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The Goddesses Magna Mater and Vesta: Analyzing Comparative Advantages of a Cultus and a Religio

Sarah Crosley

Religious belief and practice in the Roman world can be divided into two categories, one focusing on official, long-standing state religions, here referred to as *religio*,¹ and, second, imported cults, here referred to as *cultus*.² Rodney Stark, religious scholar and professor, argues that there were distinct advantages for a *cultus* over a *religio* in the competitive Roman market. These advantages were: a higher level of emotional satisfaction for the worshipper, a more personal connection to an individual worshipper, a higher level of intellectual satisfaction for a worshipper, greater opportunities in religious leadership for women, and a greater sense of community for the worshippers of that *cultus*. However, a careful comparison shows that the *cultus* of Magna Mater³ has no distinct competitive religious advantages over the Roman state *religio* of Vesta, due to the Vestal Virgins’ ability to function both within and outside of Roman gender norms because of the *religio*’s longstanding position and integration into the state.

Vesta, goddess of the hearth, had a long-standing and rich history with the Roman state. Rhea Silvia, mother of Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, was believed to have been a Vestal Virgin, raped and impregnated by Mars, the god of war; this incident created a connection between the legendary founding of Rome and Vesta. The temple to Vesta was located at the center of Rome’s Forum and contained a flame eternally burning, thus ensuring the continuation and the success of the Roman state. As historian Robin Lorsch Wildfang states, “all of our ancient sources are agreed on two central facts about this goddess...she was most fundamentally associated with the domestic fire that burned on the hearth of the *aedes Vestae*...on the other hand, she and her representative fire were essential to the preservation and continuation of the Roman state.”⁴ The hearth and home and thus the *religio* of Vesta were of extreme importance to Rome and its people.

The *cultus* of Magna Mater had a different connection to the Roman state. This particular goddess has many origin stories, all of which depend upon the culture in which the story is based. For the Romans, Magna Mater, elsewhere referred to as Cybele, was introduced to Rome from Asia Minor late in the Second Punic War. In 205 BCE, reports of ominous falling rocks had reached the Roman Senate, which was responsible for mediating the relationship between the gods and the Roman people. Understanding this as a sign from the gods after the Sibylline books were consulted and interpreted, the Senate elected to bring

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¹ “Ritual and religious service to Roman divinities”; used throughout the paper to differentiate the state worship from a *cultus* (defined in footnote two), distinct from the modern connotations and definitions of “religion.”

² “Honor, reverence for a deity”; used throughout the paper to indicate the ritual worship of and religious belief in a singular deity not included in official *religiones*, not meant to be connected to the modern understanding of “cult.”

³ “Great Mother”; the history of Magna Mater and Rome will be given below.

Magna Mater and her cultus into Rome to rid Italy of the Carthaginian army that had caused devastation there for thirteen years. The level of reverence and respect that the Romans gave to Magna Mater (once the Carthaginians had departed from Italy) established what originally began as a positive relationship. The goddess was there as a protector of the city, much like Vesta.

In Stark’s argument, the first advantage for a cultus is that these imports had “a far higher content of emotionalism, especially in their worship activities.” This is most obviously evidenced in the worship practices of the galli, the male worshippers of Magna Mater. Though the true origin of the name galli is unknown, there is a popular myth concerning Attis, the young consort of Magna Mater, and his worshippers. Worshippers of Attis would fall “into a frenzy by drinking the waters of the river Gallus,” mimicking the heightened emotional state Attis felt when he castrated himself for his love of Magna Mater. And, while the worshippers in Rome may not have had access to this frenzy-inducing water, they continued to worship Magna Mater with a heightened emotional state. This myth of Attis addresses two specific aspects of the worship of Magna Mater: emotionalism and self-castration. The latter of these aspects will be discussed in conjunction with Stark’s second advantage.

Any level of emotionalism in religious worship would have been jarring for Romans not participating because of the level of seriousness normally required to complete a Roman ritual successfully. Much of their religious worship was meticulous and precise. Though ludi, including gladiatorial games, were often held in honor of a particular god or goddess, rituals were done with extreme levels of focus and control in order to ensure that the ritual was completed as precisely as possible. There was not much room for emotionalism and especially not heightened levels of emotionalism. The galli and their worship of Magna Mater created a jarring juxtaposition between the worshippers of a religio and a cultus. For example, during the sanguis, which occurred annually on March 24,

“The galli beat their breasts, shrieking, flagellated themselves with whips made from small bones, and slashed themselves with blades to make the blood spurt, which they offered to the goddess. In their wake, to the piercing sound of curved flutes and the strident rhythm of the tambourines, came the candidates for the priestly eunuchism who, in their dizzying excitement of this frenzied dance, used a flint to sacrifice their manhood.”

Throughout this ritual, emotionalism was encouraged in all aspects, visual, verbal and aural. In stark contrast is the somber ritual of entombing a Vestal having lost her virginity. If a Vestal was found to be guilty of this crime, she descended into a tomb voluntarily while the pontiffs looked away. Within this tomb there would be minimal portions of food and water, certainly not enough of either to keep her alive for very long. But the ritualistic symbolism was such that even though the college of pontiffs had found her guilty, they were not

responsible for her death. This placing of the responsibility for her death elsewhere allowed for Vesta’s relationship with the Roman people not to sour.\(^8\)

While Stark argues that a cultus allowed for worshippers to achieve a heightened emotional status, he does not acknowledge the Romans’ level of control over these proceedings. Historian Ariadne Staples argues that “the foreign elements of the cult were seemingly subjected to careful control, while the Roman aristocracy celebrated the goddess according to Roman mores.”\(^9\) As long as Roman citizens did not have to sacrifice their national standards of worship, they could pay Magna Mater the respect that she was due. And, yes, the worshippers of Magna Mater did reach this seemingly coveted emotional status, but “as Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions, there was also a legal ban excluding the participation of Roman citizens in Phrygian rites. It should be understood that this was especially, but not exclusively, related to the Phrygian practice of castration.”\(^10\) The Romans created a clear and distinct line for cultural imports, clarifying what was or was not acceptable in Roman practices. As historian Jacob Latham states, “Romans were quite content to offer Magna Mater a Roman cult replete with games, shows, and banquets, leaving the exotic but ancestral, and so necessary, rites to the Phrygian priest and priestess along with the galli.”\(^11\) If a Roman were to participate in these obviously un-Roman practices, the consequences were very serious. Most notable are two stories of slaves who castrated themselves in service of the Great Mother. After their self-castration, they were banished from Rome.\(^12\) Ultimately, the Romans had to give respect to the goddess because they credited her with the saving and continued protection of Rome, but that did not mean that their respect had to be applied to her worshippers as well.

Many of the rituals practiced in honor of Vesta were completed by the Vestal Virgins, the main body of women who were caretakers of the goddess’s hearth in Vesta’s temple in the Forum. What also supports Stark’s conclusions in general is that because the worship of Vesta was a state religio, all members of the state would be considered worshippers. Nevertheless, the Vestal Virgins can be thought of as equivalent to the main body of worshippers of Magna Mater, and it is in the Vestals’ methods and rites that heightened levels of emotionalism can be found.

The process of becoming a Vestal Virgin was lengthy and demanding. Once a young girl had been chosen for this honor, she would go through a process known as the captio. Many scholars have compared this ritual to the Roman marriage ritual. According to Wildfang, “in both rites, the girl is removed from the embrace of one her parents, and both rites seem to have had some war imagery.”\(^13\) The parallels between these two continue, as a significant similarity is that the new Vestal Virgin was making a commitment to the Roman state, much as a new bride made a commitment to her groom. However, during the

\(^8\) Ariadne Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins: Sex and Category in Roman Religion* (New York: Routledge), 133.
\(^9\) Jacob Latham, “‘Fabulous Clap-Trap’: Roman Masculinity, the Cult of Magna Mater, and Literary Constructions of the galli at Rome from the Late Republic to Late Antiquity,” *The Journal of Religion* XCII (2012): 87.
\(^11\) Latham, 87.
\(^12\) Borgeaud, 65.
\(^13\) Wildfang, 38.
ceremony, instead of being greeted with well wishes, the young girl was “treated as a captive of war.” The presence of this violence, while not totally comparable to the self-castration of the galli, bears some similarity to the heightened frenzy or emotional state a worshipper would need to achieve in order to castrate himself. Interestingly, the result is similar. The galli were freed of the male genitalia that acted as a physical obstacle that did not allow them to be included in a complete worship of Magna Mater; the new Vestal Virgin was freed from her father’s household and power and her familial cult in order to enter into her own unique power within the religio. And, as in other Roman rituals, there is a level of dramatization found in those religious rituals and religious practices; the captio is no exception.

Stark’s second putative advantage for imported religions is that “they appealed directly to the individual rather than to the community, linking faith to the ‘conscience.’” Continuing, Stark describes Roman gods as “gods of the state, not of the individual.” Because of the Roman gods’ integration into the state, he contends that they were at some disadvantage and because of Magna Mater’s supposed appeal to the individual, she and her cult had the advantage. However, Vesta’s importance to the state is no disadvantage; like Magna Mater, she was present in the city center to protect the continuation and future success of the Roman state. Magna Mater may have appealed to the individual but, from the Roman stance, the worship of Magna Mater did not link the faith of the galli to a conscience that was appreciated by the Romans.

Vesta, her temple, and the home of the Vestals were located in the Forum, and as Inge Kroppenberg argues, this is a symbol of the Vestals’ “intensive participation in public political life and their proximity to those that held power at the time.” Much of the Vestals’ legal standing centered on their own autonomy in both the political and religious spheres, and this autonomy was unique to Roman women. Vestals were guided and taught by older Vestals, and the Pontifex Maximus was in some ways a parental figure. But because Vesta was a goddess of the state, “the state religious tasks of a virgo Vestalis were regulated by [constitutional law].” Many of a Vestal Virgin’s acts would play a political role, however, as the body of Vestals was often seen as a “totem of Rome.” The singular representing the multitude allowed the Romans to represent the citizenry in rituals and also allowed for the actions of many to be converted into the actions of one.

The single greatest error a Vestal could make was to abandon her virginity, and whether this loss actually occurred was not as relevant as the simple act of accusing a Vestal of having lost her purity. The voluntary loss of a Vestal’s virginity was called by the Romans incestus. Due to a Vestal’s unique political position, she was viewed as a physical representation of the state and also, as an individual, she represented the whole of Rome. If a Vestal was accused and found guilty of incestus, the Roman state was most likely already in turmoil or was about to become chaotic, as “the loss of her virginity was equally indispensable for the political well-

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14 Wildfang, 38.
15 Stark, 10.
16 Stark, 10.
18 Kroppenberg, 427.
19 Kroppenberg, 427.
being of Rome.” The disruption of political well being did not only occur because of a clash between humans but, due to the heightened religious status of a Vestal, her loss of purity would illuminate a conflict between the gods and Rome. The singular position of the Vestals made them responsible for the pax deorum. Any one of the Vestals, at any time, could cause the relationship between Rome and gods of the Roman pantheon to be at odds with one another by losing her virginity, but the reverse could also be true.

With the voluntary loss of her virginity came a death sentence; she was buried alive. Most notably, two Vestals were convicted of losing their purity and dishonoring the state in 216 BCE, which was not long before Magna Mater was welcomed into Rome. Wildfang argues that these convictions are “evidence that accusations of Vestal incestum [sic] were made only at times of great fear and turmoil within Rome and in this case it is an accurate assessment of Rome’s likely state.” During this period, the Romans were fighting one of the deadliest enemies the state ever encountered, Hannibal and his Carthaginian army. However, Wildfang also points to the turmoil created in the city by Roman women as another cause of Roman fear for the status of the pax deorum. “Instead of remaining at home and silent on public matters, as was proper for respectable Roman mothers, wives and daughters, women had taken to wailing publicly in the streets mourning their losses.” In conjunction with other outbursts, these acts suggested “an atmosphere where traditional gender barriers were breaking down and women were acting in an increasingly uncontrolled fashion.” The state being threatened by both an outside force and an internal one, it was obvious to the Romans that the pax deorum had been disturbed and a solution was necessary. Sarolta A. Takács describes the consequences of a disturbed pax deorum: “The human scapegoat, in the most dramatic circumstances a Vestal, carried the guilt and failings of all others and in death expiated the whole society.” The likelihood of these Vestals giving up their virginity may be unknown, but because the Senate and other politicians felt that the state was in danger, they believed that the relationship between the gods and Rome had been tainted in some way.

Returning to Stark’s point, worship of Vesta and reverence for the Vestals was most obviously a communal act. The rituals were controlled by a single group of women who defied typical Roman categorization. The Vestals were permanently torn from their family so that they could not be connected to a single, familial identity. But this act also removed a Vestal from the ability to marry for as long as she was serving Vesta, both because she had to retain her virginity for thirty years and because she was removed from her father’s protection into her own autonomy. This categorical limbo allowed her to remain a member of the Roman state but secluded her from a microcosm of the state, the family. Also, the freedom from family and the expectations of a wife made the Vestal Virgins “the only Romans capable of devoting all of their religious energy to the state cult without also having to fulfill a role in,

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20 Staples, 135.
21 “The peace of the gods.” Roman citizens (including members of the Senate and priests or priestesses like the Vestal Virgins) were responsible for securing a positive relationship with the gods.
22 Wildfang, 80.
23 Wildfang, 81.
24 Wildfang, 81
or risk being polluted by, the private cult of an individual family.”26 Ultimately, women were placed into one of two categories, *matronae* or *virgines*, but the Vestals did not fit into either as they were not married women (*matronae*) nor were they marriageable women (*virgines*). “In short, Vestals simply defy categorization and, ultimately, definition, or at least, categorizations and definitions we have pasted together from the remaining (most literary) sources,” as Takács argues.27 Because the Romans created a particular and unique place for Vestal Virgins, they were allowed to function in a third category while also being responsible for the actions of the community and the restoration of the peace between the gods and the people of state, making this state religio able to appeal to the individual and the community.

Stark argues in his second point that “the new religions arriving in Rome were not devoted to sanctifying civic affairs but were instead directed toward the individual’s spiritual life and stressed individual morality, offering various means of atonement.”28 As mentioned above, the *cultus* of Magna Mater was brought into the state for the protection of the city during the Second Punic War. Reflecting on the Senate’s rationale for bringing Magna Mater into the city, Stark’s argument about this new *cultus* as “not devoted to sanctifying civic affairs” is weakened. Magna Mater’s presence and introduction into the city was a move that the Senate made to purify the Italian peninsula against the Carthaginian threat.

Many of Magna Mater’s rituals were carried out to attain a heightened level of servitude to the goddess. The most well-known ritual engaged in by her worshippers was the self-castration of the *galli*, which has been mentioned previously in this paper. The myth of Cybele (another name for Magna Mater) and her lover Attis is the source for this action. Though many myths about their relationship exist and many question exactly what caused Attis to castrate himself, ultimately all the myths end with the self-castration of Attis and his return to serving the goddess. This servitude was reflected in the *galli*’s act of castration as it “was rewarded by their control over the cult” and “it was also a sign of their exclusive devotion to the cult of the Mother.”29 And while Stark’s argument that this allowed for individual atonement is accurate, this act also caused confusion for the Romans as to how to categorize the *galli*, because their voluntary abandonment of their physical maleness was also the abandonment of their categorization. “In Greek and Roman eyes, mutilation of their own bodies made it impossible for them to be accepted as normal members of the social group: classical conceptions of normative maleness meant indeed that the *gallus* was understood as a sort of slave.”30 The actions of the *galli* may have allowed them to serve Magna Mater exclusively, but it also caused them to be cast out of Roman society in a distinctly different way than the Vestal Virgins, whose lack of categorization allowed them to serve the state.

Roman attitudes toward the *galli* show that these worshippers of Magna Mater and their actions were distasteful to the Romans. “*Galli* were neither men, nor Roman, and so beyond the bounds of elite *romanitas*- Romanness.”31 And, again, the distinction between the Roman and the non-Roman is exemplified by the *galli*’s actions during rituals: “the calm, controlled
part of the Magna Mater’s ritual was a product of Roman culture, but the noisy and colorful aspects [were] viewed as vulgar and unseemly...and therefore un-Roman.”  

While the act of self-castration gave the galli access to more worship-related privileges in the context of serving Magna Mater, they also “persistently stood beyond the limits of normative masculinity: their dress, deportment, behaviors (ritual and otherwise), and the act by which one gained membership to that chorus, castration, transgressed at various times the boundaries that defined Roman men.”  

Stark’s argument that the worship of Magna Mater directly appealed to the individual falters because of the seclusion from the Roman populus that the galli faced, a direct result of their lack of maleness. Most of their actions were relegated to the Palatine Hill and participation in the Megalensia, the annual celebration of Magna Mater’s entrance into the city, was forbidden for Roman citizens, assuming that they were interested in participating. The worship of Magna Mater did appeal to the individual, but in the context of the Roman state and norms of Roman masculinity, the worshippers of Magna Mater were not considered individuals but were aberrations in the state and demoted to the status of a slave, raising the question of at what cost a cultus appealed to an individual in Roman society.

A secondary interpretation of the galli’s self-castration, based in one myth of Cybele and Attis, shows the more negative aspect of the cultus of Magna Mater. Jaime Alvar argues that the heightened emotional state of the worshippers led to crazed physical acts that might not otherwise have happened. He describes the relationship of Magna Mater and the worshipper as “the model of the devouring mother,” and states that “if the goddess demanded castration as a condition for becoming a true servant, the imperative might be met by individuals who, given the appropriate economic, social and ideological conditions, were emotionally disposed to turn fantasy into reality.”

Here, Alvar presents this ritual as a fanciful one with direct and serious consequences for the individuals who turned it into reality.

Stark’s third point considers the intellectual appeal of an imported religion and the representation of the god or goddess. He argues that “they satisfied the intellect’ by possessing written scriptures and by presenting a more potent and virtuous portrait of the gods.” Because the comparison of written scripture relating to Magna Mater and Vesta is not possible with the available sources, the representations of Vesta and Magna Mater will be examined instead. Stark argues that “many worshippers of Cybele ... ‘recognized no other deity but their god’ and if they did not claim that theirs was the only god, they did regard theirs as the supreme god.” Many of the Roman gods feature in stories of debauchery and other bad behavior, especially when concerning interactions with humans. However, Vesta and Magna Mater serve the Roman state in a similar virtuous manner, but the “portrait” of Magna Mater is very different from that of Vesta.

The images of female goddesses, from inside or outside of the Roman state, tend to carry with them the gender norms of their culture and the time. A myth gives some evidence

33 Latham, 89.
34 Alvar, 256.
35 Stark, 10.
36 Stark, 12.
for the characterization of the goddess: she “did not become involved in the conflicts between the Olympians and the old gods but asked her brother Jupiter to grant her the privilege of remaining a virgin after his victory over the Titans and requested him to guard her virginity.”\(^{37}\) As the goddess of the hearth, many have argued that the everlasting flame of Vesta represented procreation, domesticity, and in some instances purification.\(^{38}\) Her flame also represented the stability and continuation of the Roman state, as previously mentioned. But due to the presence of a hearth and the absence of a statue in Vesta’s temples, a physical representation of Vesta has been argued to be symbolized by flame and not “not represented anthropomorphically.”\(^{39}\) The flame became a representation of Vesta’s virginity. And, as Ovid writes in the *Fasti*, “You must understand Vesta as nothing other than a living flame; and from flame you see no bodies born. Rightly therefore she is a virgin that puts out no seed and takes no seed.”\(^{40}\) Though she was invisible in the sense that she was not represented in a fashion similar to other Roman divinities, there was a sense of her constant presence through an invisible flame that the Romans believed had omnipresence. For the Romans, this “perpetual virgin was a manifestation of holiness and the essence of the sacred” and “associated with a state of physical intactness, moral integrity, purity, unity, and not least, great power.”\(^{41}\) It is all of these characteristics based in Vesta’s continued presence and virginity that allowed her to represent the Roman state and its continuation. The amount of reverence bestowed upon Vesta reflects the potency that the goddess carried; her relationship to Jupiter and her connection to the founding and continuation of the city also factored into how the goddess’ strength and importance were perceived by the Romans.

In sharp contrast is the Roman characterization of and relationship to Magna Mater. Most obviously, Magna Mater commanded respect from the Romans because she was a goddess brought to Rome to save the state and the people from the Carthaginian threat. Because of her feminine gender, Magna Mater received and continued to receive some of the same characterization as Vesta. She has been described as “the mother of all the gods, symbol of the ever-feminine principle of the world,” and “the protectress of the Eternal City [Rome],” both of which connote a level of superior potency to other gods and goddesses.\(^{42}\) In many of the myths, Magna Mater is “the archetypal expression of maternity and birth.”\(^{43}\) Others argue that “Meter [Magna Mater] was not primarily a fertility goddess, but a goddess of power and protection,”\(^{44}\) which is a characterization consistent with the Roman rationale for Magna Mater’s entrance into Rome. Where Magna Mater’s characterization veers from Vesta’s is in her foreign background. By bringing in Magna Mater, the Roman Senate also introduced an uncomfortable level (for the Romans) of foreignness that the Roman citizenry attempted to control, as has been discussed previously. Ultimately, the Romans had to balance their reverence for the goddess with their distance and distaste for her worshippers.

\(^{37}\) Kroppenberg, 418.
\(^{38}\) Takács, 84.
\(^{39}\) Takács, 85.
\(^{41}\) Kroppenberg,419.
\(^{42}\) Tortchinov, 150.
\(^{43}\) Tortchinov, 155.
Stark’s fourth point concerns the opportunities for women in a *cultus*. He argues that *cultus* were “far more appealing to women, some offering women the opportunity to lead.”\(^{45}\) To support this point, he refers to Vestal Virgins: “Worse yet, priestesses were subject to severe regulations quite unlike anything imposed on priests. For instance, vestal virgins [sic] were buried alive for transgressions.”\(^{46}\) And while both of these comments are true, Stark ignores key concepts about the Vestals and the benefits of being a Vestal. Most aspects of the Vestals’ life, from their clothing and hairstyle to where their temple was located, were guided by the need for them to represent the Roman state and its continuation and because of that, they were deeply integrated into the politics of the state. Due to this, Vestals carried a high level of political power that most other women did not have. Inge Kroppenberg notes that “in times of crisis, the political circles made sure to have the support of the Vestals.”\(^{47}\) A significant crisis for the Roman state has already been mentioned: the attack on Italy by Hannibal during the Second Punic War; this attack and other omens motivated the Senate to bring in another goddess to save the Roman state, Magna Mater. Her entrance into the city had to be done with the right level of care. In some accounts, this meant bringing in a Vestal to help with her journey to the city. This was common, as Vestals were regularly “deployed on delicate diplomatic missions, often with the continued existence of the Roman state at risk.”\(^{48}\) Their duties included maintaining a registry of important public and official documents and being able to give testimony in court, which other women were rarely allowed to do. Dividing Roman life into three aspects, politics, law, religion, each of the Vestals had a unique position that differentiated them from other women.

Examining the *cultus* of Magna Mater, one of the main rites for her worshippers was the act of self-castration. Alvar discusses the physical component of this rite and argues that “the *galli* normally simply lacked testicles and scrotum.”\(^{49}\) This rite was required to show a worshipper’s complete and total devotion to Magna Mater; but this rite comes into direct conflict with Stark’s point about a *cultus* offering more opportunities for women to lead within the *cultus* because this ceremony was one in which only men could participate. After the act of castration had occurred, the worshipper then learned the secrets of the cult; since women were never able to participate in this rite, they would never have had access to the secrets of the cult. However, women did have a separate means of participating in the act of castration, the rite of *taurobolium*. In this process, a bull was either purchased from the market or brought in from a personal estate, had its scrotum removed and then sacrificed to the goddess. Both men and women paid for this particular rite, but in many ways it was viewed as a substitute for self-castration or representative of “the subject’s longing to satisfy the Mother’s gelding-imperative while enabling him to attain the rank of priest without personal loss of the power of procreation.”\(^{50}\) Many have argued that this secondary rite was made available for Romans who wanted to participate in the worship of Magna Mater, as they were not legally allowed to be castrated. While there is no evidence showing that women could not or were not welcome

\(^{45}\) Stark, 10.
\(^{46}\) Stark, 12.
\(^{47}\) Kroppenberg, 421.
\(^{48}\) Kroppenberg, 421.
\(^{49}\) Alvar, 250.
\(^{50}\) Alvar, 274.
to participate in the worship of Magna Mater, the only available option for them was not equal to the option for men.

Stark’s fifth and final point focuses on the creation of community. He argues that a *cultus* was “not content merely to function as temples to which people went from time to time but organized their adherents into structured and very active communities that provided a deeply rewarding social as well as spiritual life.”\(^{51}\) He continues by stating that a *religio* would typically meet once every month or so, whereas a *cultus* expected its worshippers to worship daily in private and then to meet on a weekly basis. Stark writes that “the Greco-Roman gods had only clients and festivals, not members and regular services.”\(^{52}\)

However, after examining the community and structure of the Vestal Virgins and how the *galli* were ostracized by Roman society, Stark’s point is shown to be invalid. Each Vestal Virgin was taken from her father’s home to serve the goddess at a very young age, between six and ten years old. For the next thirty years, these Vestals would live and serve Vesta together; many chose to serve the goddess for the remainder of their life. The education of the young Vestals was left to the more experienced Vestals. In some ways, this relationship could be compared to a mother-daughter relationship, though it is important to remember that Vestals were removed from a familial structure through the rite of *captio*. As mentioned before, the life of a Vestal was structured to include aspects of law, politics and religion and to ensure that Vestals were representing the Roman state well. Though not all Roman worshippers were allowed to enter the temple and see the flame, the Vestal Virgins worshipped the goddess daily through their actions, as their primary task was to tend to the fire that represented Vesta herself.

More interesting is Stark’s argument in the context of the *galli* and Magna Mater. In many ways, the *cultus* created a particular and specialized community for the worshippers, as seen through self-castration. However, the Roman reaction to this shows that creating such a community went against Roman norms; the Roman response was to limit the spatial access of the group, specifically the *galli*, since their actions created significant confusion and concern for the Romans. “Unless safely confined at an extreme of ‘male’ existence, the reputed excess of the *galli* could have thrown off kilter the delicate balancing act of Roman manhood.”\(^{53}\) Due to this particular Roman mindset and the foreignness of the cult, the priest, the priestess, and “their cultic practices were seemingly confined to the Palatine temple apart from one raucous procession.”\(^{54}\) Though the worshippers were allowed an annual procession during the Megalensia, Roman citizens were legally not allowed to participate. Many other rites for the goddess were relegated to the interior of the sanctuary so that the *cultus* and its actions did not have to be seen by Roman citizens. The ostracism of the *cultus* did allow for a community to form within the larger Roman community. However, due to the strangeness of the *cultus*, the community was heavily limited.

A careful comparison between the *cultus* of Magna Mater and the *religio* of Vesta shows that there are no apparent advantages for the *cultus* of Magna Mater. The worshippers of

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51 Stark, 10.
52 Stark, 13.
53 Latham, 89.
54 Latham, 93.
Magna Mater, the *galli*, received so many negative responses and reactions from the Romans that their worship was secluded in a particular location. In contrast, the Vestals enjoyed privileges that other Roman women and many men did not, such as legal freedom from a father and a husband; and though they were required to serve for thirty years, their status was not as permanent as that of the *galli*.

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In 1950, following years of escalating tensions and crises between the United States and the Soviet Union, President Harry Truman implemented National Security Council paper 68 (NSC 68). This decision altered the course of US policy for decades. Written by advisors from the Departments of State and Defense, NSC 68 weighed existing US objectives against the Soviet Union’s atomic, military, and economic capabilities. The report primarily recommended a rapid peacetime military build-up in order to contain Soviet aggression. Truman’s decision to approve NSC 68 led to a dramatic increase in the US defense budget and the formation of the United States’ first extensive peacetime military. Before reviewing NSC 68, Truman reduced military spending and relied on providing western allies with economic aid to prop up democratic, or at least non-Soviet allied, regimes. This event not only marked a distinct shift in Truman’s policies, but also represented a seminal change in the conduct of US foreign and spending policies during the early Cold War. Truman’s decision merits an intensive examination to understand why he enacted NSC 68. Truman implemented NSC 68 because he firmly believed that the United States needed to adopt a cohesive national security strategy to oppose the external threats posed by Soviet expansion and to promote individual freedom across the world.

Within the historical debate surrounding the origins and effects of NSC 68, many scholars argue that the start of the Korean War in May 1950 forced Truman to sacrifice his desire to balance government spending. Such scholars contend that he enacted NSC 68 despite his opposition to its prescriptions. For example, US foreign policy historian Steven Casey posits that “Korea suddenly transformed the policymaking landscape, pushing even committed economizers such as Truman and [Secretary of Defense Louis] Johnson in the direction of an expanded military mobilization.” Numerous scholars echo Casey’s view that Truman shelved NSC 68 in order to focus on cutting military spending until the Korean War forced him to concede to NSC 68’s policies. These historians represent the realist understanding of Truman’s foreign policy, which contends that external threats influenced Truman’s decision to implement NSC 68. While realists identify the external threats Truman faced, many often understate or overlook Truman’s belief in the necessity of NSC 68, as well as the influence of his cabinet and other advisors.

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Other scholars emphasize internal concerns. Historian Benjamin Fordham focuses on the pressure Truman faced within his administration from Secretary of State Dean Acheson and the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff (PPS) to actively oppose the Soviet Union. Fordham argues “had [Truman] rejected [NSC 68], he would probably have had to rebuild much of his foreign policy apparatus and the supporting coalition behind it.”\(^{57}\) According to Fordham, Truman implemented NSC 68 because Acheson and his advisors in the PPS engendered enough support for the report’s policies that to oppose them would have had drastic political costs. This view is supported by US national security scholar Ernest May, who credits the Washington bureaucracy with forcing Truman’s decision.\(^{58}\) Fordham and May allow that the Korean War influenced Truman, however, they stress that the Korean War served as the justification, rather than the motivation, for Truman’s decision to implement NSC 68. Arguments that Truman accepted the report in response to internal pressure also highlight his economic concerns over national security threats.

Furthering scholarly attention on internal pressure, Curt Cardwell offers a convincing assessment of Truman’s decision. Cardwell contends that Truman supported and implemented NSC 68 “to overcome the systemic problems to the international economic order posed by the ‘dollar gap.’”\(^{59}\) The “dollar gap” refers to the immense discrepancy between very low US dollar imports and high dollar exports throughout the early Cold War that worried Truman and many of his advisors. Cardwell demonstrates that Truman supported the conclusions long before the Korean War began. Similar to Fordham and May, Cardwell identifies the Korean War as the opportunity for Truman to implement NSC 68, rather than as the motivation. However, Cardwell distinguishes his position from others by concentrating on the dollar gap as Truman’s primary motivation. While the arguments both of the realist view and the political economic view offer significant examples of Truman’s actions, ideological differences between historians obscure the root causes of Truman’s implementation of NSC 68.

A consideration of the various scholars’ viewpoints reveals a clear divergence of opinion that revolves around whether international threats or domestic pressure motivated Truman’s decision.\(^{60}\) After analyzing these scholars’ claims and various primary sources, I offer a different answer that focuses on Truman’s firm belief—which he held prior to the Korean War—that the United States needed to adapt a cohesive national security strategy. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that, rather than seeking a justification to enact NSC 68 meeting domestic pressure, Truman sought to implement NSC 68 with the goal of opposing the Soviet Union.


\(^{60}\) Comments on author’s historiographical essay from Dr. Elaine Reynolds regarding the divide between domestic and foreign motivations, November 8, 2015.
Truman’s decision to enact NSC 68 must be regarded in the context of the bipolar power struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States following the end of World War II. At the conclusion of hostilities, Truman undertook a rigorous policy of demobilization and budget cuts to reduce the size of the military and begin alleviating the immense war debt. After two years of demobilization, Truman’s administration had decreased the size of the military by over ten million personnel from World War II levels.\textsuperscript{61} A much smaller military and fewer resources in the wake of immense spending cuts and demobilization during the post-war years greatly challenged Truman’s ability to respond to crises in the early Cold War.

During the Iran Crisis of 1946, the Soviet Union refused to relinquish control of Iranian territory until pressure from the United Nations forced them to withdraw military forces. At the same time, communist movements grew throughout Eastern Europe, especially in Greece and Turkey. Because of their immense economic and military losses incurred during the war and a shift in their government’s foreign policy, the United Kingdom abandoned its traditional protection of Greece and Turkey in early 1947. This left the United States as the only democratic power capable of supporting the resistance to communist takeovers. The struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union also manifested in their competing methods for rehabilitating Europe when in June of 1947, the Soviet Union refused to participate in the United States Marshall Plan, and prohibited the Eastern European countries from participating as well.

Soviet encroachment reached a new level of intensity in 1948 when they forced a military takeover of Czechoslovakia and closed all land routes into the Western controlled sections of Berlin during the Berlin Blockade. Furthermore, the Soviet Union detonated its first atomic weapon in 1949. This ended the US monopoly on atomic weapons and presented Truman with a greatly enhanced threat to the United States. Shortly thereafter, Chinese communists ousted the nationalist government and Mao Zedong proclaimed the People’s Republic of China from the Forbidden City in Beijing. Overall, events in the late 1940s presented the Soviet Union as an increasingly aggressive belligerent and forced Truman to seek new policy initiatives.

Faced with the necessity of combating communist uprisings in Greece and Turkey in 1947, Truman addressed Congress on March 12. He declared “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugations by armed minorities or outside pressures.”\textsuperscript{62} Truman’s statement implied a broad shift in US foreign policy to openly and actively oppose communist encroachment by the Soviet Union. Previously, Truman avoided committing US monetary or military support to contest acts of


Soviet aggression. As an embodiment of democratic ideals and a change in policy to a more active opposition to the Soviet Union, his declaration of what was to be known as the Truman Doctrine marked Truman's first enactment of policies designed to oppose the spread of communism.

Following the blatant Soviet-led takeover of Czechoslovakia and the Berlin Blockade in 1948, Truman demonstrated an increased desire to oppose the Soviet Union. During a campaign speech on October 27, Truman asserted “I hate communism. I deplore what it does to the dignity and freedom of the individual...I have fought it abroad, and I shall continue to fight it with all my strength.” While Truman likely made these statements to arouse support for the upcoming election, the importance of using such striking language in an open forum must be noted. Furthermore, Truman turned rhetoric into action less than a month later in November 1948, when he implemented National Security Council Paper 20/4 (NSC 20/4). This report outlined then-present Soviet and US objectives, aims, and capabilities. Crafted by George Kennan, former Ambassador to the USSR, then-of the PPS, NSC 20/4 expanded on the concepts Truman stated in the Truman Doctrine. NSC 20/4 also established a policy of containment towards the Soviet Union by focusing on regions of strategic economic or political importance. Specifically, the report called for the United States to “reduce the power and influence of the USSR to limits which no longer constitute a threat to peace [and]...To bring about a basic change in the conduct of international relations by the government in power in Russia, to conform with the purposes and principles set forth in the UN charter.” His implementation of NSC 20/4 demonstrated another shift in Truman’s assessment of the Soviet Union. In his Truman Doctrine US policy aimed to oppose subversive communist movements, but NSC 20/4 sought to contain the Soviet Union’s encroachment and undermine its capability to do so.

In September of 1949, when Truman learned that the Soviet Union had detonated its first atomic weapon, he quickly informed the United States in a radio broadcast. The end of the US monopoly on atomic weapons meant that the United States had lost the ability to deter Soviet acts of aggression without a massive military presence in Europe. Weeks later, the victory of Mao Zedong’s forces led to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. From the Iran Crisis to the communist takeover in China, the developments of the late 1940s

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presented Truman with a steadily growing threat from Soviet aggression that forced him to seek a new direction for US policy. While Truman faced a growing threat from the Soviet Union throughout the late 1940s, he also maintained a steadfast commitment to balancing the budget and cutting government spending in the face of immense postwar debts. On April 5, 1947, shortly after his implementation of the Truman Doctrine, Truman spoke to a gathering of Democratic supporters about his budget cuts. Truman stated: “I was warned by some that I was going too far. I was aware of the risk. But I was aware, too, of the greater risk of a weakened postwar financial structure.” Aside from establishing his commitment to spending cuts, Truman alluded to the pressure he faced from advocates of an expanded budget. Truman’s desire to rein in government spending arose from his personal beliefs and pressure from the public. In his memoirs, Truman recalled his career in government service and experience with financial responsibility. He wrote “As a county judge, senator, and President, I consistently kept in mind the same sort of tax philosophy. It was a pay-as-you-go program, except in emergency conditions.” Truman demonstrated this “pay-as-you-go” philosophy by his constant resistance to increased government spending after the years of a wartime budget left the nation in immense debt.

In addition to Truman’s own convictions, negative public opinion about foreign aid programs influenced Truman to reduce spending. A November 1949 article from *Barron’s National Business and Financial Weekly* attacked his administration and argued that “the immense outpouring of foreign subsidies is widely disliked.” A *Chicago Tribune* article also printed in November supported this sentiment, decrying Truman’s foreign aid plans as schemes or tricks presented by untrustworthy spokesmen to convince disapproving Congressmen. Because Truman committed the US to aiding Europe through the Marshall Plan and countries facing political subversion through the Truman Doctrine, public opinion pressured him to keep any other expenditures at a minimum and avoid protracted Congressional disputes.

In addition to public opposition, Congress also favored a reduction in spending. Republican conservatives, led by Senator Robert Taft, headed this group. Taft often criticized Truman’s foreign policy and foreign aid expenditures and argued that foreign military and economic commitments only damaged the United States’ national interest by involving the country in unnecessary foreign engagements. Taft’s views generally represented that of many other Republicans. However, some Democrats also attacked Truman. In a 1950 article from

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the *Chicago Tribune*, Senator Harry Byrd of Illinois stated, “If the President...regards chronic deficit spending during peak prosperity as a fatal menace to our form of government, as I do, the federal budget would be balanced now.” The disapproval of members from both political parties, public opposition, and his belief in a balanced budget led Truman to reject any expenditures that he deemed unnecessary.

It is important to recognize that Truman had to decide carefully between his commitment to a conservative fiscal policy and his desire to oppose the spread of Soviet communism. We see this tension in his condemnation of an enlarged military budget only months after the Soviet Union realized atomic power. Truman decried the appropriations for the US Air Force budget proposed by Congress. He stated: “Increasing the structure of the Air Force above that recommended in the 1950 budget would be inconsistent with a realistic and balanced security program which we can support.” By criticizing the expansion of military spending shortly after an intensification of the Soviet threat, Truman’s statement underlines the delicate balance he struck between protecting US national security and reducing government spending.

Beyond limiting government spending, the balance of payments crisis between US imports and exports greatly concerned Truman. The balance of payments crisis, or dollar gap, was the result of European demand for US goods greatly surpassing the ability of those nations to pay for US goods. The Marshall Plan aimed to fix the immense trade deficit. However, the dollar gap presented Truman with the potential for a devastating economic recession throughout the world if Marshall Plan aid was unable to bolster European economies. Altogether, the growing Soviet threat, economic crises, and political pressure in the postwar years required Truman to weigh the domestic needs of the United States against the international threat of communism's expansion.

Communist victories in late 1949 convinced Truman to search for comprehensive policies that could safeguard U.S. national security and ultimately led to his decision to enact NSC 68. I agree with historian Ken Young, who argues that NSC 68 stemmed from “the Soviet nuclear test and the Communist takeover in China, the groundswell of political anxiety they induced, and the new policy agenda established by the prospect of thermonuclear weapons.” In light of the new threat of a nuclear-armed Soviet Union, Truman first considered changes to his fiscal and defense policies.

Weeks after the Soviet nuclear test, Truman’s shift towards deficit spending caused his economic policy advisor Edward Nourse to resign. On October 19, 1949, Truman discussed

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74 Curt Cardwell, *NSC 68*, 60.

Nourse’s resignation and opposition to deficit spending in a weekly press conference at the White House. Truman said: “I am very certain that Dr. Nourse didn’t know what he was talking about. Although he is an economist, he knows nothing about Government financing.” Truman’s public criticism of such a high level advisor suggests a distinct change in his belief that deficit spending had to be avoided. This is also evident in the proposals of Nourse’s replacement, Leon Keyserling. Keyserling stated: “there was a big dispute over whether President Truman could safely increase the defense budget...when he finally sided with us.” Keyserling referred to the group of advisors who favored increasing defense spending, primarily Acheson. Historian Lester Brune supports Keyserling’s account and credits him with persuading Truman that deficit spending could increase economic growth and allow for increased military spending. Michael Hogan also argues that Keyserling swayed Truman’s opinion “given his [Keyserling’s] conviction that Keynesian economic policies could expand the economy and alleviate the need to sacrifice on behalf of the country’s global responsibilities.” Keyserling argued that deficit spending offered Truman the best of both worlds: increased funding for defense purposes and economic growth. Faced with an unprecedented threat from a nuclear Soviet Union and persuaded by Keyserling’s arguments about deficits, Truman reconsidered his commitment to balancing the budget.

In addition to Truman’s shift in fiscal policy, he publicly demonstrated his desire for a new global strategy. While addressing his administration’s foreign policy in November of 1949 to the American Society of Civil Engineers, Truman stated: “I don’t believe in little plans. I believe in plans big enough to meet a situation which we can’t possibly foresee now.” Truman’s statement implies a level of dissatisfaction with the policies his administration had enacted up to late 1949. Truman first considered the need for a new strategy after receiving an NSC memo from the recently appointed PPS director Paul Nitze. After a policy meeting of the National Security Council in December, Nitze recommended that “N.S.C. reexamine our aims and objectives in the light of the USSR’s probable fission bomb capability and its possible thermonuclear bomb capability.” Nitze’s suggestion underlined the apprehension

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within Truman’s administration regarding the Soviet Union’s recent attainment of nuclear power.

At the beginning of 1950, Truman delivered a telling State of the Union address, speaking about the need for a robust American presence around the world. Truman stated:

> Our tremendous strength has brought with it tremendous responsibilities...Other nations look to us for a wise exercise of our economic and military strength, and for vigorous support of the ideals of representative government and a free society. We will not fail them.82

Truman’s message clearly shows his vision for the United States’ role as a beacon of democracy and prosperity. To fulfill this role, Truman required a national strategy to cope with new threats, protect US interests, and replace the despair of communism with the hope of freedom. Truman’s belief in the United States, desire for stronger policies, and the pressures of the early Cold War set the stage for NSC 68.

Acting on the advice from Acheson and Nitze, and his own convictions, Truman ordered the creation of a study that later became NSC 68. On January 31, 1950, Truman directed Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson to reassess the capabilities and intentions of the Soviet Union in light of American capabilities and objectives, given “the probable fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear bomb capability of the Soviet Union.”83 This responsibility fell to the Policy Planning Staff in consultation with the Department of Defense. The PPS functioned as a small group of analysts in the State Department under the direction of Nitze, with oversight from Acheson. Over the next three months, the PPS worked with members of the Department of Defense to create the cohesive national strategy that became NSC 68.

In accordance with the President’s order, the PPS began crafting NSC 68 but soon ran into conflicts with Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson. Truman appointed Johnson to vigorously economize the Department of Defense. He vehemently opposed even considering increasing military spending. Years later, Nitze recalled that Johnson had prohibited any of his subordinates from contacting the PPS without his express approval.84 The conflict between Johnson and the PPS continued throughout the drafting of NSC 68. As Nitze biographer Nicholas Thompson notes, Nitze “managed the bureaucracy, most significantly in an effort to circumvent Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson.”85 Despite Johnson’s aversion to spending

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increases and restrictions on his subordinates, his liaisons, Generals Landon and Burns, the military strategy department of the Joint Chiefs of Staff continued working with the PPS until the report neared completion in late March 1950.

NSC 68 began with great fervor in describing the Soviet threat. The introduction stated the Soviet Union was “... animated by a fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world...It is in this context that this Republic and its citizens in ascendency of their strength stand in their deepest peril.” With a zealous tone bordering on the apocalyptic, NSC 68 framed the Cold War as a fight for national survival with the need for an immense national undertaking to preserve the United States, a view evidenced by Truman throughout the late 1940s. Years later, Acheson said the fervor of NSC 68 was intended “to so bludgeon the mass mind of ‘top government’ that not only could the President make a decision but that the decision could be carried out.” Following the vehement identification of the Soviet Union as a colossal enemy, NSC 68 presented its policy prescriptions in the context of extreme necessity.

After characterizing the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States as an apocalyptic struggle, NSC 68 referenced the previously approved policies from NSC 20/4 concerning containment. NSC 68 pointed out that the changes in circumstance required changes in emphasis but stated: “The objectives outlined in NSC 20/4...are fully consistent with the objectives stated in this paper, and they remain valid.” The differences between the two papers represented a shift in focus from communism’s political threat to its military threat and from opposing communism in strategic regions to opposing communism worldwide. Acheson and Nitze’s decision to include NSC 20/4 allowed them to present NSC 68 as a growth of policies that Truman had already approved NSC 20/4 in 1948. The harsher language, and more specific policies of NSC 68, reflected Truman’s desire for a stronger and more encompassing strategy to oppose the Soviet Union in light of more dire circumstances.

The central recommendations of NSC 68 addressed the readiness of the United States military given the extent of the United States' commitments around the world. NSC 68 argued that “when our military strength is related to the world situation, it is clear that our military strength is becoming dangerously inadequate.” The emphasis NSC 68 put on military strength signaled that the United States faced increased vulnerability, because atomic weapons could no longer serve as an unanswerable deterrent. To correct the disparity in military

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89 Nicholas Thompson, The Hawk and the Dove, 113, Kindle.

commitments, NSC 68 recommended “a more rapid build-up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world than provided under [current policies], with the purpose of...preparing to defend ourselves in the event that the free world is attacked.”91 The insistence on a rapid buildup meant that a major escalation in government spending would be required. Overall, NSC 68 called for a large increase in military forces to “deter, if possible, Soviet expansion, and to defeat, if necessary, aggressive Soviet or Soviet-directed actions.”92 To this end, NSC 68 proposed increases in military and foreign aid spending, as well as a focus on promoting Western ideals in preparation for a protracted conflict with an increasingly dangerous enemy.

With NSC 68 reaching its final stages after three months of work, Acheson and Nitze arranged a meeting with Johnson to go over the report before its submission to Truman. At this meeting on March 22, 1950, Nitze recalled that “[Johnson] entered the room in a towering rage...He said this entire effort was a conspiracy by me [Nitze] and General Landon to subvert his attempts to hold the Defense budget down.”93 Johnson’s outburst became infamous throughout the upper levels of the Truman administration. Johnson objected to the manner in which the PPS crafted NSC 68 and to its potentially immense budgetary increases. However, despite Truman’s support for Johnson’s economizing goals, Acheson stated “within the hour the President telephoned me, expressing his outrage and telling me to carry on exactly as we had been doing. At the slightest sign of obstruction or foot-dragging in the Pentagon I was to report to him.”94 Truman’s apparent anger at Johnson’s conduct suggests that he wanted nothing to hinder the process of creating NSC 68 and, by extension, a plan to reestablish US policy. NSC 68 faced no further obstacles until the PPS submitted it to Truman for review on April 7, 1950. The report indicated a sense of urgency due to the dramatic disparity between the United States capabilities compared to the large threat of the determined and then-recently nuclear armed Soviet Union. The report offered three distinct objectives to oppose the Soviet Union's growth:

[Increase] the development of our military and economic strength...lead in building a successfully functioning political and economic system in the free world...foster a fundamental change in the nature of the Soviet system...to its participation with other nations on the basis of equality and respect for the rights of others.”95

To achieve this objective, NSC 68 generally recommended “a rapid and sustained build-up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world.”96 According to NSC 68, such increases in the United States’ aggregate power would require that “budgetary

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91 Ibid, 48.
92 Ibid, 58.
94 Dean Acheson, Present at Creation, 373-374.
96 Ibid, 68.
considerations…be subordinated to the stark fact that our very independence as a nation may be at stake.” The report frequently repeated the theme of national survival against the Kremlin’s designs to justify sacrifices such as increases in taxation, military spending, and economic assistance to foreign countries. Further policy recommendations included psychological warfare strategies to influence Soviet citizens and mobilization programs to increase the readiness of the military. NSC 68 tied all of these proposals back to its argument that the United States had to act quickly to ensure that the Soviet Union did not achieve an insurmountable advantage.

The key to analyzing Truman’s decision to implement NSC 68 emerges in the timing of when he decided to begin enactment. As I noted earlier, scholars disagree about whether Truman used the Korean War to sell NSC 68 (when its real purpose was to mitigate political and economic pressure at home) or if he abandoned NSC 68 until the Korean War forced his hand. But both groups of scholars view the Korean War as the catalyst for Truman’s final decision in favor of NSC 68. However, I argue Truman began to enact the policies of NSC 68 weeks before the surprise of the North Korean invasion.

First, days after Truman received NSC 68 on April 7, he contacted the National Security Council for further information on the programs, policies, and costs, contained within NSC 68. He wrote: “I am particularly anxious that the Council give me a clearer indication of the programs which are envisaged in the Report, including estimates of the probable cost of such problems…I am concerned that action on existing programs should not be postponed.” That Truman expressed such urgency and apprehension shows the importance with which he regarded NSC 68, especially considering his reputation for positivity and measured consideration. Rather than shelving NSC 68 for future consideration, Truman treated the report as a matter for immediate action.

Second, Truman began publicly alluding to the implementation of a new national strategy and privately echoing the sentiments of NSC 68 before the war broke out. On April 20, 1950, Truman and Acheson met with the Secretary General of the United Nations. During this meeting “the President said that he had met with Stalin at Potsdam…and that he had been completely disillusioned on the usefulness of such meetings.” This conversation shows that Truman no longer believed that negotiations with the Soviet Union could lead to any success, the same position taken by NSC 68. The report argued: “the terms of agreements on important pending issues would reflect present realities and would therefore be unacceptable.

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97 Ibid, 60.


99 David McCullough, *Truman*, New York: Simon and Schuster (1992), Kindle edition, location 14569. For example, McCullough reports that Truman privately reacted to the Soviet atomic threat with lighthearted acceptance: “[Truman] knew it would probably come-German scientists in Russia did it, probably something like that.” In contrast to his urgent requests for policy specifics when he first received NSC 68.

if not disastrous, to the United States.”101 Because Truman believed, like NSC-68’s authors, that negotiation with the Soviet Union was futile, he sought other means to contain the Soviet threat.

Third, on the same day, Truman spoke about US foreign policy at a luncheon with major newspaper editors. During his address, Truman stated “I have directed the Secretary of State to plan a strengthened and more effective national effort to use the great power of truth in working for peace.”102 While he did not directly name NSC 68 as the new national effort, Truman sought to employ the media to show Soviet citizens the truth about the coercive Stalinist regime. In this case, the use of propaganda matched NSC 68’s prescription for winning the hearts and minds of the Soviet people.103 This instance shows that Truman began laying the groundwork for NSC 68’s policy recommendations before the North Korean invasion.

Fourth, considering Truman’s concern for the dollar gap crisis, NSC 68 referred to the dollar gap only in passing, with no policy suggestions. The report noted “certain inadequacies and inconsistencies, which are now being studied in connection with the problem of the United States balance of payments.”104 While the balance of payments crisis worried Truman, the authors of NSC 68 did not focus on the dollar gap. Furthermore, records from National Security Council meetings clearly show that Truman believed the dollar gap existed as a separate issue from the emphasis of NSC 68. During a National Security Council meeting on April 28, 1950, the council noted that “the problem of United States balance of payments, [is] to be handled along the lines already approved by the President. (Mr. Gordon Gray’s staff.)” 105 Truman appointed Gray, then the Secretary of the Army, to complete an independent economic study of the dollar gap. Despite the claims from scholars who focus on the dollar gap crisis as Truman’s motivation for implementing NSC 68, Truman clearly ordered his National Security Council to let Gray address the issue.

Finally, Truman directly sought to implement NSC 68’s recommendation for increased military and economic mobilization. He instructed Acheson to prepare legislation for Congress to increase mobilization measures. These measures would allow the United States to quickly assemble troops and supplies in the event of a war. On May 5, 1950, less than a month after Truman first reviewed NSC 68, Acheson reported Truman’s directive to Under Secretary of State Webb: “[Truman] had been discussing the matter of mobilization legislation of a standby nature, and believed that the most desirable course was to get the legislation in its


104 Ibid, 33.

entirety into draft form and introduce it.” 106 By itself, Truman’s desire for standby mobilization capabilities was relatively inconspicuous, as measures included the stockpiling of strategic resources and streamlining of the drafting process. However, when viewed in the context of NSC 68, Truman’s directive clearly sought to correct the discrepancy in mobilization ability noted by the report. NSC 68 argued that “without superior aggregate military strength, in being readily mobilizable [sic.], a policy of ‘containment’…is no more than a policy of bluff.” 107 That is, without the ability to quickly muster the United States’ full military potential, the United States had no means of enforcing containment. Truman’s push for mobilization authority serves as an undeniable indicator of his desire to implement NSC 68 almost two months before the instigation of hostilities in Korea.

On June 25, 1950, communist North Korean forces invaded South Korea across the 38th parallel and stunned the Truman administration. While Truman began implementing specific policies of NSC 68 prior to the Korean War, he did not officially approve the report in its entirety until September of 1950. Thus it is still important to address the timing between the Korean War and Truman’s final decision.

Truman faced a difficult decision in how to respond to the unprovoked act of aggression in Korea. Historian Doug Bandow argues that “American intervention was not foreordained. The peninsula had no intrinsic value to American security…Nevertheless, Truman viewed the attack as part of the larger Soviet global threat, and made Seoul’s cause an American one.” 108 Based on Truman’s diary entry of June 30 in which he considers the Soviet Union’s true intentions behind the feint in Korea, I agree with Bandow that Truman viewed the invasion as a surrogate action on the part of the Soviet Union. 109 Influenced by the recommendations of NSC 68, Truman committed the United States to aiding the defense of South Korea. Beyond showing Truman’s belief in the recommendations of NSC 68, this decision demonstrates Truman’s firm belief in the United States’ role as a global leader and a sentinel against the spread of communism.

Throughout the first months of the conflict, Truman focused on the war effort while waiting for the cost estimates from the National Security Council regarding NSC 68. On July 28, 1950, at a meeting of the National Security Council, he stated “I am therefore concerned that, despite our preoccupation with the developments in Korea, we also attempt, as best we can to project our plans and programs ahead for the next four or five years…Recommendations based on that report [NSC 68] have, in my opinion, become more


rather than less urgent since the Korean development.”

Rather than using NSC 68 immediately to bolster defense spending in the face of a dire campaign in Korea, Truman considered the report's prescriptions independent of his war planning for the Korean conflict. Truman's reference to the continuing work on NSC 68's plans as a separate matter from the Korean War demonstrates that Truman viewed NSC 68 as the encompassing national strategy that he had desired.

The timing of Truman's official approval of NSC 68 occurred only after the successful Inchon landing on September 15th. General MacArthur orchestrated the famed amphibious assault at Inchon that turned the tides of the Korean War. As Truman biographer David McCullough notes, “by September 27 more than half the North Korean Army had been trapped in a huge pincer movement. By October 1, U.N. forces were at the 38th parallel.”

By the end of September, MacArthur's resounding victory at Inchon and subsequent rout of the North Korean Army gave Truman's administration the sense that the Korean War was all but won. On September 30th, 1950, Truman formally approved the conclusions and policies of NSC 68 as official United States strategy. He waited to officially enact the report until he had reason to believe that the Korean conflict would end shortly. This delaying action would have allowed the United States to smoothly pivot its focus from the war to implementing the prescriptions envisioned by NSC 68.

Truman's decision to enact the report revolutionized US national security policy. During the three years following NSC 68's implementation, national defense spending increased tenfold from 2.05 billion dollars in 1950, to a remarkable 20.59 billion dollars in 1953. Additionally, since 1950 and the mandates of NSC 68, the United States has maintained a large standing military even during times of relative peace, a policy never practiced by the United States before the Korean War. Most importantly, the United States carried out the recommendations of NSC 68 throughout the Cold War by opposing the spread of Communism everywhere in the world. Historian Francis Gavin notes the United States' role in overthrowing the socialist leaning leader of Iran, Mohammad Mosaddegh, as an example of a shift in the scope of containment after Truman approved NSC 68.

Implementing regime change in Iran represents a marked difference to the quiet diplomatic pressure exerted on the Soviets in the 1946 crisis.

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111 David McCullough, Truman, Kindle edition, location 15577.


involvement in Iran as well as later interventions in Vietnam and Latin America serve as examples of the changed emphasis from primarily Europe to the entire globe.

As a seminal change in the practice of US foreign relations and military strategy, Truman’s motivations for implementing NSC 68 are worth a close examination. Despite the arguments from many scholars that Truman implemented NSC 68 either as a response to domestic and economic concerns or as a response to the Korean War, I have demonstrated that Truman pursued an all-encompassing national strategy with which to oppose the Soviet Union. Truman ordered the creation of NSC 68 following the escalation of the early Cold War because he believed that NSC 68 represented a new direction for US policy that could protect the interests of the United States, thwart the expansionist aims of the Soviet Union, and promote freedom around the world.

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The Anti-Imperialist Jeremiad: William Jennings Bryan's "Flag of Empire"

Margaret Perko

Introduction

In the wake of the American Civil War, what was thenceforth to be known as the United States of America was an open wound, pulsing with the toxins of internal unrest. After merely a century of independence since its own revolution, healing was supplied rapidly, and at times hastily, by the golden age of industrialization, capitalism, and globalization. It was within this environment that the United States began to include in its political goals not only the pursuit of internal westward expansion, but of international trade and regional dominance. The question of American expansionism had become central on the ever-growing list of disagreements between the two major political parties. The difference in opinions was maintained in the intentional use of diametric language between the groups. Expansionism, as the Republicans liked to call it, was analogous to what the Democratic Party diagnosed as American imperialism. Whereas Republicans saw colonization of the Philippines as similar to the Louisiana Purchase, Democrats sensed the temptation of empire (Rendahl 63).

William Jennings Bryan, born in 1860, was a prominent public figure at the turn of the twentieth century. He holds the standing record as most defeated presidential nominee of a major political party. Three times—1896, 1900, and 1908—Bryan was nominated and three times he sat in the crowd on Inauguration Day. His failed attempt at the Presidency, however, did not change the fact that he was a fiery and charismatic spokesperson for the Democratic Party. Bryan is most renowned for his Cross of Gold speech, given upon his first nomination for the presidency in 1896. In support of bimetallism, that is, a monetary standard based both on gold and silver, Bryan climactically concludes his speech with arms allegorically extended, demanding: “You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.” Bryan had something to say about a myriad of issues, including domestic finance, international trade, and American expansionism. His political career tells the story of the enduring ideals of our democratic republic in an age of rising industrialization amongst the comforts of agrarian America.

Bryan’s political rhetoric, especially that having to do with American foreign policy, lends the modern audience a critical lens through which to reinterpret foreign policy decisions in the past, present, and future of America. Throughout his campaign for presidency in 1900, Bryan seized the opportunity to address the issue that he considered to be of “paramount importance” (Bryan, Speeches 17). The bulk of Bryan’s argument is a condemnation of Republican colonial policy. With Cuban independence having just been granted, Bryan argues that the Philippines deserved the same treatment. Americans, as noted by historian Frederick Gillet, “were dazzled by the prospects of Oriental trade and world power which were...
promised them by the leaders urging annexation” (211). Bryan’s central thesis in response to this bedazzlement was that if United States did not grant the Philippines its independence and allow Filipinos to exercise their right to self-govern, it would not only be hypocritical in light of the recent actions in Cuba, but also would discredit the revolutionary heritage upon which the United States stands.

So often in this world are great men and women remembered by the legacy they leave behind. While the successes of artists, musicians, and writers are tangible and everlasting, the impact of political rhetoric is sometimes overlooked, despite its enduring significance in modern political discourse. Speeches provoke debate and eventual policy reform. Yet often the most prescient speeches are those spoken to people who did not heed the advice of the rhetor, and suffered for it. The Republicans prevailed in the election of 1900 and the Philippines declared war on the United States. Bryan can be easily characterized as “a tribune of lost causes” because his policies went unheeded, however his anti-imperialist discourse has both historical relevance and modern application (Kazin 25). “The words of Bryan and Roosevelt appeared to be echoed during the Vietnam War and many of the statements that were made in 1900 could have been made in the 60s or even in the Bosnian War of the 1990s...Bryan's speeches, with a few exceptions, could be said today” (Rendahl 64).

**Personal Motivation**

I initially became interested in William Jennings Bryan after discovering his memoirs on a dusty bottom shelf of the library here at William Jewell College. Early in my educational career I read *Inherit the Wind*, a book that dramatizes the 1925 Scopes “Monkey” Trial, the court case that may have unfortunately tacked on the prefix “in” to the otherwise famous Bryan. Simply because of my familiarity with his name I was drawn to the yellowed pages, broken spine and embossed cloth cover of the volume. A habitual shuffle of the pages stopped abruptly as I caught sight of a pencil marking circling the following passage:

“My father, being a Baptist, had intended to send me to William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, an institution of his own denomination which he had come to hold in high esteem. If I had been two or three years older I presume he would have carried out this purpose and I would have been brought into contact with other personalities and my life might have been moulded by an entirely different chain of circumstances” (Bryan, *Memoirs* 53).

Bryan ran for president on three separate occasions and lost the election each time. The Scopes trial, although a success on the part of the prosecutor and the subject of this paper, was a social failure. “According to both popular lore and most standard histories of the trial, Bryan revealed himself as a woefully ignorant leader of small-minded fundamentalism” (Murphy 84). Yet had his life been so marred by these prescribed “failures” he would not have a school of thought named after him, nor would he be so adamantly remembered as one of the forerunners of modern political campaigning, the Great Commoner, the Godly Hero (Kazin
Bryan firmly believed that “the only barriers to a just society…were man-made; God was always on the side of common men and women” (Kazin xix).

William Jennings Bryan is one of the most prolific orators of his time, representative of everything from the Democratic platform to the common person’s troubles. Upon nomination as the Democratic candidate for President in 1900, Bryan spoke to the ongoing debate over appropriate action in Philippine Islands, acquired by the United States as part of the Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War. In his Cross of Gold speech, Bryan took advantage of his presidential nomination as a crucial moment to educate the public on the current Democratic platform, and the issue he had deemed the most consequential. Thus, the purpose of the following study is to explore William Jennings Bryan speech, Imperialism, in order to examine his anti-imperialist jeremiad and reveal his unique exclusion of pessimism.

**Literature Review**

Much ink has been spilled over the role of rhetoric in foreign policy debate. Scholars have argued about the interplay of rhetorical and non-rhetorical factors as they affected Bryan’s political success. Further critics, scholars and historians alike, have attempted to make sense of the impact of the policy suggestions that failed, especially when the prevailing policy was not one of overwhelming success.

**The Rhetoric of Imperialism**

There are numerous rhetorical criticisms and previous research that give insight into Bryan’s anti-imperialistic rhetoric. The majority of the scholarly work speaks specifically to the 1900 presidential election because, as Welch puts it, it provoked the only “formal debates” over the issue of Philippine Islands (qtd. in Rendahl 57).

Rendahl uses Burke’s dramatistic pentad to highlight the commonalities and difference between the rhetorical arguments made during the 1900 presidential race surrounding the “act” of the war in the Philippines. One of Bryan’s most overt strategies Rendahl denotes as “narrowing the scene” (58). The Philippine Islands, Bryan clarifies, were much farther from the continental United States than Cuba, thus annexing them as our own could not be described as “expansionism” simply because geography would not allow it. Bryan intentionally uses such imperialistic language in order to condemn the Republican policy’s inadequacies. Ultimately Rendahl utilizes Burke’s dramatistic pentad to conclude that Bryan’s anti-imperialist rhetoric “changed impressions” of the war in the Philippines by strategically contrasting and reframing the Republican argument into pentadic elements of his own design. While Rendahl points out that Bryan’s speech would still have some political significance if spoken today, he quoted Welch when he says that the clash of ideas in 1900 was "confrontation without a climax" (qtd. in Rendahl 58). Thus the Philippine question was not decisive in the outcome of the election (Rendahl 58).

Kimokeo-Goes, on the other hand, asserts that a combination of the “pro-expansionist Republican controlled Senate, the Republican President working to secure the territories, and a
weak Democratic presidential candidate” led to the ultimate failure of the anti-imperialist cause (Kimokeo-Goes 2). Kimokeo-Goes examines the anti-imperialist rhetoric of George Hoar, a Republican senator from Massachusetts and a contemporary of Bryan. Being a Republican, Hoar was an unlikely voice for the anti-imperialistic cause. Kimokeo-Goes argues that Hoar, at times, utilized a rhetorical style that demonstrated “different types of appeals to American and Christian values” (3). However, when he was not making an appeal corresponding to the “duty” to American values, he was highly pragmatic with his warnings and his approach to suggesting policy in the newly acquired territory. Imposing imperialist rule upon the Philippines, Hoar argued, would be unlawful and unconstitutional (Kimokeo-Goes 10). Kimokeo-Goes points out that Hoar’s arguments “were often offered as attempts to counter claims about American nationalism and the obligations it conferred” (10). Hoar, like Bryan, was fighting against the conception that expansion was the obligation of the United States. Like Bryan, he sought to redefine the Republican’s mission of expansion as duty to a mission of protection of freedom as duty.

One of the most interesting aspect of Kimokeo-Goes’ study is the acknowledgement that, despite the long-term “failure” of men like Hoar and Bryan, “there are lessons to be learned” (3). One of the more prominent lessons was that “moral appeals were not the trump card of pro-expansionists alone” (Kimokeo-Goes 3). Both Hoar and Bryan were able to fashion persuasive messages using the same “tropes of [their] opponents” (Kimokeo-Goes 3). Though whereas Hoar’s rhetoric attempted to redefine or reiterate the duties laid out by American nationalism and the Christian cause, Bryan’s sought to utilize the audience’s familiarity with both realms in order to formulate a more persuasive argument against expansion. Hoar simply “engaged” the Republican’s claims concerning nationalism, whereas Bryan used the values and duties therein to point out the hypocrisy of Republican policy (Kimokeo-Goes 22). Both men were fighting for the same team, both utilized different rhetorical techniques, and both failed to further their cause.

The American Jeremiad

While the roots of the American jeremiad are widely accepted to have been cultivated in the religious rhetoric of the Puritans, the word “jeremiad” harkens back to a much earlier concept. Jeremiah was an Old Testament Jewish prophet who would warn the exiled Jews of the impending holy wrath of God that would be upon them if they did not leave their evil ways behind. Engaging in repentance was the only way for the sinful people to avoid this horrible fate. “No prophet stressed repentance as much as Jeremiah did, and none so fervently foretold the gratuitous spiritual transformation in store for the house of Israel” (Bercovitch 7). What made Jeremiah’s message so effective was that it was not merely a condemnation of the current state of the sinful exiles; it was an attempt to persuade an entire community of people, united under a common belief system, to engage in moral and spiritual transformation.

The word “jeremiad” makes reference to the more modern rhetorical technique that harkens back to the style of the prophet Jeremiah. In his seminal work on the American Jeremiad, Bercovitch outlines the evolution of the jeremiad. The more “traditional” European
The jeremiad was “a lament over the ways of the world” (Bercovitch 7). The purpose of the Puritans’ jeremiad was to “direct an imperiled people of God toward the fulfillment of their destiny, to guide them individually toward salvation, and collectively toward the American city of God” (Bercovitch 9). In search for this godly city, Americans purposefully transcended what they perceived as “arbitrary territorial limits” and began to view westward expansion and colonization as the natural and inevitable outcome of pursuing the “American mission” (Bercovitch 11). In doing so, the American people could invest in the “patent fiction” that it was the “American mission” with all of the “emotional, spiritual, and intellectual appeal of a religious quest” (Bercovitch 11). The American puritan jeremiad has a “distinctive form” and functions to “create a climate of anxiety that helped release the restless "progressivist" energies required for the success of the venture” (Bercovitch 23).

The advent of the American Jeremiah (or the Yankee Jeremiah, as Bercovitch likes to occasionally call it) was brought about by the perceived freedom from the constraints of their Puritan ancestors as the seventeenth century turned into the eighteen century. The Puritans “identified themselves primarily in religious terms,” and what was once their “divine plan” was “shaken loose from its religious framework to become part of the belief in human progress” unto which the Yankee Jeremiahs clung. (Bercovitch 93)

“In effect they incorporated the Bible history into the American experience – they substituted a regional for a biblical past, consecrated the American present as a movement from promise to fulfillment, and translated fulfillment from its meaning within the closed system of sacred history into a metaphor for limitless secular improvement” (Bercovitch 93-4).

Thus the American jeremiad most effectively persuades the audience by using the paradoxical tension between hope and fear. The rhetorical jeremiad “posits a movement from promise to experience - from the ideal of community to the shortcomings of community life - and thence forward, with prophetic assurance, toward the resolution that incorporates (as it transforms) both the promise and the condemnation” (Bercovitch 16).

Leeman outlines the process, according to Bercovitch, by which the orators utilize the jeremiad. The orator “[condemns] the audience for their sins, [promises] God’s punishment if they did not change their erring ways, and held up hope of ultimate salvation, a brighter day to come were the audience to return by their moral actions to God’s flock” (Leeman 224). While the origins are inherently religious, Leeman also points out the evolution of the use of the jeremiad in secular circumstances. Although American imperialism was not wholly secular (some supporters of territorial occupation justified their stance as a divine calling) the jeremiad allowed Bryan to utilize the religious elements of an otherwise secular setting. Leeman reveals that the rhetor of his study was able to use the jeremiad to “deliver his message as an absolute, moral Truth” (Leeman 240). An important aspect of this moral truth is that the rhetor assumes that his audience is fully capable of absorbing this truth, despite their current or previous “sin.” “What differentiates the jeremiad from other forms of this message” Leeman clarifies is
“the nature of the sin. The jeremiadic speaker asserts that the audience originally held a morally superior position” (Leeman 225).

**Political Figures as Jeremiads**

The most relevant pieces of rhetorical criticism that analyze the use of jeremiads have examined prominent figures in American politics. Most of the politicians that employ the rhetoric of American jeremiad are men who are either aspiring to be, or currently are or have been presidents. Murphy examines the rhetoric of Senator Robert F. Kennedy as he addressed the crisis the United States faced following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. In this instance the jeremiad, Murphy contends, served as “a rhetoric of social control” in a time of crisis (Murphy 412). Standing “squarely in the jeremiad tradition,” Senator Kennedy was perceived as a radical (Murphy 412). Murphy’s study brings light to the fact that in adopting a “traditional rhetorical form of the jeremiad,” Senator Kennedy was able to address the crisis the country was facing (Murphy 402). Murphy concludes that by reframing the difficulties of the day “within the framework of the American tradition,” Kennedy was able to effectively restore balance insure that the American people would not respond and provide assurance of the “eventual triumph of the American system” (Murphy 410).

Murphy speaks explicitly to the limitations of the jeremiad and calls for future examination of jeremiadic rhetoric. “Robert Kennedy’s speaking in this situation,” Murphy writes, “however eloquent, ultimately served the purpose of the status quo” in that his message justified progress as an “appeal to the past” (Murphy 411). That is, Kennedy called for social progress by calling upon the “ideal American” to take the place of the “real American,” but did not put forward any corresponding policy that could make this transformation a reality (Murphy 411). The use of criticism of actions in order to “reaffirm basic American values” and “not to overturn them” is what Murphy sees as the greatest limitation of the American jeremiad. But I would contend that this is only a limitation if American values are so intertwined with the status quo that they become indistinguishable from that which benefits only the married, never divorced, white businessmen who easily benefit from the white supremacist, capitalistic, exceptionalist environment that America tends to be. The analyses of Kennedy and Bryan diverge here. Although they both use similar rhetorical tactics, Kennedy fails in his attempt to challenge the status quo, whereas Bryan succeeds by identifying and exposing the double standard upon which it so fragilely sits.

Another example of Bryan’s contribution to the secularization of the jeremiad aligns with the observation that the American Revolution brought with it an unwritten covenant among the American people; A covenant that was by nature secular under the doctrine of separation and church and state (Edwards 11). “It was a convention,” Edwards writes, “that did not exalt allegiance to God, but rather allegiance to secular documents like the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution” and looked upon the founding fathers as god-like figures (Edwards 11). While this language is religiously charged, its content is purely governmental. The secularism was in the politics; the religion was in the people. “From the rhetor’s perspective, the need and want to return to being a “chosen people” would unite citizens to
achieve traditional goals” (Edwards 11). The nature of these goals and the process by which to attain them is what Bryan is fleshing out in his speech against imperialism. “The jeremiad functions as a means to create a climate of anxiety so that others act to stop the calamity from recurring” (Edwards 11). And William Jennings Bryan did just that.

Bostdorff writes an excellent analysis of the “myths of mission and manifest destiny” in President Reagan’s rhetoric dealing with foreign crisis. The myth of mission started with the Puritans in their belief that we are God’s chosen people and people should look to us for a model of morality and success. This is what Edwards would call the mission of American exceptionalists to act as an exemplar of successful government. Manifest destiny, on the other hand, was an idea that emerged much later. If Bryan wanted the same fate for the Philippines that the United States granted the Cubans, the logic would follow that he considered the Philippine Islands part of America’s manifest destiny. His speech shows, however, that this is not the case.

Jones and Rowland’s study examines the atypical jeremiad embodied in Ronald Reagan’s post-presidential discourse. Reagan’s rhetoric was atypical in that it excluded the warning of inevitable disaster that is standard in the rhetorical American jeremiad. Jones and Rowland contend that Reagan was successful in spite of this exclusion because it allowed him to call upon a sense of optimism that was preferable for the audience. “No one likes to be labeled a sinner and called to reform his/her ways” (Jones and Rowland 160). Jones and Rowland mention Murphy’s comment, as referenced above, that the jeremiad has “considerable limitations” (qtd. in Jones and Rowland 160). The researchers suggest that to overcome this limitation, “Ronald Reagan enacted that generic modification in creating a Covenant-affirming Jeremiad.” The rhetor, having to make a strategic choice of a rhetorical response to an exigency, is “in no way forced to follow a generic model…but chooses to emulate the genera for some reason” (Jones and Rowland 160). In terms of Reagan’s rhetoric, like all politicians answering an exigency, he was not required to make a jeremiadic response, but rather he chose the jeremiad as a rhetorical form because it was “consistent with [his] objectives and worldview” (Jones and Rowland 160). In choosing the jeremiad and effectively transforming it into Covenant-affirming Jeremiad, Reagan was able to employ a positive overtone that is unlike the traditional jeremiad. By combining warnings with a message of optimism, Reagan was able to shift the focus away from the threat of long-term disaster and towards the affirmation of “values behind an essentially mythic view of the meaning of the nation” (Jones and Rowland 161).

Often the argument is made that Bryan was dependent on his rhetoric as a means of gaining a following. Miller characterizes Bryan as a “different type of political leader, one reliant on his own oratorical skills and power of personality to maintain a large and devoted following, holding office for only brief periods of time” (67). Furthermore, Kazin contends that “whatever he achieved depended upon the power and durability of his voice and the romantic tenure of his words” (304). Bryan’s more enduring legacy, Kazin goes on to argue, was the “new style of politics” that emerged from his rhetoric (305). Bryan’s campaign tactics, Kazin describes, were “aggressively affable,” and centered on a “go-to-the people” mentality.
I tend to agree with the assertion that Bryan’s oratory set him apart from his political opponents. This study will argue that by utilizing the religious undertones of the American Jeremiad, Bryan warns his audience that colonization endangers the national destiny of America. Thus, he reminds American that it is their moral responsibility to ensure freedom in the Philippines and in all foreign nations around the world. Moreover, Bryan does not evoke a sense of pessimism, as is standard with the more traditional jeremiads, thus performing a more persuasive rhetorical act.

Historical Context

The Spanish-American War took place in 1898 as a result of the US intervention in the Cuban War of Independence. Cuba had been a Spanish Colony since Christopher Columbus first conquered it, but America had had its eye on the island for decades. In 1859, William Seward, who later became the secretary of state under Abraham Lincoln, wrote the following of Cuba: “Every rock and every grain of sand in that island were drifted and washed out of American soil by the floods of the Mississippi” (Golay xiii). The eventual acquisition of Cuba and other Caribbean islands was seen by some as a given.

After watching the transformation of the British American colonies into the sovereign United States, Cuba too attempted revolution. In an attempt to recover its independence from Spain, Cuba employed the assistance of the United States. The United States initially publicized its entrance into the Cubans' fight for independence as an effort to liberate Cuba from the “tyranny of Spanish rule” (Weslin 39). This goes to show that the underlying purpose of engaging in war was to rid the Western Hemisphere of Spanish influence, thus paving the way for the United States to become the dominant regional force. This underlying intention provokes an interesting discussion of the true intentions of national interest that lie behind the façade of humanitarianism.

According to Bryan’s speech, when the Spanish-American War had reached its conclusion, Republican leaders began to suggest a colonial policy of which they would naturally be in charge. I use the word “naturally” because both before and after the election of 1900, the Republican Party maintained the majority in both houses of Congress as the presidency switched hands from one Republican to another. This colonial policy was to include instructions for the Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam, all of which the United States had acquired ownership of upon signing the Treaty of Paris with Spain at the conclusion of the war in 1898. That same year, as Theodore Roosevelt’s term as Governor of New York came to a close, he was contemplating what political move to make next (Goodwin 260). “From the moment the United States acquired the islands as a provision of the treaty in 1899 ending the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt had coveted the job of creating a new government in the Philippines” (Goodwin 260). With the defeat of the Spanish navy in Manila Bay, American occupation of the Philippines began (Wesling 3).

The words of Roosevelt represented the Republicans' end goal for the Philippines: to allow the country to “stand alone as a nation,” by providing a “constantly increasing measure
of self-government,” while history remembers the American entrance into the Philippines as a different means to the same end (qtd. in Goodwin 260). Republicans “drew upon a conceptualization of education as the moral imperative of American citizens, and the most effective means of managing or “rehabilitating” racialized subjects—immigrants, African Americans, Native Americans, and Filipinos alike—within the framework of middle-class Protestant Americanism” (Wesling 3). Wesling keenly points out the “contradiction between colonial despotism and national independence.” The Republicans justified “violent intervention” into the Philippines by reframing it through the “paradigm of tutelage, in which Filipinos were regarded as the beneficiaries of the civilizing effects of American political and cultural tradition” (Wesling 3).

**Imperialism: The Flag of an Empire**

William Jennings Bryan was elected as the Democratic nominee for the presidency at the 1900 Democratic National Convention held in Kansas City, Missouri. Although Bryan was not in attendance at the convention, he seized multiple opportunities in the following months to render formal messages of acceptance that doubled as artistic rhetorical advocacy against the Republican platform. One hot day in early August, Bryan gave a speech simply entitled *Imperialism* to an audience in Indianapolis that consisted primarily of Democratic delegates. However, the true audience was much wider. Speeches were heard in person, but also republished and distributed, not unlike the way conventions are televised today. Bryan’s audience, beyond the Democratic delegates, was the greater American population who “were clamoring for the return of their sons” from the war in the Philippines (Bryan, *Memoirs* 121).

The various reactions to Bryan’s speech could not have been more drastically opposed between the Republican and Democratic critics. The day after the speech was given, the *Indianapolis Press* published an article formatted as two columns, into which the Republican and Democratic reactions were split. The majority of the negative critique from the Republican politicians who were in attendance that day had more to do with the proceedings than of Bryan’s message itself. They found Bryan’s parade and rally lacked the pomp and circumstance that had been more typical of his presidential campaign four years earlier. Eli Ritter, a well-known attorney in Indianapolis, reproved Bryan for the “freedom with which [he] quoted Abraham Lincoln” and diagnosed the speech as lacking in “real merit as a discussion of the issues” (“Bryan’s Notification”). Democrats, on the other hand, called Bryan’s speech the “greatest speech ever delivered” (“Bryan’s Notification”). While the Republicans viewed Bryan’s visit to Indiana as a failed political move in a district that was sure to swing right, Governor Charles S. Thomas of Colorado acutely pointed out to the press reporters, “such meetings change few votes,” and thus that was never the intention of Bryan’s message (“Bryan’s Notification”). Bryan was attempting to dispense a message of morality in the face of the empire state of mind and, as Governor Thomas put it, “create enthusiasm for the effort” (“Bryan’s Notification”).

Bryan’s speech was met with especially heavy criticism from major conservative newspapers around the country. *The Indianapolis Journal*, on the Monday following the speech, published a number of reactions from various news publications, each of which shared the
common refrain of discontent with Bryan’s message. “There is not a point presented by Mr. Bryan,” published the Madison Courier, “that has not been riddled time and time again. He makes a vain attempt to escape from his personal responsibility for ratification of the Spanish treaty, but fails miserably” (“Speech and Meeting”). Bryan voices a response to this critique in a formal letter of acceptance, written a month after the speech was given. Knowing that he would later write this formal letter of acceptance, he includes a note that he intentionally designated “notification speech” to the “paramount issue” of imperialism because the discussion could not be delayed any longer (Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention 243).

It is important to address a critique of Bryan’s criticism of American colonialism. Although he was anti-imperialist to the core, he supported the Treaty of Paris, which was a shocking stance from the perspective of his fellow Democrats. He clearly and concisely quells discussion of this alleged hypocrisy in the beginning remarks of his speech. He believed it “better to ratify the treaty and end the war” because it was “safer to trust American people to give independence to the Filipinos than to trust the accomplishment of that purpose to diplomacy with an unfriendly nation,” by which he is referring to Spain (Bryan, Speeches 21). It is a complex argument, but it is an important one. Bryan supported the Treaty of Paris so that the United States could avoid going to war with the Spanish in the Philippine Islands. He also supported the treaty in order to force an exigency of the imperialist conversation. If the treaty had not been accepted, the Democrats and other opponents of the treaty would have had a harder time successfully contesting American imperialism because they would have been put at fault for “international complications that might have arisen before the ratification of another treaty” (Bryan, Speeches 22).

The Indianapolis Journal, in the same publication mentioned earlier, reported on the Kansas Republican Committee’s then recent canvass of the state of Kansas. Kansas was reportedly amidst a transformational political movement that was shifting the state away from its once decisive Democratic tilt. The committee interviewed farmers, mechanics, and businessmen, all of whom had “changed from Bryan to McKinley” (“Out in Kansas”). One of the most significant reactions to Bryan’s speech, and by far the most chilling, came from a Kansan farmer:

When Bryan, in 1896, declared that the success of the Republicans meant 8-cent corn, and 25-cent wheat, foreclosure of the mortgages on farms and the starvation of laboring people, I actually took some stock in his prophecies. But he has proven to be a false prophet. He was wrong in his prophecies then, why should we listen to his prophecies now? (“Out in Kansas”).

Eight thousand miles from Kansas, the Filipinos were not enthused with a colonial policy set in place by the Republican dominated U.S. government, and neither were the Democrats at home. While one Kansan farmer, and many like him, ignored what they perceived to be the “alarmist speeches” of William Jennings Bryan, they found themselves supporting policies that included the forcible spread of the Christian religion, permanent occupation by American people, and the United States as an aggressive world power (“Out of
Kansas”). On June 2, 1899, the Philippine Islands declared war on the United States of America.

Method

The process by which I will analyze William Jennings Bryan’s foreign policy rhetoric will naturally take form as a rhetorical criticism. Utilizing his speech, *Imperialism*, as the historical artifact, the following analysis will evaluate the nature of this rhetorical message and identify commonalities with previous strains of jeremiad discourse in order to contribute to the discipline of rhetorical theory.

In carrying out a rhetorical criticism, it became necessary to choose a rhetorical method as a lens through which to analyze Bryan’s speech. The rhetorical jeremiad, as referenced above, had its roots in the religious sermons of the Puritans, but it has become secularized over time. Through the latter half of the twenty-first century, and even to this day, the jeremiad is most often used in political discourse. The jeremiadic message itself takes the form of a cyclical sin-repentance-reform pattern. The rhetor first points out the perceived wrongdoings of his audience, followed by an appeal to the audience to change their erring ways in order that they ultimately reform and improve their current moral status and political policies.

Bryan partially employs the traditionally religious jeremiad by taking advantage of his audience’s familiarity with religious rhetoric. The remainder of the time Bryan uses the jeremiad in a way that is much more secularized. As a Yankee Jeremiad, Bryan felt free from any religious constraints, but still chose to use it sparingly (Bercovitch 93). Bryan’s reverence for the founding principles of the American democratic republic contributes to this secularization of the typically religious jeremiad. While Bryan’s efforts to provoke a nationalist and jingoist response from his fellow Democrats may not have brought his party success or his policy to fruition, Bryan’s rhetoric of anti-imperialism evokes a sense of optimism uncharacteristic of typical jeremiad discourse.

Murphy writes that traditional jeremiads do not question American values, but instead “urge a more stringent adherence to those values as a way of bringing “good out of evil” as a means to fulfill the prophecies of the past that assured the eventual success of America” (404). By adopting this rhetorical form of the jeremiad, Bryan’s speeches called into question new American values of expansionism, modernization, and Americanization of foreign nations.

A major part of Murphy’s analysis is the exploration of the limitations of the jeremiad. The jeremiad “cannot serve as a vehicle for social criticism” despite its ability to “unify and shape a community” (Murphy 404). This limitation is most apparent in the jeremiadic language used by the Puritan ministers, of whom Bercovitch writes: “Despite their insistent progressivism, the future they appealed to was necessarily limited, by the very prophecies they vaunted, to the ideals of the past” (179). Interestingly enough, one of the most prominent contemporary critiques of Bryan was that he was fighting for an American way of life that was being rapidly eclipsed by the modernization movement. He was old-fashioned in ways, but extraordinarily progressive in others. “His great flaw,” Kazin points out, “was to support, with a studied lack of reflection, the abusive systems of Jim Crow” (Kazin xix). This reality
admittedly makes it difficult to take seriously Bryan’s defense of human rights in other countries. But, as Kazin points out, it was a view “that was shared, until the late 1930s, by nearly every white Democrat” (Kazin xix). This does not excuse Bryan’s disposition, but it leaves the mind open to the possibilities of Bryan’s policy had he lived in a different era. Kazin retells how “Herbert Hoover once snapped that the New Deal was ‘Bryanism under new words and methods,’” which proves that bitterness need not impair one’s historical judgment” (xix).

Analysis

Throughout his Imperialism speech, one of Bryan’s main intentions was to shift the narrative away from the Republican assumption that expansion is a matter of manifest destiny. Bryan argues that when the Republic party defended their imperialist policy, they “fall back upon the assertion that it is destiny” (Speeches 47). But “destiny,” Bryan declares, “is the subterfuge of the invertebrate” who lacks the courage to oppose error and instead blindly supports it (Speeches 47). Bryan is trying to break his audience of the assumption that American duty is dictated by some obscure conception of God-given destiny. Rather, Bryan argues, the destiny of America is formed by the “hands of its own people” (Bryan, Speeches 47).

Bryan’s Imperialism Speech

Bryan began his speech with an explanation of the conflict and the reference to the Philippines issue as “the question which is declared to be of paramount importance in this campaign” (Bryan, Speeches 17). At the onset he frames the contest of 1900 as a conflict between democracy and plutocracy, that is, government by the people and government by the wealthy, respectively. He accuses the Republican party of being dominated by the desire to gain monetary wealth and points out their problematic habit of substituting the “worship of mammon for the protection of the rights of man” (Bryan, Speeches 17). While the latter sentiment becomes a theme for Bryan throughout the remainder of his speech, he is sure to tread lightly around his critique of the misuse of American capitalistic endeavors. “The Democratic Party,” Bryan clarifies, “is not making war upon the honest acquisition of wealth; it has no desire to discourage industry, economy and thrift” (Bryan, Speeches 18).

Bryan’s speech is essentially split into two parts. In the first he utilizes an emotional appeal to his audience's nationalistic side. By calling upon the words of the American founders and warning the audience of the implications of departing from adherence to traditional American values, Bryan begins to employ the rhetorical jeremiad to illustrate the “paralyzing influences of imperialism” that are already plaguing the American environment (Bryan, Speeches 25). Bryan spends a good amount of time intertwining his warnings against forcing Americanized government on the people of the Philippines with his central thesis that colonization of the Philippines reveals the problematic double standard with American foreign policy. Because the American government will never receive consent from the Filipinos to hold influence in their country, Bryan argues that the citizens of the Philippines “cannot be citizens” without in turn “endangering [American citizens]” (Bryan, Speeches 29).
About halfway through his speech, there is a shift in tone as Bryan begins to clearly outline, one by one, the reasons that have been given in support of the policy of American expansion, followed by his counterarguments and proposed solutions. After voicing his refusal to believe that expansion is the duty or the destiny of the American people and proclaiming the hypocrisy of the Republican platform, Bryan says the following: “Can it be our duty to usurp political rights which belong to others? Can it be our duty to kill those who, following the example of our forefathers, love liberty well enough to fight for it?” (Bryan, *Speeches* 35). This logical and emotional appeal is what Bryan returns to time and again.

**Reframing Manifest Destiny**

Bercovitch observes that America at the turn of the 20th century began to assume a sort of metaphorical divine purpose in its dealings with other countries. American authors began describing themselves with metaphors such as “new chosen people, city on a hill, promised land, destined progress, New Eden, American Jerusalem” (Bercovitch 92). “What was once the saint became the American patriot, the sacred errand became manifest destiny, and colonization became imperial power” (Bercovitch 92). There is a fine line, Bryan argues, between divine calling and moral responsibility. Bryan strategically reframes the conception of manifest destiny from one of selfish pursuit to that of responsibility for the collective “hope of humanity” (Bryan, *Speeches* 47). “Destiny” he proclaimed, “is the subterfuge of the invertebrate, who, lacking the courage to oppose error, seeks some plausible excuse for supporting it” (Bryan, *Speeches* 47). Whereas divine destiny leaves room for the use of force and violence, moral responsibility requires a level of justice in relationship. Bryan recognized this subtlety by his constant substitution of the word “imperialism” and all of its associated connotations for the word “colonialism.” He shifts the rhetorical conversations away from a divinely procured destiny to one of national destiny in the hands of the people. His proposed alternative to imperialism is establishing a stable government in the country in question and then giving them their unfettered independence (Bryan, *Speeches* 46).

Bryan redefines the duty of America to spread democracy as the responsibility of that country to protect our territories and act as a role model of supreme morality, thus proposing change to both the fundamental nature and the practical appearance of foreign policy in colonial territories (Bryan, *Speeches* 49). In the conclusion of his speech he observes: “Washington believed that not only the destiny of our own nation, but the destiny of the republican form of government throughout the world was entrusted to American hands” (Bryan, *Speeches* 47). Because Bryan believed that the hope of humanity was in American hands, he took it upon himself to point out that any type of destiny that American claims should always be a collective one, rather than a selfish one.

**Bryan’s Use of Religiously Charged Language**

In the same way that Bercovitch described the jeremiad to be “substituting a regional for a biblical past,” so does Bryan substitute the foundations of the Constitution and the words of the founders as metaphorically sacred texts and utterances (Bercovitch 93-4). Bryan
calls upon the words of Washington and Jefferson in order to highlight the American idea of liberal democracy. If the Republican Party proceeds to act in ways that undermine this uniquely American idea of popular government, they would be “censuring,” Bryan argues, the words of the men who built this country (Bryan, Speeches 25). To drive home the point, Bryan states that if the words of Jefferson and Washington are not convincing enough, then let the Republicans censure Lincoln, “whose Gettysburg speech will be quoted in defense of popular government when the present advocates of force and conquest are forgotten” (Bryan, Speeches 24). The words of Lincoln are everlasting. Bryan’s language here shows the rhetorical substitution of the American founders as everlasting voices of authority.

**Bryan as an American Jeremiah**

Bryan’s most explicit application of the jeremiad is pointing out the impending consequences associated with the metaphorically “sinful” imperialist policy. Protest, Bryan correctly predicts, will be a consequence of Americans permanently holding the Philippines in an act of imitation of European empires (Bryan, Speeches 23). Another example of the many consequences Bryan outlines is that if the United States “surrenders its belief in the universal application of the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence, it will lose the prestige and influence which it enjoyed among the nations” (Bryan, Speeches 26).

Bryan intentionally directs his appeal to the collective consciousness and does not appear to claim that he has the all-knowing solution. “The nation can do whatever it desires to do,” Bryan concedes, “but it cannot avoid the natural and legitimate results of its own conduct” (Bryan, Speeches 38). This statement encapsulates the tone that Bryan takes on throughout his speech. A tone that recognizes American as an influential world power, but warns the people to avoid the temptation of power. If the “the spirit which will justify the forcible annexation” is to prevail, Bryan contends, “we can expect a certain, if not rapid, growth of our military establishment” (Bryan, Imperialism 28). Bryan’s audience primarily consisted of Democratic delegates who were against the upkeep of a big military, not only because of the practical reasons of cost, but because “compulsory service” was a “constant source of irritation” and the “army is the personification of force and militarism which will inevitably change the ideals of the people and turn the thoughts of our young men from the arts of peace to the science of war” (Bryan, Speeches 28).

Whether or not Bryan personally submitted to the belief in American exceptionalism, he used the threat of the nation’s loss of admiration and political superiority as one of the central points in his jeremiad. “If this nation surrenders its belief in the universal application of the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence, it will lose the prestige and influence which it has enjoyed among the nations as an exponent of popular government” (Bryan, Speeches 26). One of Bryan’s many suggested solutions is that the United States acts as an exemplar, rather than as an interventionist. “The Filipinos” he points out, “do not need any encouragement from Americans now living. Our whole history has been an encouragement, not only to the Filipinos, but to all who are denied a voice in their own government” (Bryan, Speeches 23). Bryan asserts that the historical accomplishments of the United States could sufficiently encourage the Filipinos to demand a voice in their own government (Speeches 23).
The role of America is to act as an exemplar, rather than an intervening force in the political affairs of foreign countries.

In one of his most impassioned jeremiadic moments, Bryan points out that God did not intend for the relationships between humans to work in this way.

Will the Republicans say that inanimate earth has value but that when that earth is moulded [sic] by the divine hand and stamped with the likeness of the Creator it becomes a fixture and passes with the soil? If governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed, it is impossible to secure title to people, either by force or by purchase. (Bryan, *Speeches* 33)

Bryan is the then controversial argument that all peoples are capable of sustaining self-government. Following his logic, it is not the duty of the United States to force a false sense of self-government, but rather it is the responsibility of the American people to act as “encouragement…to all who are denied a voice in their own government” (Bryan, *Speeches* 23).
He defends his argument primarily by challenging the audience to envision a world in which the Republicans get their way and get their war. Bryan’s consistent reference to the hypocrisy of a colonial policy is the most permeating and persuasive of all the examples of Bryan’s use of jeremiadic discourse and warning of impending consequences.

**Bryan’s Use of Rhetorical Devices**

While rhetorical theory, in conjunction with past research, can lend incredible insight into Bryan’s rhetoric, it is important not to overlook his artfully and intentionally crafted messages. There are two particularly noteworthy examples that I wish to include. The first is Bryan’s use of simile within his jeremiadic message. The second is his use of the traditional rhetorical strategies of logo, pathos, and ethos.

The most versatile step in the “sin, repentance, reform” cycle of the jeremiad is the middle one. While pointing out the audience’s wrongdoing and proposing a way they can change act as straightforward introductions and conclusions of the message, the middle part of the message is where the rhetor is allowed the most rhetorical freedom. The most effective way to display this message is by pairing it with the logical and emotional appeal that is most appropriate for the audience. Bryan’s emotional appeal is abundant through the speech, but one of his most interesting usages is the way he portrays the condemnation of the pro-imperialists by use of simile. Bryan paints a portrait of a young man who has reached the stage in his life where he is able to do what he pleases. “He can disregard the teachings of his parents; he can trample upon all that he has been taught to consider sacred; he can disobey the laws of the State, the laws of society and the laws of God” (Bryan, *Speeches* 38). In the same way, Bryan argues, the young American Nation is “of the age and it can do what it pleases” (*Speeches* 38). The temptation of expansion, Bryan argues, has caused the country to begin to use “force instead of reason” (*Speeches* 38). If expansionist policy continues in the way that it has, Bryan contends, we will continue to “substitute might for right” in order to conquer weaker nations, exploit their lands and kill their people (*Speeches* 38). In the end, the young man
cannot escape the reality that the “wages of sin is death” (Speeches 38). In the same way, the American nation “cannot repeal moral law and escape the punishment that is decreed for the violation of human rights” (Speeches 38). Calling America’s actions in the Philippines a violation of human rights is a very serious accusation, and Bryan warns Americans that the punishment for such a violation is the inescapable tyranny that comes at the expense of liberty and equality. Although the Americans are becoming the oppressors, Bryan warns that the punishment for being the oppressor is just as undesirable as the fate of the oppressed.

In addition, Bryan uses the rhetorical strategies of logo, pathos, and ethos to guide his audience through his argument that the United States does not have to intervene in the Philippines. He makes it clear at the onset that the Democratic Party is not against increasing trade and expanding the free market. “The Democratic party is in favor of the expansion of trade,” Bryan contends, as longs as it is extended by “legitimate and peaceful means” (Speeches 41). In creating emotional legitimacy, Bryan pulls on the heartstrings of a country that is amidst a war. What the Democratic Party is not willing to do, he says, is “to make merchandise of human blood,” whether it is American blood or Filipino blood. Next he points out that it is “not necessary to own people in order to trade with them” (Speeches 41). It is ethically corrupt, Bryan argues, to assume that voluntary trade cannot be profitable. Finally Bryan makes a logical argument based in economic theory. “When trade is secured by force, the cost of securing and retaining it must be taken out of the profits, and the profits are never large enough to cover the expense." (Bryan Speeches 42)

Revealing the Republican Hypocrisy

Among the many ramifications of the “sinful” imperialist Republican policy was the notion that America would have more to suffer than to gain from colonizing the Philippines. “Those that would have this Nation enter upon a career of empire must consider,” Bryan challenged, “not only the effect of imperialism on the Filipinos, but they must also calculate its effects upon our own nation. We cannot repudiate the principle of self-government in the Philippines without weakening that principle here” (Bryan, Speeches 24). Bryan uses a number of logical arguments and rhetorical strategies to highlight the contradiction he perceives between the actions being taken by the American government in the Philippines and the American ideals of equality under a democratic republic. Often he defines an argument by what it is not, or points out weaknesses in the Republic platform as a direct argument as to why the Democrats platform is superior. For example, a section of Bryan’s speech goes into a series of “if...then” type statements in which he predicts the future under the actions and policies supported by the Republicans. “If it is right for the United States to hold the Philippine Islands,” a stance that Bryan adamantly opposed throughout his speech, then the Republican party must “expect the subject races to protest against such a policy and to resist the extent of their ability” (Bryan, Speeches 23). His seminal argument is that, by taking control of the underserved land, the United States will be acting upon the same imperialistic urge that they so adamantly opposed one hundred years previous.

“This is a strange doctrine” Bryan argues, “for a government which owes its very existence to the men who offered their lives as a protest against government without consent
and taxation without representation” (Bryan, *Speeches* 30). The “strange doctrine” to which Bryan is referring is the part of the Republican platform in 1900 that said “the largest measure of self-government consistent with their welfare and our duties shall be secured to them (the Filipinos) by law” (Bryan, *Speeches* 30). In making this point, he illustrates how the plans of the Republican Party are no different from what England did in the colonies in America or what Spain did in Cuba. “In a monarchy the king gives to the people what he believes to be a good government; in a republic the people secure for themselves what they believe to be a good government” (Bryan, *Speeches* 30). Bryan criticizes the Republican Party for accepting the European monarchical idea that a king “gives to the people what he believes to be a good government” (Bryan, *Speeches* 30). In treating the Filipinos in this European way, the Republican party was suggesting that it distrusted the “capacity of the people for self-government” and denied them a “voice in their own affairs” (Bryan, *Speeches* 30) and he makes it clear that the Republican Party was aware of its own hypocrisy, which is what, he argues, makes it more problematic. If the Republicans were to have made a law regarding policy in the Philippines, the law would “disclose the radical departure from history and precedent contemplated by those who control the Republican Party” (Bryan, *Speeches* 31). Overall, however, Bryan is not so much condemning the United States or the Republicans, as he is warning against the temptation of empire that is manifested as the “evil of the colonial system, no matter by what nation it is applied” (Bryan, *Speeches* 32).

**The Limitations of the Jeremiad**

Murphy is critical of the choice of jeremiadic language, especially when trying to incite social change. “The difficulty of achieving social change by relying on the precepts of the past is particularly apparent when the issue is American racism,” as was the case when Robert Kennedy gave his speech in 1968. The discussion of American expansion at the turn of the century was not without its racist undertones, as we would diagnose them today. American expansionism, not only the result of unearned destiny, was formulated on the assumed existence of the “the white-man’s burden,” that is, the idea that its was the responsibility of the civilized and modernized nations of the world to overtly instruct and guide other countries through the civilization process (Kimokeo-Goes 2). Even a Republican who later called for the continued occupation of the Philippines to end (William Howard Taft in 1904, for example) could not escape the usage of rhetoric that described the Filipinos as the “motley groups of brown people of the tropics” (Goodwin 411). Even Bryan, at times, submitted to the somewhat naïve generalizations used to articulate the differences between the American people and the people of the Philippines. In trying to expand upon the point that the Americans have no business in claiming sovereignty over islands that they would not even utilize if they wanted to, Bryan claims in his speech that Americans will never inhabit the Philippines islands, because “the white race will not live so near the equator” (Bryan, *Speeches* 28). His description on the surface seems absurd, but it illuminates what many people saw to be cultural stagnancy of race.

Murphy makes clear that the limitations of the traditional jeremiad must be examined in
future research. Despite the fact that the jeremiad often calls for social change, Murphy contends that it puts “limits on reform” by restricting the realm of change to the “confines of the American covenant” (Murphy 411). “Criticism and change served to restore and reaffirm basic American values not to overturn them” (Murphy 411). In the context of Bryan, however, it was not basic American values that needed to be overturned, it was the new and developing values that caused the Republican Party not to recognize the seizure and occupation of the Philippines as a violation of “moral law” (Bryan, Speeches 38). It is admittedly difficult to look at this time period and praise those who spoke out against imperialism in the Philippines as a “violation of human rights,” due to the widespread marginalization of what was considered to be the “inferior race” living in their own country (Bryan, Speeches 38). Tyranny abroad was not so different from tyranny at home. While we must occasionally excuse Bryan for his use of marginalizing language, in the context of the events of the early twentieth century, his speech and sentiments set the foundation upon which later appeals for social change were fought.

Overcoming the Limitations of the Jeremiad

It is important to understand the limitations of the jeremiad. While the rhetoric of the jeremiad has strengths such as the “capacity to ground critique in a covenant possessing great symbolic power that had been broken,” its greatest weakness is that its tone is most often based in negativity. Negativity, Jones and Rowland content, “may lead to the rejection of the message and the messenger” (159). In Jones and Rowland’s study, they identified how Reagan modified the jeremiad by combining “warnings with an optimistic celebration of American exceptionalism” (Jones and Rowland 159). Although Bryan’s message was ultimately rejected, it was embraced by many due to a similar summoning of the exceptionalist narrative. By altering the traditional jeremiad in order to gain credibility from a “fundamentally positive perspective,” orators like Reagan and Bryan were able to combine the warnings of the typical jeremiad with the “essential optimistic message” that would reaffirm a “commitment to basic values” (Jones and Rowland 161).

Rhetorical scholarship on the traditional jeremiad, Jones and Rowland reiterate, “focuses on three primary characteristics” (160). They are the identification of sin, the warning of the “disaster that threatens society” due to that sin, and a “call to return to the basic values in order to eliminate the sin and prevent the disaster from threatening the society” (Jones and Rowland 160). Bryan, as outlined above, clearly meets the stipulations for the more traditional take on the rhetorical method. Threatening “disaster because of sinful breaking of a covenant” is what Jones and Rowland found to be a common habit of conservatives who fear the “decline of traditional morality” (Jones and Rowland 161). Reagan and Bryan, on the other hand, were able to “[warn] society of problems, but [maintain] that the covenant...was still strong” (Jones and Rowland 161).

Bryan wished to uphold the covenant of American values not only for the people inside the United States, but for the people outside of it, as well. “Is the sunlight of full citizenship to be enjoyed by the people of the United States, and the twilight of semi-citizenship endured by
the people of Porto Rico (sic), while the thick darkness of perpetual vassalage cover the Philippines?” He has hope that his message will persuade his audience to recognize this inequality. In evoking a sense of optimistic opportunity that the Philippines and the United States could become “friendly republics,” Bryan makes reference to the relationship between the US and Mexico. The United States and Mexico, Bryan points out, “are each stronger and happier than they would have been had the former been cursed and the latter crushed by an imperialistic policy disguised as benevolent assimilation” (Bryan, *Speeches* 37).

Toward the end of the speech, Bryan points out the legitimacy and strength of the American project in the face of imperialistic temptation. It is one of the few times that Bryan switches his message to be in the first person. In so doing, he shows his personal dedication to the subject matter.

“I am not willing that this nation shall cast aside the omnipotent weapon of truth to seize again the weapons of physical warfare. I would not exchange the glory of this republic for the glory of all the empires that have risen and fallen since time began” (Bryan, *Speeches* 40).

Bryan, not unlike Reagan, makes it clear that the covenant is alive. The glory of the republic is what is at risk, and is what makes the cause worth fighting for. Bryan’s conclusion is full of hopeful and optimistic language. “No exterior force can disturb this republic, and no foreign influence should be permitted to change its course,” Bryan declares. Although he advocated adamantly against the imperialist cause, he concludes his speech with the following: “What the future has in store for this nation no one has the authority to declare, but each individual has his own idea of the nation’s mission, and he owes it to his country as well as to himself to contribute as best he may to the fulfillment of that mission” (Bryan, *Speeches* 48). The United States of America, Bryan argued, was “gradually but surely becoming the supreme moral factor” despite the internal debate on foreign policy. America’s path has been just, and Bryan calls upon its citizens to contribute to the nation that “gives light and inspiration to those who sit in darkness” (Bryan, *Speeches* 49).

**Conclusion**

After analyzing Bryan’s *Imperialism* speech, it can be concluded that Bryan utilizes the religious overtones of the traditional rhetorical jeremiad in order to reveal the double standard that American expansionism had created. While both parties utilized the argument of destiny and duty to back their view of expansion, Bryan’s refra mes American duty in a way that is more properly suited for the future success of the country. In addition, Bryan’s rhetorical strategies evoked a sense of optimism that was uncharacteristic of the traditional jeremiad, and yet allowed him to use American values as the basis of his persuasion, rather than the subject of his critique. Whereas the traditional American jeremiad warns against breaking the covenant, Bryan’s message was hopeful in that he believed strongly that the covenant still existed.

To echo the words of Rendahl, “Bryan's speeches, with a few exceptions, could be said
today” (64). To this day, America plays a unique role in international politics. Whereas Bryan may have had a more isolationist policy in mind for America, many of his warnings and policy proposals would have supported the modern theory of liberal institutionalism, that is, that America should be part of international institutions that uphold security and the ideals of democracy around the world, without always directly involving itself in developing nations. Spreading the ideals of Liberal Democracy around the world is still a priority of American foreign policy. America’s role, according to Bryan, is to “hasten the coming of a universal brotherhood” and to “gradually but surely become the supreme moral factor in the world’s progress and the accepted arbiter of the world’s disputes” (Speeches 48).

This research ultimately supported the thesis that Bryan offered a unique American jeremiad by utilizing a more positive tone. Further study, however, can further analyze the various delineations of the American jeremiad as a rhetorical method. Specifically pertaining to the rhetoric of William Jennings Bryan, further research can be done in exploration of his use of the jeremiad in provoking social change. Bryan had big ideas that were not always analogous to the progressive opinion. His views on domestic issues such as women’s rights and evolution may too be appropriately analyzed by using the jeremiad.

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Herbert Hoover and Harry Truman: An Unexpected Alliance

Maria Topi

There are few obvious connections between the discredited former Republican president Herbert Hoover and Harry Truman, the career Democrat and inheritor of Franklin Roosevelt's interventionist New Deal legacy. Following his failed bid for re-election in 1932, Hoover is generally regarded as fading into the shadowy background of American political history. He is remembered primarily for his inadequate efforts to address the increasingly precarious state of the national economy during his presidency, from 1929-1933. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the specter of the thirty-first president was continually invoked by members of the Democratic Party, including Harry Truman, against their Republican opposition, as a reminder of the horrors of the Great Depression.

Historians often relegate the relationship between Hoover and Truman to a subordinate, tangential role in their works. In reality, though they often found themselves supporting opposing policies, the statesmen significantly impacted each others' professional and personal lives. Beginning just after Truman's ascension to the Presidency in 1945, Hoover's advice, especially on post-war relief efforts and executive reorganization, was given the honest consideration Truman believed was due to an ex-President. For his part, Truman actually helped repair Hoover's shattered reputation. Following Truman's retirement in 1953, the only two living former presidents developed a close friendship, together transitioning from the demands of public service to the calm of private citizenship. Their collaboration also positively impacted nations and individuals worldwide, as well as American citizens. Together, Truman and Hoover helped prevent mass starvation across the globe in the wake of WWII's devastation. Their largely successful efforts at governmental reorganization also allowed the executive branch to function more efficiently and effectively. The reverberations of these beneficial actions continue to be felt across the globe.

On April 12, 1945, following the death of the mythic Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman was inaugurated as the nation's thirty-third president. Hours later, Hoover, from his residence in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City, sent the new president a message of congratulations and encouragement. The simple telegram said only, "all Americans will wish you strength for your gigantic task. You have the right to call for any service in aid of the country." This vague communication was actually Hoover's offer of personal assistance to Truman. After years in the political wilderness, excluded by Roosevelt, Hoover was eager to establish a positive rapport with Truman. He was also eager to re-enter the political sphere and to assist his government at a time of crisis, when the untested Truman was called upon to

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lead the country toward victory against Japan and plan for the U.S.'s role in the post-war world.²

Though under no obligation to seek his predecessor's advice, Truman soon arranged first for his advisor Bernard Baruch, and then Secretary of War Henry Stimson, to meet individually with the former president to obtain Hoover's recommendations. Stimson urged Truman to contact Hoover about the "chaotic situation in central Europe and the methods of dealing with... famine and pestilence," to which Truman happily agreed, saying he had already been considering consulting Hoover.³ On May 17, Stimson asked Hoover to visit the White House to converse with him on the European post-war situation. However, Hoover, who had been continually excluded and slandered by numerous Democratic politicians, remained deeply suspicious of Truman's motives. Offended that Truman had not spoken with him directly, Hoover insisted that, if the president truly sought his guidance, he should send an invitation himself. He explained that, though he would not "ride on the high horse of my pride but that if the President valued my advice at all that I at least merited an invitation from the President to see him."⁴ Hoover did not want to be seen as desperately seeking the new president's approval and, always wary of further harm to his reputation, wanted to avoid inserting himself where he was not honestly wanted.⁵

In response to Hoover's insistence, on May 24, 1945, Truman scrawled a quick response to the former president in his characteristically warm, informal style. Addressing the man he had never met as "My dear Mr. President," Truman formally invited Hoover to the White House to discuss the "European food situation" and to "become acquainted" with each other.⁶ This congenial, understated communication represented a major shift in the White House's policy toward Hoover. After Franklin Roosevelt's victory over Hoover in the fall of 1932, Hoover, whose presidency was unjustly, but popularly, viewed as the cause of the Great Depression, was shunned by the Roosevelt administration. In the wake of Pearl Harbor, Hoover had indicated his eagerness to serve the nation, presumably through organizing a home front food conservation campaign as he had during the First World War. Ever the calculating politician, FDR recognized the controversy that could arise from employing the discredited president. Roosevelt purportedly explained the situation to his advisors, stating, "I'm not Jesus Christ. I'm not raising him from the dead."⁷ Hoover was crushed.

When Truman asked Hoover to visit him at the White House, he took a political risk, especially as an untested president whom the public--and Truman himself--expected to follow in the footsteps of his larger-than-life predecessor. Though Truman explained to


⁵ Hoover to Stimson. Memo.


visitors that he was "trying to do what he [Roosevelt] would like," Truman's resolution to end Hoover's twelve-year exclusion demonstrated his refusal to blindly follow FDR's policy. Indeed, though Stimson encouraged Truman to accept Hoover's offer of assistance, several of the President's advisors were shocked and confused when they learned that Truman had directly and openly invited Hoover to visit without first asking their opinion. Upon hearing of Truman's letter, a thoroughly-scornful Steve Early (who had been FDR's press secretary and retained his position until June, 1945,) asked whether Truman would welcome Roosevelt's Republican opponents Alf Landon and Thomas Dewey as well. Truman, displaying his spirited brand of self-confidence, replied that he might just do that.

The American public's general contempt for Hoover increased the potential liabilities to Truman. Because the Depression began during Hoover's presidency, he became the scapegoat for all of the nation's economic and social problems. Though Hoover was wrongly considered the cause of the Depression (which began only several months into his presidency,) his conservative approach to governance failed to adequately address the nation's desperate situation. He remained convinced that relief for victims of the Depression was the duty of private individuals and organizations, and that the U.S. government should remain aloof from charitable measures. His conventional advice, that Americans simply needed to maintain good spirits and confidence in the nation's recovery, along with his insistence that a superior joke or song was needed to make people "forget their troubles and the Depression" incensed the growing numbers of unemployed citizens. To many, Hoover seemed completely out of touch. Seizing upon this public distaste, Democrats used Hoover's poor reputation as a public relations and campaign tool to remind Americans of the consequences of Republican rule.

There are no recorded statements from Truman during the period of Hoover's presidency or beyond indicating that he personally blamed the thirty-first president for the economic and social turmoil of the Great Depression. Rather, Truman seems to have believed (as do the majority of modern scholars) that Hoover came into office at an inopportune moment. In a series of post-presidential interviews, Truman explained that "President Hoover was just like the rest of us.... he wanted to do exactly what he thought was right." While he did not cause the Depression, Hoover's refusal to take dramatic action potentially prolonged and worsened the U.S.'s economic trials. Truman, who had begun his political career at the bottom of the bureaucratic hierarchy, also believed many of the former President's failures were the result of his meteoric rise to power and consequent lack of political experience. As he described, "the principal cause of Mr. Hoover's trouble... was that [he] didn't know the political setup from the ground up."

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11 Wilson. 142.
12 At least, there are none that I have found in my fairly extensive study of primary documents and secondary works.
These later, conciliatory statements should not be considered an accurate reflection of Truman's feelings during the 1930s. Even without a direct comment, Truman's speeches in particular hint at his distaste for Hoover and his administration prior to being acquainted with the statesman. In a speech given during his Senate campaign in 1934, Truman not only hailed the Democratic Party generally, and Franklin Roosevelt specifically, as saviors of the common man, he also criticized the capitalist domination of government during previous Republican presidential terms.\textsuperscript{15} As this speech and others like it suggest, Truman, a staunchly-loyal, deeply-committed Democrat, harbored a degree of resentment toward previous Republican presidents, including Hoover, and accused the Republican Party generally of causing the Depression.

Truman's decision to re-integrate Hoover was partly a product of the realities of the post-war world and Truman's insecurity regarding public perception of his relative unpreparedness for the presidency. Though Roosevelt's health was in constant decline throughout his four terms, few practical actions had been taken to acquaint the Vice-President with the position itself or the state of world affairs. Following Roosevelt's death, it soon became apparent that Truman had not even been informed of the Manhattan Project and the ongoing efforts at Los Alamos to create atomic weaponry.\textsuperscript{16} When asked years later, Truman said only that "I always felt... a man who had been President of the United States could always make a contribution... because he knows more about the government than any other man."\textsuperscript{17}

Truman also valued Hoover's experience fighting famine in Europe in the aftermath of World War I and during the Great Famine of 1921.\textsuperscript{18} During the Great War, Hoover used his sizeable fortune from his successful career as a mining engineer first to aid Americans trapped in Europe at the beginning of the conflict to return to the United States. He then established Commission for Relief in Belgium, which provided food to four million civilians stranded in war zones throughout Belgium and Northern France and earned him the nickname "The Savior of Belgium."\textsuperscript{19} In 1917, he was appointed U.S. Food Administrator by President Woodrow Wilson. In this capacity, Hoover coordinated efforts to conserve and ration domestic food supplies to feed the allies, American soldiers overseas, and the American people themselves. After the armistice, Hoover directed the American Relief Administration, which worked to minimize post-conflict famine and starvation and fed 17 million people in 21 countries.\textsuperscript{20} /\textsuperscript{21}

When Truman took office in April, 1945, Europe was in a desperate position reminiscent of 1918, and the President honestly wanted "The Great Humanitarian's" advice on how best to supply Europeans with the food and medicine needed to prevent mass suffering. As the globe transitioned into the Cold War, Truman also hoped that providing aid to war-torn European nations would limit the growing influence of the Soviet Union, especially in the Eastern Europe. As he explained in a public letter on May 22, "a chaotic and

\textsuperscript{15} McCullough. 206.
\textsuperscript{16} McCullough. 355.
\textsuperscript{17} Truman. \textit{Talking with Harry.} Ed. Weber. 136.
\textsuperscript{21} "Hoover Timeline."
hungry Europe is not fertile ground in which stable, democratic and friendly governments can be reared."  

These pragmatic reasons for recalling Hoover to public service were supplemented by Truman's upbringing, personality, experiences, and moral code. Unlike Roosevelt, whose New York-based clan was among the wealthiest and most influential in the nation, Truman's modest Missouri rearing instructed him that even political foes were to be treated respectfully (provided that they were civil and deserving.) When he served as a Missouri Senator, Truman resolved to deny no one a meeting. He explained, "I can see no harm in talking to anyone--no matter what his background. In fact I think everyone has a right to be heard if you expect to get all the facts." 23 His stint in the Senate had also provided the President with valuable experience working with personal and political opponents. 24 As Truman described in post-presidency interviews, former Presidents and other national leaders were almost automatically due courtesy and recognition because of their knowledge, experience, and former positions of authority. As he explained, "I have always thought that when a man holds the office [of the president]...[he] ought to have every courtesy that can be extended to a former Chief Executive of the greatest nation in the history of the world." 25 

Further, Truman's experiences as both a Democratic Senator and as Roosevelt's Vice-President allowed him to sympathize with Hoover's situation. While serving in the Senate, Truman was continually denied access to the President, despite his fervent support of Roosevelt's New Deal program. 26 The Roosevelt administration exhibited a similar pattern of indifference and disrespect during Truman's short tenure as V.P. He was "sunk" when, rather than directly asking him to assume the position of second-in-command, FDR yelled over the telephone that, if Truman wanted to break up the Democratic Party in the 1944 election, in the middle of the war, he was free to refuse the Vice Presidency. 27 Truman was also wounded by the increasingly-ill Roosevelt's apparent refusal to prepare the V.P. for the presidency in the event of Roosevelt's death. Roosevelt and Truman met only twice prior to April, 1945, and nothing of consequence was discussed at either meeting. 28 Both Hoover and Truman felt personally and politically wronged by the great statesman, which undoubtedly played a major role in Truman's decision to rehabilitate the former president.

Hundreds of letters sent to the Truman White House prior to the President's meeting with Hoover demonstrate the controversial and divisive nature of the latter's re-integration in view of the American public. Numerous individuals and organizations urged the President to use Hoover's great experience and knowledge to prevent starvation in Europe and elsewhere. Just after Roosevelt's death, in mid- to late- April, 1945, Truman was inundated with letters like that of McKey Humphreys, a sales manager at Taunton Pearl Works in Taunton, Massachusetts, who asked, "would it not seem proper and fitting, and serve to increase your own political stature, if you were to forthwith recall into service, as an advisor, our only living

23 McCullough. 218.
26 McCullough. 230.
27 McCullough. 314.
28 McCullough. 339.
Similar pleas arrived from a rancher in Clever, Missouri; a self-identified "Jeffersonian Democrat" in Louisville, Kentucky; the Chairman of the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Nebraska; and Republican Congressman Jack Anderson. These communications represent the geographic, political, and socio-economic diversity of Hoover's advocates. A slightly smaller number expressed horror and indignation at the prospect of the former President's involvement in Truman's administration. Though the U.S.'s economy eventually flourished in the postwar period, many feared a relapse into the hardships of the Great Depression years. Hoover, as the embodiment of the Depression and the poor leadership which had brought it about, continually aroused such concerns. This mixture of anxiety and resentment is reflected in letters sent to the White House. Many of these letters date from 1946 forward, as rumors of Hoover's participation were increasingly confirmed by Truman's actions. One writer demanded, "don't you think that Hoover did enough damage after the First World War? Why dig him out of the moth balls into which the people put him in 1932?" A Los Angeles man declared it "unthinkable to incorporate a man with the very questionable record in any high office of our country." A Pennsylvania voter explained that bringing Hoover back into national politics was immoral because "46 out of 48 states put Herby in the ash can, years ago." The acrimonious, disrespectful language and tone of such letters indicate the lingering strength of anti-Hoover sentiment, even more than a decade after his tenure as president. These letters also confirm that the novice, untested President Truman indeed took a political risk when he employed the ex-president as an advisor.

Truman and Hoover met for the first time on May 28, 1945. Hoover quietly entered through the White House's front door, startling Margaret Truman, to avoid passing the room in which the reporters and journalists lounged. For approximately one hour, the two discussed global food shortages, ongoing diplomatic issues with the Russians, and plans for the post-war situation in Eastern Asia. The usually-restrained Hoover, in his element and eager to assist the President, did much of the talking and offered his apparently honest and unfiltered opinions. According to Hoover's research, in Northwestern Europe and Italy, the next ninety days, before the harvest, would prove the most desperate and crucial. He shared Truman's concerns regarding the spread of Soviet influence, and insisted that "bare subsistence meant hunger; and hunger meant Communism." He proposed the creation of an economic council comprised of representatives from Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark,
and France, which could cooperate with the Army on the conservation and distribution of vital resources, but which could be groomed to take full control of European affairs. He argued against the "mass of committees" and red tape employed by the U.S. during the war, and declared the domestic food administration "terrible." 40

While the two were unshakably cordial, each harbored serious reservations regarding the other's motivations and abilities. Hoover worried that Truman was simply being polite, and that the requested visit was intended to bolster Truman's reputation as a fair-minded, bipartisan administrator. This sentiment is again reflected in multitudinous public communications sent to the White House. For example, on May 26, 1945, even prior to the President's meeting with Hoover, a Republican couple from Los Angeles declared the prospective talk "indicates to us that you are a practical, down-to-earth statesman and [are] not afraid to do the right thing even if it does mean calling in someone not of your own party." 41 Hoover's friend and confidante Edgar Rickard recorded that, despite his reservations, his associate was clearly "elated that he at least has a chance to give advice" and possibly receive "public recognition of his experience." 42 In a note to himself from May 28, directly following his meeting with the President, Hoover concluded that Truman "was simply endeavoring to establish a feeling of good will in the country, that nothing more will come of it so far as I or my views were concerned." 43 To Rickard, Hoover later described Truman as "really dumb" and decried that the nation "ever was governed by such a mediocre type of man." 44 45

Truman's feelings following the conference are more difficult to assess. In his diary, the President simply recorded that he and former president Hoover "had a pleasant and constructive conversation on food and the general troubles of U.S. Presidents--two in particular." 46 Given his publicized distrust of the wealthy, whose "wild greed" he believed had caused the Depression, Truman likely harbored some suspicion toward Hoover, who had earned millions during his successful career as a mining engineer. 47 Despite his later statements regarding the respect due to ex-presidents because of their experience, Truman also seems to have somewhat begrudgingly believed himself duty bound to engage Hoover. Four years later, in August, 1949--well into their collaborative efforts on global food relief--Truman privately described Hoover as "a nice enough old man... but he doesn't understand

47 McCullough, 233.
what's happened in the world since McKinley."  

This comment, revealed privately to comrade David Lilienthal, is suggestive of Truman's lingering, behind-the-scenes skepticism respecting Hoover's insight.

Despite their continuing reservations, beginning in February, 1946, the statesmen collaborated on a campaign to encourage Americans to conserve food, which could then be sent to Europe and Asia in hopes of averting mass starvation. Only one month later, in March, 1946 Hoover accepted Truman's offer to head the Famine Emergency Council as honorary chairman, and began a whirlwind global tour to assess food needs. In three months, the 71-year-old traveled 50,000 miles, met with seven kings and thirty-six prime ministers, delivered twenty-four speeches, and held more than forty press conferences. Making constant calculations regarding such varied subjects as the calories in one pound of corn or the extent of the fish surplus in Scandinavia, Hoover reported an immediate world need of eleven million tons of grains and three million tons of fats. One of Hoover's primary objectives involved limiting the discrepancy between supply and demand by improving internal distribution in some areas, reducing consumption in others, substituting various cereal products for wheat and rice, and loaning food to others. With as many as half of a billion lives in the balance, Hoover urgently declared that Americans needed to eat less, so that Europeans and Asians could eat at all. He asked Americans to "imagine one of these starving women or children as an invisible guest at your table" and treat food conservation for foreign people as they would aid to neighbors.

Throughout 1946, the relationship between the President and Hoover remained distant and uncertain. On April 18, Truman sent a telegram asking Hoover to prematurely conclude his tour and return home to present eyewitness testimony about global famine conditions to the American people. Truman had heard rumors of the now 72-year-old's poor health, and wanted to ensure his wellbeing. Hoover, still unconvinced of Truman's sincerity, apparently interpreted this action as evidence of the President's lack of regard for his expertise, and staunchly refused to end his trip ahead of schedule.

After concluding the first section of his trip and returning to the U.S. on May 10, Hoover and Truman again met in person at the White House. The ex-President was frustrated when Truman dismissed Hoover's plan to ask Stalin for extra grains for Finland, Eastern Europe, and the Far East. Hoover believed that the Russians had such materials and were purposefully withholding them, perhaps to further prevent or delay recovery throughout Eastern Europe. Truman labeled the plan impractical and put it aside. Hoover, who believed

\begin{itemize}
  \item Wilson. 256.
\end{itemize}
Truman was too accommodating to the Russians, insisted that "there was only one method of treating this present group of Russians and that was with a truculent spirit. They treated us that way... Even if he were to present a gold watch, it should be presented in a truculent mood."56

After their meeting, Hoover again departed Washington for the second segment of his food survey. Whereas his last trip had taken him to war-torn Europe and Asia, this time he journeyed to South America. While in Venezuela, Hoover fell in a hotel bathtub and cracked several vertebrae. Despite this serious injury, Hoover continued with his mission. The former president's major aim was to convince Argentine dictator Juan Peron to release desperately-needed food supplies, despite the acrimonious relationship between the Argentinean and United States governments. Hoover described his discouragement when he was placed at the 196th position out of 216 guests at an Argentinean official dinner. However, he confided in his diary that he "was resolved however to eat even Argentine dirt if I could get the 1,600,000 tons [of food.]"57 Astonishingly, his persistence yielded fruitful results, and the U.S. was able to obtain the requisite foodstuffs, which could then be distributed to areas of great need. 58

It is difficult to uncover concrete statistics regarding the number of individuals aided by the Truman-Hoover food relief partnership, partly because of the wide scope of United States' relief efforts and the chaos of the postwar years. Noted presidential scholar and Hoover biographer Joan Hoff Wilson determined that Hoover's recommendations reduced the gap between supply and demand across the globe from 11 to 3.6 million tons of food. 59 Truman considered the first food trip so successful that he sent Hoover back to Europe, to tour the especially-war-torn nations of Germany and Austria, in early 1947.60

The favorable statements of military and civilian officials further demonstrate the importance of the statesmen's alliance to the postwar world. Without Hoover's expert recommendation that food be supplied immediately to Western Europe, and especially to West Germany, and without Truman's willingness to carry out those suggestions, General Lucius D. Clay, who was then deputy military governor of the U.S. zone in Germany, asserted that "we would have had mass starvation."61 General William H. Draper, who was Chief of the Economics Division of the Control Council for Germany during 1945 and 1946, also credited Hoover and Truman for their major contributions to food relief, which "prevent[ed] most of the threatened starvation" in Europe.62

59 Wilson. 256-257.
Gifts sent to Truman by various foreign diplomats, as thanks for the U.S.'s commitment to ensuring some degree of global food security, also demonstrate the positive effects of the presidents' collaboration. Though many leaders focused on the U.S.'s efforts in Europe, the crisis was truly global in scale, and these presents reflect the wide-ranging scope of the nation's food efforts. Now housed in the Truman Presidential Library, one such offering consists of a mahogany table and dining room set from Elpidio Quirino, the former President of the Philippines, in recognition for the U.S.'s help in feeding the Filippino people after they had been ravaged by the Japanese. The collection also includes a rare picture of the Grand Dalai Lama of Tibet in his Shawl of State because, as Truman plainly stated, "we fed them." The President insisted that, while deeply appreciated, gratitude from his foreign counterparts was unnecessary, as "we were just doing what was right."64

Truman continually and consistently praised the former president's efforts, and insisted Hoover's work was crucial to accomplishing the nation's global food security goals. Clearly full of appreciation, Truman claimed "President Hoover... was indispensable.... I don't think anyone could have done the job as well as he did."65 In a letter to Hoover in December, 1946, Truman applauded his new colleague for his "magnificent job" fighting the food crisis and assured Hoover that he was "more than happy to have your views on any subject which you care to write me about."66 As this last statement implies, even as the two presidents' successful cooperation came to an end, Truman anticipated a continuation of their professional relationship.

The positive results of the presidents' collaborative efforts spilled over into their budding, still uncertain friendship. In 1947, Truman successfully campaigned Congress to reinstate Hoover's name to the monolithic dam on the Colorado River. Construction began in 1931, two years into Hoover's presidential term, and the then Secretary of the Interior, Ray Lyman Wilbur, dubbed the project the Hoover Dam in the President's honor.67 However, following Hoover's 1932 defeat, and given his extremely poor reputation, especially among Democrats, Roosevelt's Interior Secretary, Harold Ickes, officially christened it the Boulder Dam. Similarly, in his 1935 speech commemorating the completion of the dam, Roosevelt eliminated all references to his predecessor, referring to the dam only by its new name.68 Following his previously established trend of rehabilitating Hoover and righting what he viewed as FDR's wrongs, on April 30, 1947, Truman approved a measure to reinstate his colleague's title to the monument to America's industriousness and engineering capacity.69 Today, the name is so ubiquitous that few Americans are aware that the dam was ever referred to by a name other than "Hoover." Truman's relatively small act has helped to ensure

Hoover's legacy as the "Great Engineer," rather than simply the harbinger of the Great Depression.

Hoover's deep gratitude to Truman is evidenced in a speech he delivered at the annual Gridiron Club Dinner on May 10, 1947. The Gridiron Club is one of the nation's most prestigious journalistic organizations, and because of his contentious relationship with the press, it was the first time Hoover had attended the dinner since just after his loss to Roosevelt in 1932. Throughout his unexpectedly sarcastic, witty, and humorous rhetoric, the staunchly conservative ex-President interwove frequent praises for his Democratic colleague. Hoover thanked Truman for his "high service" to the country. He declared that, throughout the many international crises which necessarily inundate the Oval Office, Truman "stood firm with his feet rooted in the American soil." Truman, who was in attendance, was so moved that he reached for Hoover's program and scrawled "with esteem and keen appreciation to a great man." While some may have expected the presidents' collaborative efforts to end with the conclusion of much of the world's desperate food situation, Truman chose to continue to use Hoover in an advisory capacity. As the world's war wounds continued to heal, Truman's gaze increasingly turned toward domestic issues, including the reorganization of the executive branch. Despite their radically different views on the proper scope of governmental authority—Truman continually supported the expansive efforts of FDR under the New Deal, while Hoover remained committed to a small, limited bureaucracy—the two discovered that they shared an interest in bureaucratic restructuring. Since the 1920s, when he served as a judge in his native Missouri, Truman had continually worked for administrative reform to increase efficiency and save taxpayer money. He had also supported FDR's reorganization efforts as a Senator. Hoover had been the first president to ask for the congressional authority to restructure the federal government, subject only to legislative veto, though little came of his request.

The Federal government had grown at an unprecedented rate between Hoover's and Truman's presidencies. During the rapid, somewhat haphazard progress made by Roosevelt, the size of the bureaucracy had risen from 600,000 employees in 550 agencies and bureaus to two million workers in over 1500 agencies. Since the 1920s, the federal government's annual expenditures had increased from approximately 3.6 billion dollars to over 42 billion dollars. Such unanticipated growth alarmed many conservative Americans, prompting some—recalling turn-of-the-century anti-trust rhetoric—to label the enlarged government a "menacing octopus." Though Truman admired the majority of his predecessor's accomplishments, he believed Roosevelt was a poor administrator, and he could improve upon the framework set

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up under the former President. With this in mind, in his first special address to Congress in May, 1945, Truman asked for renewed authority to overhaul the federal bureaucracy.

Truman was encouraged to attempt reorganization because of the Reorganization Act of 1945, which granted the President the authority to submit plans for reform that would take immediate effect unless vetoed by both houses of Congress within sixty days. Several of the President's plans, crafted in his first term, were ultimately rejected. Truman's reform efforts were aimed at increased efficiency, while Republicans' primary goal was to decrease expenditures, which had swelled with the increased size of the executive branch during the New Deal and the WWII. Senator Robert Taft's Republican Congressional faction saw reorganization as an opportunity to begin dismantling the remaining infrastructure of the New Deal. They believed that the Democratic Party's losses in 1946, combined with the general assumption, by 1947, that Truman was unlikely to win re-election, justified such efforts. Taft and his allies organized a Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, which was officially established in 1947 by the Republican-dominated Eightieth Congress.

Both the Republicans and Democrats wanted Hoover to head the commission, though liberal Democrats remained skeptical of his motives. In spite of former New Dealers' opposition, Truman pushed for the man who had proven himself so useful during the previous years' food emergencies. Hoover seemed the ideal candidate for a number of reasons. He had substantial familiarity with the machinations of the executive branch and the relations between Congress and the Chief Executive. Further, he had close ties with Republicans in Congress and good relations with the Democratic White House, a rare combination. The President was allowed to make appointments to the commission, and on July 17, 1946, Hoover accepted Truman's proposition and, following a vote of the commission's members during its first session (which was largely a formality, given the President's authority and Hoover's bipartisan appeal,) became chairman of what would become popularly known as the Hoover Commission.

The twelve-man committee was dominated by conservatives. Though the half of its members were Democrats, and Truman himself appointed four members including his close allies Dean Acheson, the soon-to-be Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, even the majority of the Democrats were relatively conservative and generally opposed to Truman. Hoover, reflecting the hopes of the majority, intended to scale back New Deal administrations and legislation. The chairman and his allies also wanted to challenge public power programs, privatize government activities, oppose Truman's health insurance plan, and imbue the executive branch with a pro-business slant.
In a statement to the press on the day of the commission's inaugural session, Hoover revealed the complexities of the project and hinted at the massive task ahead of himself and his colleagues. He described it as "the most formidable attempt yet made for independent review and advice on the business methods of the Executive branch of the Federal Government." The group would be forced to cooperate--and contend--with the President, the House of Representatives, the Senate, and both political parties. Despite Hoover's belief in the Republican plan to dismantle the New Deal, his unique connections with Truman and the Democratic White House gave the chairman an ultimately crucial understanding of his opposition's aims. Indeed, following Truman's unexpected victory in the 1948 election, Hoover tailored the majority of the Commission's recommendations to align more closely with the President's objectives. Rather than debating the existence of agencies and bureaus, the committee would focus on increasing efficiency and decreasing waste.

In a letter to Hoover on November 12, 1948, the newly-reelected President attempted to reassure his skeptical colleague of his support for the Commission and its recommendations. Despite their previous collaboration, Hoover continued to fear that, as a Republican, Truman and his allies would attempt to block his suggestions. This was especially prevalent in Hoover's mind following Truman's harsh remarks about the ex-President in campaign speeches, which prompted Hoover's renewed distrust for the President. Though Truman campaigned against Republican candidate Thomas Dewey, much of the incumbent's rhetoric targeted the Republican Party generally, and reminded voters of its reputation as the party of the Great Depression. As the unofficial symbol of the economic turmoil of the 1930s, the thirty-first president's presence was continually invoked in an attempt to convince constituents that only the Democratic Party truly supported their interests and wellbeing.

During an address in Raleigh, North Carolina, on October 19, 1948, Truman excoriated Hoover and the Republicans while refraining from criticizing Dewey by name. Truman declared he was glad to see the area's farmers prosper again after the "Republican depression." He remarked at the lack of "Hoover carts," or "the remains of an old tin lizzie [slang term for a Ford Model T] being pulled by a mule because you couldn't afford to buy a new car or gas for the old one." The President further tarnished his predecessor's reputation by associating him with the troublesome 80th Congress and stating that the Republican Party wished to repeat Hoover's actions by allying the Federal Government with "powerful men and greedy Wall Street interests." On another occasion, Truman declared that Hoover was "one engineer who really did a job of running things backward" and that he had "backed the train all the way into the waiting room and brought us to panic, depression, and despair." Truman attempted to devalue his campaign statements, explaining to Hoover that the Raleigh

address was "a damned canned speech" released to the press before he was aware of its content. Hoover remained unconvinced.88

Such comments led Hoover to view Truman as a split personality. One day he was an open-minded, truly devoted public servant, and the next he was a Pendergast-style politician willing to do or say anything to garner votes.89 To Edgar Rickard, Hoover confided his frustrations with Truman's appointees to the reorganization committee, who he claimed were intent on excluding Hoover's recommendations from the Commission's final report. Partly because of Truman's acerbic comments about himself and his administration, Hoover predicted the Commission would bring few results, and Rickard noted his friend's agitated and depressed state.90

Despite their continued disagreements and Hoover's waxing suspicions about Truman, the two presidents continued to cooperate on executive reorganization. Truman and Hoover found they agreed on multiple proposals, including those that would allow the president to make executive changes, remove quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial functions from the executive branch, unify public works under one agency, and consolidate all existing transportation agencies under the commerce department.91 With Republican dreams of pre-Roosevelt organization dashed by Truman's victory, Hoover increasingly moderated between the Commission's liberal and conservative forces, producing a moderate program that was generally amenable to most within Congress. Hoover recognized that working with Truman, rather than staunchly advocating a rollback of the New Deal against the President's wishes, would allow the Commission the greatest possible chance of success.92

The Hoover Commission ultimately submitted more than 18 reports to Congress detailing 277 specific recommendations. Underlying these suggestions were several key principals, including: the president should be a true Chief of Administration, federal activities should be administratively decentralized to encourage efficiency, and that the President needs the legal mechanisms to act as manager of the executive branch. The Hoover Commission made detailed studies of the departments reporting to the President and advised their consolidation from 65 to approximately 22 agencies. It suggested the destruction of unused government records which occupied the space of about three Pentagon buildings. Many of the committee's recommendations sought to decrease expenditures, and included new manners of budget keeping. The commission suggested the creation of an Office of Accountant General, under the Treasury Department, to prescribe and regulate accounting measures. This, in turn, would ensure the availability of accurate, timely information to the President, Congress, and the American public. Perhaps the most consequential proposal was the creation of a General Services Administration, attached to the Executive Office, which would limit waste by overseeing storage, property acquisition and inspection, federal construction, etc.93

91 Wilson. 225.
92 Pemberton. "Truman and the Hoover Commission."
93 Lederle. 96-97.
Ultimately, Congress adopted over 70% of the Commission's final recommendations. This unusually high success rate was due, in large part, to the cooperation between Truman and Hoover. Hoover's support, given the respect he had among conservative Republican legislators, enabled Truman to push through Congress the most extensive reorganization program in U.S. history. Since 1949, the reorganization measures, first proposed by the Hoover Commission, have saved the government perhaps trillions of dollars. In 1961, Robert McNamara thanked Hoover for saving the Pentagon billions. Beyond monetary savings, reorganization helped shape the modern Presidency and Executive branch to better handle the demands of the postwar world. Further, in recommending increased executive authority, Hoover helped convince Republicans to back a stronger presidency.

Throughout the remaining years of Truman's presidency, the statesmen's working relationship waned. In late November, 1950, after the passage of much of the Hoover Commission's proposals, Truman attempted to further extend their partnership when he asked Hoover to chair a bipartisan commission to investigate claims of Communist infiltration of the State Department. Hoover was a known anti-Communist, as is evidenced by a number of his speeches during the period. In 1952, two years after Truman's proposal, in an address to the Republican National Congress, Hoover declared that, "nurtured by policies participated in by our government and by Communists in the highest echelons of our Washington Administration, the Kremlin now cracks its whip over a horde of 800 million people." He further decried the "American and British traitors" whom he believed had "given them [the Soviets] the bomb."

Given his publicly-professed opinion that the American government harbored Communist spies, Truman's request seems perfectly placed. However, Hoover declined to chair the committee and implied that he was uncomfortable with such an investigation. He responded that it was unlikely that any "card-carrying communists" were employed by the government. If such suspicious were grounded in fact, it was the duty of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to look into the issue, not a presidentially-appointed committee. Hoover also explained that, given the level of anti-Communist hysteria, an informal committee was unlikely to satisfy the public or Congress. Hoover had also previously declined to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee hearing in 1947, stating that he had no special knowledge. Despite Hoover's public statements, his refusal to participate in McCarthy-era communist witch hunts suggests his possible disapproval of such activities, which would align more closely with Truman's personal beliefs. Truman continued without...
Hoover, and established the largely unsuccessful Commission on Internal Security and Individual Rights in January, 1951, with naval hero Chester Nimitz as chairman.  

Whatever his reasons for declining, Hoover's refusal to chair the anti-Communist committee represented a virtual end to his professional association with Truman. However, the two continued to communicate privately and found themselves continually opposing sides in public debates. In 1950, Hoover touched off what became known as the "Great Debate" on U.S. foreign policy. On December 20, 1950, Hoover took to the airwaves to oppose Truman's plan to send four divisions of U.S. soldiers to assist the NATO in its collective security efforts. Hoover asserted that non-Communist forces could never prevail in Korea or in a land war against Russia, and that nuclear war was unthinkable now that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union had the atomic bomb. He argued that the U.S. should build up its air and naval forces to protect the Western Hemisphere, as it alone stood as preserver of Western civilization. European nations, in turn, should assume responsibility for, and control of, their own defense. Reducing international commitments would, in turn, allow the nation to balance its budget, combat inflation, and feed the world's hungry.

Truman was incensed by the former President's "Fortress America" speech, and, in a press conference on December 28, insisted Hoover's recommendations were "nothing else" but isolationist. Though he faced increased opposition to the nation's foreign policy, especially its military commitments, because of the deteriorating situation in Korea, the President reasserted that "the country is not going back to isolationism... you can be sure of that." Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson believed that Hoover's speech promoted retreating from the enemy, which could have disastrous consequences for global freedom. Truman and Hoover also clashed over the firing of the lauded military commander General Douglas MacArthur. The President relieved MacArthur of his duties on April 11, 1951, after the General issued unauthorized statements regarding the U.S.'s Korean policy. Hoover, who, unlike his colleague, shared the majority of Americans' deep regard for the General, quickly telephoned one of MacArthur's aides and encouraged the MacArthurs to rush back to the U.S. before his reputation could be sullied by his enemies. This advice led MacArthur and his family to abandon their original plan to travel by boat and instead return via airplane. Hoover then helped arrange a gigantic homecoming celebration for MacArthur upon his arrival in San Francisco, lobbied Truman to allow MacArthur to deliver a farewell speech before a joint session of Congress, and even attempted to write parts of the General's speech (which were ultimately rejected.}

Truman left office in 1953, returning to Independence, Missouri. Hoover remained in public service until 1955, after the submission of the final report of the Second Hoover Commission, which was established by Congress in 1953 under the Eisenhower
administration. Hoover initially hoped that the return of the Republican Party to the Executive office would allow him to push measures limiting governmental authority and rolling back the New Deal through Congress. However, political circumstances, Eisenhower's ambivalence toward Hoover and his recommendations, along with Eisenhower's failure to secure adequate support for the committee's plans within Congress, combined to make the Second Hoover Commission significantly less successful than the First. While over 70% of the First Hoover Commission's proposals were adopted, approximately one-third of the Second Commission's recommendations became law, much to its leader's frustration.\footnote{Smith. "Introduction," \textit{Hoover and Truman: A Documentary History.}} Eisenhower's relative apathy toward Hoover--a member of his own Republican Party--serves to further highlight the unprecedented nature of Truman's response to the former president, especially as a career Democrat and follower of FDR.

After both leaders mostly retired, their always contentious alliance grew into a true friendship. As the only two living former United States presidents, Hoover and Truman understood each other's experiences and hardships as no one else could. Both had faced severe public criticism during their presidencies. For instance, each had been booed when throwing out the first ball at baseball games while in office (Hoover in 1931 and Truman in 1951.)\footnote{McCullough. 848.} Beginning in the mid-1950s, until Hoover's death in 1964, the two elderly statesmen frequently exchanged letters and telegrams, marking occasions like birthdays and holidays, sent each other books, updated each other on their health, and met several times in person to reminisce and discuss current affairs.\footnote{Papers of Harry S. Truman: Post-Presidential Papers, Boxes 487 and 23. Truman Library. Accessed April 6, 2016.} The two also attended the opening of each other's Presidential Libraries as guests of honor. In his short address to the crowd at the dedication of the Hoover library in West Branch, Iowa, in 1962, Truman declared that "I feel sure that I am one of his [Hoover's] closest friends, and that's the reason I am here."\footnote{Smith. "Introduction," \textit{Hoover and Truman: A Documentary History.}} In March, 1960, following an personal visit, the eighty-six-year-old Hoover wrote Truman that their conversation was "my intellectual stimulant of the month."\footnote{Herbert Hoover to Harry S. Truman. Letter. March 6, 1960. Papers of Harry S. Truman: Post-Presidential Papers, Box 23. Truman Library. Accessed April 6, 2016.}

The lingering respect for the former presidents' collaborative accomplishments, especially on food matters, is reflected in President John F. Kennedy's invitation to Hoover and Truman to act as joint Honorary Chairmen to the American Food-for-Peace Council. The Office of Food for Peace was established in July 1954, under the Eisenhower administration, to reduce hunger and malnutrition across the globe and to monitor food insecurity, especially during periods of conflict or natural disaster.\footnote{"Office of Food for Peace," USAID website. Accessed May 15, 2016.} In April, 1961, George McGovern, Director of Food for Peace and assistant to JFK, extended the President's offer to Hoover, who then contacted Truman.\footnote{Herbert Hoover to Harry S. Truman. Letter. April 25, 1961. Papers of Harry S. Truman: Post-Presidential Files. Truman Library Website. \textit{Hoover and Truman: a presidential friendship. A joint project of the Truman and Hoover Presidential Libraries.} Accessed May 15, 2016.} Both men ultimately agreed to give advice upon request, but declined the invitation to sit upon the Council board, citing the limitations of age (Hoover and Truman were eighty-seven and seventy-seven, respectively,) and, privately, a reluctance to become
involved in organizations whose motivations and intentions were unclear. Although the offer did not result in further practical collaboration between Hoover and Truman, the offer implies the continued esteem with which their relationship and efforts to resolve the postwar food crises were held.

Throughout their later years, both Hoover and Truman grew to respect each other's accomplishments and personal character as never before. The private insults of previous decades shifted into public compliments. The 1964 autobiography of Paul C. Smith, the longtime editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, included a quote from Hoover disclosing the president's belief that Truman would go down in history as "one of the really great presidents." Truman explained on several occasions that Hoover's "administrative ability...and humanitarian sensibilities were greatly responsible for sparing us world famine after both great wars," and that he would "never forget" all that Hoover had done for the world.

The height of their amicable feelings came in the years prior to Hoover's passing in 1964. In December, 1962, Hoover wrote Truman, thanking him for his collaboration and friendship since he took office in 1945. He added that "yours has been a friendship which has reached deeper into my life than you know." Hoover summarized his frequent ostracization and exclusion from governmental affairs during FDR's presidency, and highlighted the differences between such treatment and the respect he was shown by Truman. "When you came to the White House within a month you opened the door to me to the only profession I knew, public service, and you undid some disgraceful action that had been taken in the prior years. For all of this and your friendship, I am deeply grateful." Truman was so proud of the letter that he had it framed and placed by his desk at the Truman Library. On January 5, he responded, "you'll never know how much I appreciated your letter....In fact I was overcome, because you state the situation much better than I could. I'll quote you, "for your friendship, I am deeply grateful.'"

Such was the course of the Hoover-Truman relationship: from uncertain partners, to wary and often contentious allies, and, finally, to close friends. Though the course of the presidents' personal relationship is fascinating in itself and worthy of historical inquiry, their practical accomplishments, achieved through collaboration, are the most impressive and important aspect of the Hoover-Truman association. Their combined efforts, aimed at

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combating the food crises following WWII, prevented perhaps millions across the globe from succumbing to starvation. The two statesmen's work on governmental reorganization, throughout the late 1940s, shaped the aims and organization of the executive branch to more effectively and efficiently serve the modern president and American public. Many of the governmental institutions designed by Truman and Hoover remain crucial to effective governance to this day. For these reasons, the alliance between Presidents Hoover and Truman, which is little known and rarely discussed, is crucial to a complete and in-depth understanding of American and world history. I intend for this essay to serve as one minor step toward increasing awareness and knowledge of the presidents' cooperation, and hope that readers will recognize the significance of this unexpected and unprecedented alliance.

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