of America's minorities as well as the destruction of Anglo-Saxonist ideology<sup>50</sup>. In the end, the good news is that this could not have occurred if most "WASPs" had not come to the realization, albeit with considerable reluctance, that this ideology is thoroughly incompatible with the Christianity they claim to profess. The question today, however, is whether white guilt combined with minority bitterness could erode the traditional social fabric of the United States as we know it and, if so, what would replace it.

The real challenge to the American people and their government lies in finding ways of promoting social harmony and genuine mutual respect among the citizens of the different ethno-cultural families while simultaneously providing equal rights, economic opportunity and some sense of common culture.

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<sup>50</sup> The FBI recently put the number of KKK members at around 5,500 - down from 5 million during the 1920s. The Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Report counted 676 active hate groups in the United States in 2001, most of them white supremacists. This includes KKK, Neo-Nazi skinheads, Neo-Confederates, Black Separatists and the like. In all, they probably number less than 50,000 individuals.



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