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*New / Old*  
**WORLDS**  
spaces of transition

univers enciclopedic

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# New/Old Worlds: Spaces of Transition

A Collection of Essays



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### III. Technologies of Representation

# Prophecies of Dystopic “Old World, New World” Transitions Told: “The World Tomorrow” Radio Broadcasts to the United Kingdom: 1965-1967

*Eric Gilder & Mervyn Hagger*

Judged by the standards of 2006, the world of 1966 was unsophisticated and its technology was still in the dark ages. It was the age of mono broadcasting, before personal computers and the Internet as we know it (not to mention cell phones or the hundred-and-one personal communication and entertainment gadgets that are small enough to get lost in our pockets), because they were all years away from the store shelves.

Nonetheless, the USA and USSR had become locked into a space race with NASA in high gear trying to meet President Kennedy's goal of landing a man on the moon before the end of the decade, and Doris Day was starring in a MGM movie as a widow working for the space agency and part-time as a mermaid for her father's "Glass Bottom Boat" service. By any standards of plausibility the movie script was laughable, but not in its intended sense of pretending to be a comedy. The plot involved NASA security personnel who had decided that Miss Day was a spy working for the Soviet Union. Today we might well cringe at the very thought that even the storyline as told could have ever been committed to paper by a scriptwriter, and we might wince at its many demonstrations of crude technology. That is, until we recall that during that same decade, the CIA

considered methods of handing an exploding cigar to facilitate the assassination Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.

Over in England, four young men from Liverpool had been promoted as merchandise and propelled across the Atlantic to wild acclaim as the doyens of "Beatlemania" and subsequently inspired British accountants to throw everything they could at the media-hungry American market (Gilder 99, n52). In this climate of clashing cultures, America threw sounds back across the transatlantic airwaves from steel-bottom boats with cargoes holding radio transmitters, and weighted bases supporting antennas rising from their decks (Gilder 101, n.63). But in 1966, the doyen of offshore broadcasting was not a pop star, but a preacher named Garner Ted Armstrong, the glib-sounding son of Herbert W. Armstrong.

### **The Religion of Radio, The Radio of Religion**

Herbert Armstrong was a former advertising account representative and copywriter turned radio minister. In Oregon during 1934, Armstrong took to the airwaves with his own local church service called "Radio Church of God" (Gilder 107, n.77). A few years later while WWII was drawing to its conclusion, Armstrong moved south along the Pacific coast to the city of Pasadena and there, in the shadows of Hollywood, he began a personal and professional "makeover."<sup>1</sup> Herbert Armstrong inserted a 'W' between his first and last names to distinguish himself from others with similar monikers

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<sup>1</sup> According to Christoh Kreitz:, Herbert W. Armstrong's interest in the Bible began in 1927 after his wife brought the particular teachings of her church, the Church of God – Seventh Day, to his attention. Trying to prove them wrong he studied their beliefs intensively and finally accepted them. In 1933, he was ordained a minister of that church and shortly afterwards began broadcasting . . . [but] because his teachings deviated more and more from that of the Church of God – Seventh Day his ordination was later revoked. . . . Armstrong's message [became] a mixture of Seventh Day Adventism, Jewish observances of the law, and specific cultist doctrines which were claimed to be special revelations from God. (<http://www.cs.cornell.edu/Info/People/kreitz/Christian/Cults/5.armstrong.pdf>, Accessed 19 September, 2006).

and then he replaced his church service radio format for plain talk. He also hired the announcer of the “Amos ‘n Andy” radio show to provide a professional introduction. (Art Gilmore and his voice subsequently appeared in many other radio and TV shows and movies.) To complete the transformation of his image, Armstrong borrowed the slogan of the 1939 World’s Fair as the new name of his program. Gilmore told listeners that “Herbert W. Armstrong brings you the plain truth about today’s world news with the prophecies of the world tomorrow.” At the conclusion of Armstrong’s hectoring half-hour, Gilmore concluded the polemical message by repeating a mailing address over a brief, stock Hollywood instrumental jingle that provided the only music heard in the program (Gilder 107, n.78).

When Armstrong gained followers in California he established the first of what would become three liberal arts institutions called Ambassador College. One of his first Ambassador College graduates is alleged to be the source of interpreting Armstrong’s ministry by using a system of nineteen-year time cycles previously invented by others. The conclusion of his first nineteen years of ministry took him to the year 1953, and that is when super-power and international commercial broadcasting station Radio Luxembourg first agreed to sell him time for his radio program. (For previous UK restrictions on the sale of religious airtime, see Gilder 108, n. 79.)

Armstrong’s ministry was not based upon the theology of traditional Christianity, but upon a cobbled-together collection of doctrines, theological interpretations and political ideology.<sup>2</sup> This “smorgasbord” was then interpreted by Armstrong to mean that his purpose on earth was

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<sup>2</sup> Ruth Tucker (in “*CT Classic: From the Fringe to the Fold: How the Worldwide Church of God Discovered the Plain Truth of the Gospel*” [*Christianity Today*, online edition, 26 March, 2001]) describes the “religious smorgasbord” of the original Worldwide Church of God thusly:

“Armstrong vehemently opposed the doctrine of the Trinity. There is not one God, but two,” he wrote. “God the Father, the Possessor of heaven and earth, the Father of Jesus Christ; and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the active Creator of heaven and earth—the One who became Jesus Christ. [They believe] ... in a “God Family” [that] has been likened to the Mormon belief that the faithful will one day attain godhood, [but] the

not to gain converts, but to warn the world with a message from the New Testament book of Matthew chapter 24, verse 14: *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* His primary medium of choice was also a part of his message, and in many instances his message was interpreted by many to be “dystopic” in nature. While Armstrong talked about a “wonderful world of tomorrow” like that of a mythical pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, getting to his utopia was to be hell on earth for listeners, because blocking their path was a future World War III.

According to Armstrong, the scenario for his awful future was spelled out in the pages of the Bible, but that its message had been kept locked within mysterious prophecies waiting for him to begin his media mission to warn the world. On May 22, 1953, he wrote to his listeners that:

The very start of this second 19-year cycle marked the beginning of proclaiming this Gospel to all Europe and the British Isles! It must still go to Asia, Africa, South America, and Australia. When it has spanned the world, then the end shall come! ... The invasion of the United States with hydrogen-bombs that shall destroy our cities, therefore, must begin at least 10½ years prior to the ending of the Times of the Gentiles! If the Times of the Gentiles end in 1982 ... the invasion of America and the Great Tribulation must begin not later than March-April, 1972! (in Mojica, “The Painful Truth”)

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belief most often associated with the WCG is typically referred to as British (or Anglo) Israelism. Speculation that the “lost Ten Tribes” of Israel had migrated into Europe and North America was not new with Armstrong. But Armstrong uniquely developed this belief, weaving it into the very fabric of his eschatological tapestry. Britain descended from Ephraim and the U.S. from Manasseh, and as such inherited “the Birthright which God had promised to Abraham through Isaac, Jacob and Joseph” (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/113/54.0.html>, Accessed 16 September, 2006).

The balance of Tucker’s article details the tumultuous changes that took place in the denomination after Herbert Armstrong’s death in January, 1986, turning it into a more “mainline” evangelical organization. The “New Covenant” promulgated by new church leaders in 1995 dropped, for example, the central Sabbath-keeping requirement set by Armstrong.

## The “Wonderful World Tomorrow”

What the public could not see was the “Radio Church of God, Inc.,” the denomination behind the broadcasts and publications, which had been incorporated in California using the original name of its radio program. As the denomination grew, media articles began to focus upon the organization’s unusual name.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Armstrong was refuting warnings of a potential nuclear war between the USSR and USA by pointing to the emerging European Common Market as a real threat in the making. According to Armstrong, Germany would transform this economic market into a United States of Europe and following the disintegration of the USSR, this super-state would absorb some of the nations located in Eastern Europe. After the destruction of the UK and USA, this German-led USE would commence a final human showdown in the Middle East with a Russian and Chinese federation of armed forces. That, claimed Armstrong, would be the moment for Jesus Christ to return to Earth as “King of Kings” in order to stop that war which would lead to the annihilation of the human race. Following that final event, “*the wonderful world tomorrow*” of one thousand years would begin under a supernatural Messianic world government administered from Jerusalem (cf. Armstrong, Garner Ted, “50 Years of Warning”).

By 1956, Armstrong had already published his polemical vision, in part, many times within a monthly magazine called *The Plain Truth*, but it was in that year that he spelled it all out within a single booklet called *1975 in Prophecy!* Its pages were filled with predictions of horrors to come that were graphically illustrated by Basil Wolverton, who Armstrong had ordained as one his first subordinate ministers. (Wolverton was an illustrator for the satirical *Mad* magazine, but work has appeared in many other commercial publications.)

In many ways, Armstrong’s warnings during the 1950s and 1960s sounded similar to messengers who preach a threat of “Global Warming” today. He would cite many leading experts who predicted that by 1972 a



terrible period of worldwide drought, earthquakes and disease would begin to stalk the Planet, and all of this would culminate in the year 1975. (Armstrong was assisted in message by a number of unsolicited secular doomsday publications such as *Famine-1975! America's Decision: Who Will Survive?*) While events remained somewhat distant, many of the predictions made by Armstrong appeared to be coming to pass. It was when he got into the fine print of specific events and dates that his commentaries came apart.<sup>3</sup>

## The Future of Europe in Prophecy and Politics

By December 1964, the trinity of Herbert Armstrong, his son Garner Ted Armstrong and lawyer Stanley Rader were standing on the threshold of their own media campaign directed at the United Kingdom, while the Central Intelligence Agency (which had emerged from the ashes of WWII with help of the Truman Administration facing the Stalinist threat) had also been busily at work since the early 1950s setting up its own proprietary, secret media operations in Europe. While Armstrong had been sounding his own warning of alarm that Europe was destined to emerge from a confederacy of sovereign states into a single federal state, according to Frances Saunders, the CIA had been attempting to influence the leaders of Western Europe to merge the emerging Common Market with the Atlantic Alliance, thus creating a European Defense Community tied to NATO and the USA. As she states:

The principal pressure group for advancing the idea of a united Europe in partnership with America was the European Movement, an umbrella organization which covered a range of activities directed at political,

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<sup>3</sup> Armstrong's personal introduction to the world of geopolitics took place on April 25, 1945 as an accredited member of the press representing *The Plain Truth* magazine. With credentials issued by the U.S. State Department, he attended the first United Nations Conference on International Organization held at the San Francisco Opera House, as noted in Volume 2 of his *Autobiography* (105-117).

military, economic and cultural integration. Guided by Winston Churchill, Averell Harriman and Paul-Henri Spaak, the Movement was closely supervised by American intelligence, and funded almost entirely by the CIA through a dummy front called the American Committee on United Europe, whose first Executive Secretary was Tom Braden<sup>4</sup>. (329)

But the European Movement was only a part of the world of clandestine funding that flowed from a U.S. National Security Council directive (NSC-10/2) to the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) via the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, “which authorized the Director of the CIA to spend funds without having to account for disbursements.” (Saunders 41) Another clandestine entity called the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) came to life with a secret Truman directive on April 4, 1951. In its own remit (PSB D-33/2), the Board pondered how a government could interpose with a wide-doctrinal system of its own without taking on the color of totalitarianism (in Saunders 148-49). Saunders remarks:

A central feature of the Agency’s efforts to mobilize culture as a Cold War weapon was the systematic organization of a network of “private” groups or “friends” into an unofficial consortium. It was an entrepreneurial coalition of philanthropic foundations, business corporations and other institutions and individuals who worked hand in hand with the CIA to provide the cover and the funding pipeline for its secret programmes in Western Europe. (129)

## **A New Media and Message in Europe**

One of the proprietary entities operating under the PSB banner was the “National Committee for a Free Europe” which became the sponsor of “Radio Free Europe” or RFE. For years the pretense was maintained that

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<sup>4</sup> Later a liberal foil conservative politician Pat Buchanan on CNN’s *Crossfire* news program.

RFE, like "Radio Swan" on Swan Island in the Caribbean, was a non-government station. But just as the truth about Radio Swan came to light concerning its true role in the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, so too RFE was finally exposed as a CIA operation in 1967. (Unlike RFE, Armstrong was able to buy time for his anti-Communist broadcasts of "The World Tomorrow" on Radio Swan.<sup>5</sup> In the early 1950s Britain offered no opportunity for paid polemical broadcasting, although attempts had been made by the British, American and French governments after WWII to secure Radio Luxembourg for this purpose, but without success (in Herbert Pjede, "The Story of Radio Luxembourg 208").

Because the British airwaves were closed to (c)overt CIA-inspired propaganda, the CIA moved into print and it based its Congress for Cultural Freedom publishing operation in France. But like Radio Luxembourg, the English language target audience for its cultural arts and political commentary magazine *Encounter* was in the UK. The CIA operated with the cooperation of both the British Foreign Office (who also funded the external BBC World Service), and the British Council. Many British writers were drawn into contributing articles to *Encounter*, such as Labour Party politician Anthony Crosland in "The Mass Media" in 1962. In it, Crosland proposed a new system of broadcasting very similar to the U.S. the Corporation for Public Broadcasting that was later introduced in the USA by the Johnson Administration.<sup>6</sup> Crosland represented an anti-Marxist wing of the socialist Labour Party, whose

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<sup>5</sup> See *The Plain Truth* "Radio Log" for October 1961: "The World Tomorrow" broadcast at 6 PM Sundays in English; 9 PM Saturdays and Sundays in Spanish. Armstrong's radio program also appeared on other stations of similar dubious ownership in Europe, Africa and Asia. According to his "Radio Log" for January 1961, his program was being transmitted on 5 frequencies by Radio Monte Carlo in Spanish on Wednesdays; in English on Fridays and in Russian on Saturdays. (This was in addition to his English language transmissions from Radio Luxembourg on Mondays and Tuesdays).

<sup>6</sup> *Encounter* 19, No.5 (November, 1962), page 3. For more on the overall CIA influence scheme, see Laurence Zuckerman, "How the Central Intelligence Agency Played Dirty Tricks with our Culture" *New York Times*, 18 March, 2000.

Marxist wing had been seen by some in the US government as a threat to its interests, as noted by Saunders:

The Labour Party's prestige had peaked at the end of the Second World War ... and the Cold War had driven a significant rift into the party. Those on the left divided into anti-Stalinists and those looked to accommodate the Soviet Union, while those on the right were committed to defeating Communism. The latter group ...counted amongst its most prominent members Denis Healey, Anthony Crosland, Rita Hinden and Hugh Gaitskell. It was this group ...which offered the CIA the hook it was seeking to harness British political thought to its designs for Europe. (328-29)

### **“Wonderful Radio London” and Armstrong**

General prohibition of private broadcasting in Europe after WWII caused problems for the CIA in seeking friendly broadcast outlets for its subterfuge media campaign. However, by 1952 the CIA had discovered a practical way around prohibition of proprietary radio stations when the official Voice of America had begun broadcasting to the Soviet Union from a ship anchored off Greece. This scheme (and even some of the same technical personnel) thus inspired a fleet of offshore commercial stations that first began to appear off the shores of the CIA propaganda target areas of Scandinavia and then continental Western Europe (where commercial on-land radio stations were illegal). Herbert Armstrong was not far behind. In June 1959, he flew to Denmark where he attempted to contact the manager of

the first radio station that we had heard of operating offshore from a ship. The offices of this station were in Copenhagen. ...I was not able to contact the manager of the station, who was out of town. However, I did contact him later by telephone. Nothing definite came of it at the time, but it did open to our investigation the idea of broadcasting from offshore ship

stations, to countries where no radio time can be purchased or used by "The World Tomorrow". (*Autobiography*, Volume 2, Chapter 72, p.432)

Armstrong was not the only American who took an interest in these offshore Scandinavian stations. Texas oil man Clint Murchison and radio impresario Gordon McLendon used their direct ties to the U.S. Government and their links to the engineers who had built the antenna system for the VOA ship station off Greece, to create "Radio Nord" aboard a ship anchored off Stockholm, Sweden (Gilder 101, n.63).

At that time, Armstrong's advertising in Britain was handled by a private firm run by two brothers: one had the Billy Graham account, the other brother had the Herbert W. Armstrong account. (*Autobiography*, Chapter 72, 317) His interest having been sparked by these developments, Armstrong's agents signed a contract for a nightly broadcast of "The World Tomorrow" with a proposed ship station that would broadcast from an anchorage off southeast England in 1962. (Although Armstrong was confident that transmissions would begin (his *The Plain Truth* magazine began listing them in its schedule in February) the station failed to get on the air.)

When word of the Nordic pirate stations began to appear in the British press, first the Conservative Party and then the Labour Party Governments made statements to the effect that they would take legal counter-action if such stations transmitted in English with signals directed towards the UK from anchorages off its coastline. However, pro-American factions within the British Establishment eventually created the first two British offshore stations that came on the air in 1964. By this time Armstrong had already made two unsuccessful attempts to buy time for his broadcasts. When "Radio Atlanta" (operating from the former "Radio Nord" ship) came on the air, Armstrong initially announced success once more, but this was suddenly dashed when "Atlanta" merged with the first British offshore station "Radio Caroline." (That station had adopted a policy of refusing to sell time for religious broadcasting.)

The success of the first two British offshore stations gained international press coverage and brought them to the direct attention of investors in Texas. Within months, a group led by banker Don Pierson of Eastland, Texas bought and outfitted a former U.S. minesweeper, which they equipped as a 50,000 watt station. After crossing the Atlantic for anchorage off southeastern England, test broadcasts began during the final days of 1964 from "Wonderful Radio London," whose management was more than happy to broadcast Armstrong's program for a g(o)odly fee (Gilder 79-89). On January 18, 1965, Armstrong wrote to his Co-Workers:

I want to report ... the biggest news that ever happened in the history of this Work! About two years ago there was considerable talk in England about a so-called "pirate" ship radio station, anchored just outside British territorial waters. But it never seemed to get going. ... Then last spring two well-financed operations with substantial and reputable backing actually succeeded in getting on the air from so-called "pirate" ships. One was called Radio Caroline, the other Radio Atlanta. ... The (British) government did everything they could to stop it. But...lawyers had surveyed the situation thoroughly. ... They were doing nothing illegal. They were breaking no law! They were broadcasting from the open sea - international waters belonging to no nation. ... The British Government finally gave up the fight for the time being. Then, this last December, the most powerful ship-station of all, Radio London, a super-power station broadcasting 50,000 watts, got on the air, anchored just off the British coast in the Thames Estuary. ... This would give us a clear reception, not only in downtown London, but over an area populated by some 37 million people - even in daylight! ... The station management had a few fears about the program going on daily. We both felt it advisable to go on by degrees... The station management wanted to start with the first Monday in the New Year, 1965. (in "Friends of Sabbath")

"Big L" was an immediate success when millions tuned in for music, news, lively jingles and commercials. After a gradual phase-in of his daily

program, at 7 PM each evening Art Gilmore's introduction would interrupt the format to introduce either Herbert Armstrong or his son Garner Ted Armstrong to begin educating the masses with their odd prophesies.<sup>7</sup>

By 1966, "The World Tomorrow" was being heard in the early morning, at noon and in the early evening from the offshore stations<sup>8</sup> and on Mondays and Tuesdays just before midnight via Radio Luxembourg, and had become well known. That year, a bizarre pop group called the "Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band" released a song called "The Intro and the The Outro" full of interpretative humor inspired as a parody of the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper" album cover. The song introduced an imaginary band which included John Wayne on xylophone; Robert Morley on guitar; Adolph Hitler on vibes; Princess Anne on sousaphone; Liberace on clarinet and Garner Ted Armstrong on vocals (BBC "H2G2"). But for some British MPs, the uncensored voice of Garner Ted Armstrong was not a joke due to the polemical nature of his broadcasts. At that time Hagger was in England and remembers reading the now defunct *Manchester Guardian* that reported controversy stirred up among some MPs when Garner Ted Armstrong stated that Franco's Spain wanted Britain out of Gibraltar in exchange for renewal of U.S. air force bases.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> At this juncture, Radio Luxembourg had only been able to clear time for "The World Tomorrow" on Monday and Tuesday nights at 11:30 PM on their nightly English language service, but its skywave signal bounced so that listeners in Liverpool received a stronger signal than those in London. Yet, because the station was located in a Catholic country, its management had stipulated that Armstrong's broadcasts had to tone down any message that might be interpreted as being an attack upon the Catholic Church. 'Big L' had no such caveats in its contract, and "The World Tomorrow" broadcast fee paid for all the basic expenses of the station, making all other advertising time sold pure profit. Armstrong said that it was the "most expensive airtime he had ever purchased."

<sup>8</sup> Including "Britain Radio" and "Swinging Radio England," later founded by Pierson.

<sup>9</sup> While Hagger well recalls the article, the British archives of that newspaper are not accessible by electronic search. Perhaps the fact that these developments took place at a time when the secretive CIA proprietary press ventures in Europe were first becoming known was a factor in their response.

## The Odd MONEY Behind the Odd Message

The anti-federalist interpretation of Europe espoused by Armstrong was in keeping with the aims of the confederation interpretation expressed by the CIA, because while Armstrong attempted to sow the seeds of fear to stop Europe from going in one direction, the CIA was actively promoting an alternative route for Europeans to follow. It was thus a policy marriage made in covert heaven. The evidence pointing to the answer of whether the CIA was directly or indirectly facilitating Armstrong's message is, like most evidence, circumstantial, and again, like most matters of political intrigue, the money trail points to answers worthy of consideration.

Although Armstrong's message was ostensibly financed by a tithe-paying church that viewed this odd message as a last warning to the world, the message required a specific medium in a specific place that did not yet exist. While creation of that medium (i.e., "Wonderful Radio London") could be explained as providential, it could also be explained as a product of opportunistic moves by various interests.

Behind Don Pierson's investment in "Wonderful Radio London" was a group based in Wichita Falls, Texas. Heading up that cabal was Pierce Langford III, who devoted much of his life to promoting the political career of John Tower, who served in the U.S. Senate for Texas from 1961 to 1985. (Tower spent much of his political life controlling the purse strings of U.S. military spending and later chaired the committee investigating clandestine political activities connected to the "Iran-Contra" scandal of the 1980s. As to be expected, Tower's death in a plane crash has been regarded by some conspiracy buffs to be the work of politicians who wanted to silence him.)

As often happens, financial control of "Wonderful Radio London" was quickly wrestled away from Pierson into the hands of Langford's group, and although Pierson remained an investor and made money, he thus decided to try to repeat his success by creating two British offshore commercial radio stations on board one ship. Again he (initially) succeeded, again Herbert Armstrong bought airtime funding the stations, and once



again, control was taken away from Pierson by the Wichita Falls cabal. Unlike Pierson's first venture, "Swinging Radio England" (with a "Top-40" format) and "Britain Radio" (broadcasting a "Hallmark of Quality" easy-listening format) later appeared to be financial disasters, even though Armstrong's program was broadcast twice a day over "Britain Radio."

During a recorded in-depth interview conducted in 1985 by Hagger (in Gilder 80), Don Pierson was asked about a 1966 visit that John Tower had made to the London offices of the twin stations and Pierson (who had become a friend of Hagger) suddenly became nervously defensive and indicated by hand gesture that the recording had to be halted immediately.<sup>10</sup>

Although the twin-station venture was designed to be a commercial project returning a profit for its investors, it appeared to turn into a "money pit" that required a continual influx of funds, with the only beneficiary being "The World Tomorrow" program, which it kept thundering into London each morning and noon. A possible explanation of this oddly functional upside-down arrangement appeared in August 1964 when government leaks revealed how the CIA funded its media projects, particularly when tied to Senator Tower's links to the "Wichita Falls cabal" that funded the European offshore outlets of "The World Tomorrow" and Pierson's clear refusal to speak about the tie.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Tower was not a stranger to the type of ship converted for use by the twin stations (since he had served aboard a similar class vessel in the Pacific during his WWII service in the U.S. Navy, and had also worked in radio during and after his college years in Texas) before becoming a political science instructor at Midwestern University in Wichita Falls. Between 1951 and 1953, Tower resumed his advanced studies at the London School of Economics and conducted field research on the organization of the British Conservative Party. That work became the basis of his Master's thesis: "The Conservative Worker in Britain."

<sup>11</sup> Following this, Congressman Wright Patman of Texas began an investigation into tax-free foundations and it how the CIA was transferring money via a "one-two-three" chain of custody. In "step one," the CIA delivered funds to private foundations that acted as mail drops. "Step two" occurred when those same funds were paid out to organizations with legitimate means of raising money (such as a tithing church). "Step three" then required those same funds to be spent on a CIA-approved project. (Saunders 354). This hearing led to the founding of the Katzenbach Committee.

## “Pulling the Plug” on the Provocateurs

After investigating such CIA covert cultural activities abroad, the Katzenbach Committee (appointed by President Johnson) issued a final report on March 29, 1967, stating that, “it should be the policy of the U.S. government that no federal agency shall provide any covert financial assistance or support, direct or indirect, to any of the nation’s educational or private voluntary organizations.” (White House press release cited by Saunders) All such funding was to terminate by December 31, 1967. (To overcome this problem the CIA reinterpreted the ban to mean that they could not make covert payments directly to U.S. operatives, but that they could continue to make such payments to foreign-based international organizations.)

On August 14, 1967, the British Labour Government of Harold Wilson introduced a sweeping censorship law, the Marine Offences [Broadcasting] Act, which deprived the offshore stations of advertising. At one point, the Texas investors offered their twin stations to Armstrong to run as he pleased, but the British Government made it clear to Armstrong that if he agreed to such an arrangement, the administration of his British Ambassador College campus (on which Armstrong maintained both a radio recording studio and a small “pirate” station that mainly covered the college grounds), would be prosecuted under the new Act. As a result of this law, Armstrong’s broadcasts ceased and the Texas-funded offshore stations closed down.

Armstrong was therefore furious and he vented his political feelings in his 1967 publication *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*:

The British government would not allow any broadcasting facilities within its jurisdiction ... But God was determined to get His message to the British! So, the first week in 1953, God’s message started getting into Britain from Europe – when “The World Tomorrow” program began going out on the superpowered Radio Luxembourg! When Radio Luxembourg was no longer effective for this message, God raised up broadcasting stations on ships, anchored just outside Britain’s

jurisdiction. "The World Tomorrow" was then thundered over all of Britain daily, from seven of these ships. They were not illegal. They violated no law of man. They did proclaim faithfully the law of God! But the British authorities falsely called them "pirate" ships. They were not pirates. They were not marauders. They did not invade the land and pillage and steal. They harmed no one! But most governments of man would like to control what their people hear or do not hear! They want to control your thinking for you! (181)

### **A Dramatic Denouement to a World Media Empire**

Whether the trinity of Herbert Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong and Stanley Rader really believed the strange global messages that they were delivering via print and airwaves is open to question. In 1968, the corporate name of the church, the "Radio Church of God" was changed to the "Worldwide Church of God" in order to reflect a denomination with a worldwide ministry, and not as some critics jibed, a ministry about radio. Its future seemed assured. Beginning in the early 1970s, one of Stanley Rader's goals was to transform Herbert Armstrong into a self-styled "Ambassador for World Peace without portfolio" which enabled the pair to visit heads of state all over the world preaching a new message of "giving versus getting" in the name of a new and neutral Unseen Deity.<sup>12</sup> While in Tokyo, Japan on May 15, 1979, he wrote:

I had read an editorial in one of the world's leading news magazines [U.S. News & World Report] which said our "world problems and evils are now so great it would seem that the world's only hope lies in the intervention of a great unseen hand from someplace." (Autobiography, Volume 2, Chapter 82).

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<sup>12</sup> A change in theology that was to become upsetting for his more traditional, Adventist-style followers.

By 1980, according to James A. Haught, Armstrong's religious media empire had become the largest in the world with income twice that of Billy Graham and budgets in excess of tele-evangelists Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. By 1990, published audits revealed that the annual income of Armstrong's empire was in excess of two hundred million dollars.

Even so, disaster loomed: When his many prophecies began to fail, Herbert Armstrong severed all ties with son Garner Ted (who had become mired in sexual scandals)<sup>13</sup> and came to regard Stanley Rader as his son, turning over control of both the financial and legal aspects of his empire to him. When serious questions were eventually raised by Church members (unhappy about new directions in ministry leading away from strict Sabbath keeping) concerning Rader's control of the organization, Herbert Armstrong baptized him in a Hong Kong bath tub to prove that Rader had abandoned Judaism for "Armstrongism." According to Henry Goldman, it was Rader who terminated the probing "60 Minutes" news interview by Mike Wallace, and it was Rader who fought off the attempted legal takeover of Armstrong's church by the state of California's Attorney General, which followed Church member's complaints. Rader's own book about that episode, *A Church under Fire* (re-published by Rader as *Against the Gates of Hell*), was called by the Reverend Dan M. Kelley of the National Council of Churches as "the seminal work on church/state relations in the 20th century."<sup>14</sup>

But the end of the story is as strange as its beginning: Following the deaths of Stanley Rader and Herbert Armstrong, the new leaders of the Worldwide Church of God disavowed everything Armstrong had said the

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<sup>13</sup> See "Garner Ted Armstrong, 73; TV Evangelist Formed own Church after Break with Father" *Los Angeles Times* 16 September, 2003 (an obituary by Myrna Oliver) available at <http://www.rickross.com/reference/wwchurch/wwchurch7.html> (Accessed 19 September, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> See the obituary of Rader written by Larry Stammer, "Stanley Rader, 71; Advisor in Worldwide Church of God", *Los Angeles Times* 4 July, 2002, available at <http://www.rickross.com/reference/wwchurch/wwchurch3.html> (Accessed 19 September, 2006).

Church stood for; they scrapped the famous broadcasts and publications, and they closed the Ambassador Colleges. After downsizing as a result of the consequential and subsequent rapid attrition of its membership, its headquarters was moved from Pasadena to a nondescript rented office space in a suburb of Los Angeles. The final ignominy awaits a rumored total name change that will finally bury the last vestiges of Herbert Armstrong's memory.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, as if from out of nowhere, other "prophets" had already picked up and repackaged the anti-European super-state theme for use by mega-churches of the new fundamentalist and conservative Christian Right.

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<sup>15</sup> See Tucker, as mentioned in note 2. Of course, among the institutional remains, some bodies do continue to say that they speak for the departed Herbert Armstrong, such as the "Philadelphia Church of God," (Edmond, Oklahoma), website at [www.pcog.org](http://www.pcog.org).

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This volume places the discussion of America as a highly mutable imaginary geography and as a repository of personal and collective projections in contrapuntal rapport with a “Europe” that is consistently inscribed as a field of differences, inscribing both “new” and “old” spaces in a cultural, literary, moral and philosophical context.

The variety of questions raised by contributors includes transatlantic relocations engaged in the reshaping of the concept of a “new” world, in the mapping of imagined boundaries and of controversial refractions, in the flexible redefinitions of identity determinations and in the innovative juxtapositions of transatlantic spaces interrogative of globalization paradigms and of fluid inter-cultural codes.

The focus of the sections of this volume — *Mapping Theory*, *New/Old Itineraries*, *Technologies of Representation*, *Negotiating Identities*, *Transitional Geographies*, *Romania/ America: Modes of Interchange* reflect the nuanced positioning of “America” as an eloquent representation, projecting an alterity in relation to an Old World that has been re-marked by the histories of a past and present in a perpetual process of redefinition, and standing in opposition to a utopian but no less problematic “New” country, spoken by writers and critics engaged in the dialectic of being contemporary, in the quest for a reality beyond contemporary corruptions of language, appearance and the quotidian.