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The photo included on this cover, sourced from our own Towson University archive, depicts the library in Stephens Hall circa 1920. In the last century, TU has evolved in many ways, and the development of our educational resources is what allows us to publish a journal such as this; it is essential for us, when furthering our research, to remember TU's own history.
Towson Journal of Historical Studies is a faculty referred journal for the publication of original undergraduate work in history.

Towson Journal of Historical Studies, 2025 Edition

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Note From the Editors

We are honored to showcase the 22nd edition of the *Towson Journal of Historical Studies* to our readers. Like many editors before us, we are glad to become a part of this publishing tradition that has remained continuous since 2003. We want to thank everyone who contributed to this edition, which is unique for how the editorial committee was constituted. In previous years, the journal was run as a production of our branch of *Phi Alpha Theta History Honors Society* through student volunteers who published the journal punctually under difficult conditions. In 2023, the Department resolved that students should earn some credit for the hard work and commitment that has sustained the journal. We hereby recognize the contributions of our heroes past.

This year, the journal received an unusually high number of submissions, which we interpret to symbolize the journal's appeal among students in the College of Liberal Arts. It is also a testament to the quality of historical training that many courses have components that encourage students to conduct research and write publishable articles. It was difficult to determine which to publish among many quality and well-reviewed submissions. To all the students who gave us the privilege of reading their papers, we offer our gratitude for your continued support and interest in TJHS.

In this edition of the TJHS, we present articles on diverse themes and historical periods. Our editorial decisions were guided by our desire to offer a wide range of scholarly interests. The edition also reflects the urgency with which authors demand for women's

rights and social justice through recovering the struggles faced by women. We begin with Lillian Norbeck's discussion on the challenges women faced to their reproductive and physical health during the Great Chinese Famine. We find her article compelling for how it demonstrates that women were as usually, the unsung victims of conflicts and environmental disasters. Similarly, Emma Kawicz's analyses of the failed promises of communism in the Soviet Union to provide freedom and justice for women. Her study is valuable because she narrates women's demand for fairness from the perspectives of Soviet female authors on the challenges of everyday life under socialist rule. Ryleigh Stine demonstrates that the mistreatment of women is as ancient as it is enduring. She recovers how Rome's Vestal Virgins were manipulated as political and religious instruments and were often sacrificed upon unfair standards of sexual purity. Noah Glorioso moves us some distance from women by examining why Martin Luther promoted civil authority the church during the early age of the Reformation. Shifting to the 20th century, Anh Quynh Nguyen Do provide a comparative analysis of student protests in South Vietnam and the United States during the 1960s. Finally, Aspen Huls examines the influence of the sanitarian movement and the evolution of funeral practices.

Each of these articles reflects the high level of academic research completed by undergraduate students at Towson. We would like to thank each author for their hard work and willingness to cooperate with our editing process. We also extend our thanks to the faculty reviewers, who took the time to read these submissions and give their feedback.

Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

We are deeply grateful to our faculty advisor, Dr. Oluwatoyin Oduntan, for his guidance and support in bringing this journal to fruition. This year's editorial board, integrated with a course component, benefited from his expertise. Beyond publishing the journal, his lectures on provincial newspapers, the history of the book, and the evolution of publishing have enriched our understanding of editorial work.

We hope you enjoy these articles as it has been a pleasure to publish them.

Towson Journal of Historical Studies Co-Editors

Patrick Bors
Isabella Samuels
Dominic Carroll
Georgia Hild
Chase Jenkins
Charles Ferguson

Feature Articles

The Neglect of Women by the Soviet State

Emma Kawicz

From the Russian Revolution, Vladimir Lenin consistently advocated for the rights of women under Marxist feminist ideology. The doctrine held that women would be able to emancipate themselves from uncompensated domestic labor and be free of household slavery.[1] However, by 1954, women living in the Soviet Union still tended to all their domestic chores on top of their careers outside of the home. After decades of fostering a government intended to build a communist utopia, why had women not received proper support? A newspaper article by special correspondent E. Maximova highlights the Soviet government's lack of conviction in freeing women from domestic slavery. Her analysis of Soviet women's mistreatment provides significant details about the life of women during the Khrushchev era and the Soviet state's ignorance of women's issues.

A year after Joseph Stalin's Death, the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* reported an article relating to a conversation in the Kalinin city executive committee meeting in which members alluded to women being unable to do laundry efficiently because some houses in Kalinin were still without running water, and that there were too few buildings for laundry to get done. Pavel Ivanovich Nerobeyev, chief municipal engineer, displayed his misogynistic opinion of women and laundry by retorting that:
'So, according to you, women enjoy doing the washing when they come home from work.'
'What do you mean? They're women, aren't they? Anyway, physical labour is good for you.'
(There was a frankly cynical note in his voice)
'But, tell me, when are they to go to the cinema or to do some reading?'

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[1]"Marxist Feminism," The Free Dictionary, https://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Marxist+feminism Accessed May 19, 2024.

'Oh, they'll find time.'[2]

Maximova highlights the tone of the conversation to emphasize the cynicism of Nerobeyev's words. She suggests that he does not actually care about women's "physical labour" and does not see household laundry obligation as being a heavy workload for women. When Nerobeyev says "Oh, they'll find time," he is being dismissive of the problem at hand. Maximova offers this conversation verbatim, implicitly pointing out the way that women are spoken negatively about in official city meetings. Men like Nerobeyev expect women to perform and even enjoy their traditional roles as caretakers of the home. He implies that household duties not being work, should not distract from a full day of (real) work duties. Maximova is specifically pointing out Nerobeyev's response as an absurdity. He is an official chairman of the city's executive committee, and yet his treatment of roughly half of Kalinin's population is disparaging. Instead of looking into the problem at hand, he uses the typical excuse that consign women work as housework. This Maximova reveals, is symptomatic of government's incompetence and lack of empathy towards women. She concludes the article by calling on the Kalinin city executive committee to take note of her article and begin taking action to assist women:For it is not only a question of opening laundry and workshops, but also of changing the outlook of some of the officials in Kalinin. I am not interested in spasmodic campaigns; what is needed is that a sensitive, tactful and attentive attitude towards working mothers should become the rule in the activities of the leading officials of the city.[3]

Maximova's advocacy for change challenged the propagandist spasmodic campaigns that draw the public's attention away from long standing issues that need to be

[2]E. Maximova, "It Is Her Right," in *Soviet Youth: Some Achievements and Problems*, ed. and trans. Dorthea L. Meek (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, 1957), 221.
[3]E. Maximova, "It Is Her Right," in *Soviet Youth: Some Achievements and Problems*, ed. and trans. Dorthea L. Meek (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, 1957), 226.

addressed. Explicitly, she demanded that working women must be supported by a government. She is just one of many activists at a time in Soviet history in which women were beginning to advocate for their needs and take note of their mistreatment in their society, and one of many whistleblowers shedding light on women's rights that have been neglected by the government.

The Literaturnaya Gazeta is the oldest periodical in Russia and dates back to the 1830s. By 1954, it had secured a high reputation for journalism and for mass circulation. Articles published in this newspaper tackled topics like sociology, morals, and daily life in the Soviet Union.[4] Maximova's "It is Her Right" was published to shed light on a common issue for women, even outside of the city of Kalinin.

Other periodicals marked the 1950s as a period of Soviet women awakening to their rights. For instance, in 1954, sociopolitical magazine, Ogonek, also tackled the topic of the Soviet double standard of women's work.[5] The short story, *Fadeev on the Housewife,* describes a young mother who feels as if she has lost her freedom and connections to other people now that she has devoted herself to domesticity. In a conversation with her husband, she attempts to advocate for herself and warm him up to the idea of her starting a job:
'If we were both working we'd be able to take on a nursemaid'
(he replies and laughed at her)
'We're both working people. It's not right for us to have nursemaids.'[6]

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[4]"Literaturnaia Gazeta," The Great Russian Encyclopedia, (1979), in *The Free Dictionary*,
https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Literaturnaia+Gazeta,
accessed May 19, 2024.
[5]"Ogonek," The Great Russian Encyclopedia, (1979), in *The Free Dictionary*, 2024,
https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Ogone,
accessed May 19, 2024.
[6]Aleksandr Fadeev. "Fadeev on the Housewife" (1954), in *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History: An On-Line Archive of Primary Sources*, edited by Dorthea L Meek.

While it was expected that Soviet citizens, men and women should desire to go to work and contribute to the state, women are looked down upon if they are unable to fulfill their household and motherly obligations. Tina's husband's insistence that "it's not right" to have a nursemaid is attributed to the idea that it is shameful that his wife cannot take care of her own children. While husbands went off to work, women were expected to raise good children, with little to no outside assistance, to fit the "good mother" role. Such social obligation implied that women were left unsupported by the government in childcare. Authors like Maximova used their mediums to highlight the difficult lives of women who work evening shifts so they can quickly get home to their children at the end of the night:

For two years now Danshina has been trying unsuccessfully to get her small daughter into a crèche; and during this time she has never known a moment's peace: she might be standing at the bench, but her thoughts would be at home wondering whether everything was alright; after all the little girl had been left in the care of her six-year-old brother.[7]

A crèche is a day nursery that provides healthcare and proper mental development of children between the ages of two months and three years, before they enter the school system.[8] The fact that this woman was unable to access proper childcare for two years fully illustrates the neglect of working mothers. The state organized and provided funds for crèches, and yet Danshina was unable to access the help she needed from her government. Not only that, societal pressures worsened her options. Instead of having her child be placed in the care of a nanny or nursemaid, she instead had to make her young son watch over her child to avoid ridicule and judgment. To be a good mother, she would have to completely sacrifice her time at work to stay with her children until they were old enough to go off to school, which may have

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[7]E. Maximova, "It Is Her Right," in *Soviet Youth: Some Achievements and Problems*, ed. and trans. Dorthea L. Meek (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, 1957), 223.

[8]"Crèche," The Great Russian Encyclopedia, (1979), in *The Free Dictionary*, https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/cr%c3%a8che accessed May 19, 2024.

been impossible without outside financial support. To be a good communist, she had to continue her long working hours to support the Soviet state. This problem could be easily solved with proper funding towards crèches from the government, to pay enough staff to accept Danshina's young children. Maximova's article highlights the shortcomings of city officials and the Soviet state itself.

The political context of women's activism makes their bravery more outstanding. Maximova's article was written only a year after Stalin's death and following the repercussions of the Great Terror and the Second World War, which were still fresh in the minds of citizens. Women's rights were hardly the most conducive subject to focus on while there were still citizens starving in the streets and rapid population decline. The world war had cost the Soviet Union between 24 and 27 million lives, and the wartime birth deficit estimated losses as high as 35 million. Before the war, the population had reached 200 million and did not reach that again until 1956.[9] The Soviet state considered that women were a crucial part of its recovery program and designed politics to control and organize women toward post-war recovery. The author Benjamin M. Sutcliffe, in his book about women writers of the Soviet Union, points to how State policy … tried to promote higher ethnic Russian birthrates and stable families. To this end, Soviet culture endorsed strict gender roles, with such informal policies implemented through de facto wage discrimination, legal and administrative channels, and advice related to family and 'proper' behavior.[10]

The Soviet government considered that changing the roles and quality of life for women would be too disruptive to an already fragile society. Despite consistent avocation to promote men and women as equals in the workplace, it was

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[9]Stephen Lovell. *The Shadow of War: Russia and the USSR, 1941 to Present.* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Incorporated, 2010) 21.
[10]Benjamin M Sutcliffe, "Documenting Women's Byt during the Thaw and Stagnation: Natal'ia Baranskaia and I. Grekova," in *The Prose of Life: Russian Women Writers from Khrushchev to Putin,* (University of Wisconsin Press: 2009) 27.

clear that the state could not replicate family care provided by women who were also needed in the workplace. Therefore, the doctrines which theoretically provided for women's rights were not followed by concrete policies. For instance, since the 1920s, women's property rights had been made equal to men's, divorces and abortions were made easier to obtain, and inheritance rights were expanded past official marriages. However, there were practical implications of these doctrines which the state was ill-equipped to resolve. Orphans ran rampant through the streets, and the birth rate fell considerably. Not only did this become a societal burden, but it threatened the future of Soviet industry and the armed forces. Thus, "women once again became responsible for the everyday duties of family life … though, women were also expected to seek employment; for many, this was a necessity, since low rates of pay made it impossible to maintain a family on just one income. The result was that women were afflicted with a 'double burden' and often had to call in grandparents to help with the multiple demands on their time."[11] On paper, the Soviet government supported women's rights, but the reality is that women were an asset as free caretakers of the non-workers in Soviet society. This is true not only of the 1920s but of the 1950s when "It is Her Right" was written. The notion that women were the best caretakers of children, old people, the sick, and the disabled was deeply ingrained into societal norms.

"It Is Her Right" was published in 1954, a year into the take-over of the communist party by Nikita Khrushchev. The horrors of de-Stalinism was still fresh, as were the effects of the world war. The party was committed to de-Stalinization, but the policy was not officially announced until the 20th Congress in 1956. Maximova and other women were advocating at this crucial moment, hoping that by drawing attention to how Stalinism impacted women, they could drive the Khrushchev administration into a more effective direction for women. They anticipated how the new government's policies under Khrushchev would affect women's lives especially because the new ethos was about

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[11]Geoffrey Hosking. *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 108.

regaining stability. A section of the newspaper *Pravda* published 1957 a dedication to the Third Congress of Young Women of Kirgizia offered some hope for a new direction. The article highlighted thousands of women attending the congress where they were presented with medals of honor. "All the speakers laid particular emphasis on the need to intensify the fight against feudal-bey survivals in the attitude toward women."[12] The key word here "feudal-bey," is a synonym for the traditional patriarchy. It exemplifies that the expectancy of women to remain in domestic roles is still prevalent enough to be brought up as a topic during a congress celebrating women's prosperity in the Soviet economy and cultural development. The article noted that twenty-eight women were given the title of "Hero of Socialist Labor," and yet these heroes still needed to fight against traditional gender roles set upon them by society. This article expands Maximova's small interviews as representative of large-scale feminist activism against patriarchy which continued to be overlooked by the state.

Disappointingly, the systematic gender discrimination from the state was not only derived from past traditions. The government under Khrushchev also added new burdens onto the lives of women with the introduction of private housing. Christine Varga-Harris commentates that Khrushchev's campaign to solve the housing crisis in the Soviet Union created a moral dilemma for decoration choices in apartments. While this may seem to stray from the topic of women being overworked and neglected, the task of decorating these separate apartments in accordance with proper communist morals fell upon women. The public debate over beauty and decoration in communist doctrine reinforced that women had gendered roles specific to them only and thereby affirmed the traditional discrimination which women activists were campaigning against.

Peace and rest, and the tidiness and warmth of the homey house are a representation of the caring female hand … that "women in naturally striving to decorate a room fill it up with statuettes and vases, and cover it with carved cornices,

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[12] "Congress of Young Women of Kirgizia," *The Current Digest of the Russian Press*, January 16, 1957, 22-23.

lace bedspreads and table-napkins, not leaving an inch of free space." "Fancifulness"- implied to be a female tendency -"is the enemy of beauty and coziness."[13]

 Vargas-Harris's article highlights a new social burden that was now demanded of women who were expected to work full time, take care of her family and housework full time, and to properly decorate her home all the while maintaining proper Soviet values. The Khrushchev government pressures presented itself as an ethical and moral government. Antisocial behavior was tracked and people designated "social parasites" were despised by the public. It was considered shameful to not work to your fullest potential, and social conformity was because behavior outside of the norm could incur ostracization.[14] Such trivial matters such as decorating one's home was therefore much more than a simple inconvenience for women when one takes into account the pressures of Soviet morality, which was enforced by the state itself with an official Moral Code.[15] Societal pressures against women were not only a product of tradition, but were also from the official state regulations. Varga-Harris's article adds to the sense of distress in Maximova's critique of city officials not paying attention to the needs of women. Not only were women's needs being neglected physically through the state's lack of initiative to solve infrastructure problems, but it also culturally shifted women's workloads and expectations to become even more taxing.

Therefore, Maximova's campaign was not just for "spasmodic campaigns" from Kalinin city officials, but rather a demand to see real action taken to help working mothers who were desperately in need of change.[16] Asking

[13]Christine Varga-Harris. "Homemaking and the Aesthetic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet Home during the Khrushchev Era." *Journal of Social History* 41,, 3 (2008): 568.

[14]C Miriam Dobson. *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009) 212.

[15]Miriam Dobson, 210.

[16]E. Maximova, "It Is Her Right," 226.

for the opening of laundries in more convenient locations in the city, was only her *entre* into greater societal issues within the Soviet Union that would continue to worsen the longer it was ignored by the Soviet government. Some historians would argue that the Soviet Union under Khrushchev was a time of societal oppression for all citizens, not just women. However, looking deeper within other examinations and publications of the time reveals that the lack of interest in women's issues from the government itself creates gender-based discrimination derived from the patriarchy, expectations to start a family, and duty to manage a home's chores and decoration choices. While both men and women experienced pressure from the Soviet state, women had to balance the double standard of career work and housework delicately. They struggled to achieve the proletariat dream that the government promised them.

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China's Great Famine's Impacts on Women's Health

Lillian Norbeck

Introduction

China's Great Leap Famine, which lasted from 1959-1961, was one of the worst in Chinese history and resulted in tens of millions of deaths and births lost or postponed.[1] The horrors of the Great Leap Famine cannot be understated, with one-third of the population in Guangshan, a rural county in Xinyang region dead due to the famine. The number of dead was so overwhelming that their bodies were discarded in mass graves. Upon visiting Guangshan in 1961, the vice premier of China, Li Xiannian, wept and claimed that "after seeing such horror in Guangshan, even I am unable to control myself."[2] Though the cataclysm affected millions, women were more deeply impacted and bore different burdens than others. Wei Dengyu, a famine survivor from northern Sichuan, elucidates this reality in his account of how his wife's health suffered during the famine. "My wife was so thin that there was hardly any flesh on her body," He added that "throughout her pregnancy we had no food to give her … After she gave birth, all she got to eat was ten kilograms of rice … Not surprisingly, she barely produced enough milk to feed the baby."[3] Not only did the famine make this woman's pregnancy immeasurably more difficult, it impacted her ability to breastfeed her child, imperiling the infant's health. This account illustrates the unique challenges women faced particularly in terms of their reproductive and physical health during the famine,

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[1] Xizhe Peng, "Demographic Consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's Provinces," *Population and Development Review* 13, 4 (1987): 641.

[2] Zhou Xun, "Memories of the Famine,' in *Forgotten Voices of Mao's Great Famine, 1958-1962: An Oral History* (Yale University Press, 2013): 273.

[3] Ibid., 281.

This paper addresses how the Great Famine affected the health, specifically fertility rates, pregnancy-related illnesses, and the overall physical health of Chinese women. The famine had profound demographic consequences, especially as birthrates declined. Malnutrition contributed to pre and postnatal medical conditions, some of which threatened the mother's life. Many factors account for the famine. Some of these were environmental, but other issues stemmed from Mao's Great Leap Forward program, which aimed to rapidly increase industrial production to make China into a military and industrial power. This program was dependent on the extraction of agricultural resources from rural areas to feed the urban population and industrial workers.[4] It placed extreme pressure on rural farm workers, many of whom were women. This had consequences on reproductive health, as there were cases of pregnant women suffering miscarriages while engaging in taxing physical labor. I examine how the atrocious conditions caused by the famine also enabled the sexual abuse of women. Together, these elements demonstrate that the Great Leap Famine impacted women in ways peculiar and more severe compared to its effects on men.

Falling Birthrates and Increased Pregnancy Risks

The Great Famine's impact on women is apparent in the declining birthrate and an increase in miscarriages, stillbirths, and pregnancy-related complications. The demographic consequences of the famine were extensive: over 25 million births were lost or postponed.[5] In the years before the famine, total fertility for women aged 15-39 was 5.6 births per woman. In 1961, one of the worst years of the famine, the total fertility rate dropped to 3.06 births per woman. The severity of the food crisis contributed to a 45 percent decrease in fertility. On average, women had fewer children, and in some provinces, the total fertility rate declined even more precipitously. In Anhui and Sichuan, the average number of births per woman dropped 165 percent

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[4] Xizhe Peng, "Demographic Consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's Provinces," Population and Development Review 13, 4 (December 1, 1987): 639.

[5] Ibid., 641.

during the Great Famine.[6] Similarly, in Zhongmeng hamlet, only seventeen babies were born in 1958 compared to ninety infants born the year prior to the famine.[7] In 1962, when the food crisis began to subside, fertility rates returned to normal in all provinces except Sichuan and Liaoning, where the famine was especially catastrophic.[8] However, even if fertility rates reverted to their pre-famine state, it did not replace the lost births which would have occurred if not for the famine. The net fertility loss for all of China was about 90 percent.[9] While these statistics primarily focus on population growth, they also reflect the health of Chinese women of childbearing age. The decline in the birthrate suggests that many women, especially those in rural areas were too unhealthy to bear children. The sharply decreasing birthrate in China is partly the fallout of the Great Famine and deleterious effects on women's reproductive health.

Miscarriages and stillbirths became more prevalent during the Great Famine. An estimated 10 to 15 percent of pregnancies ended in miscarriage, though in some regions it may have been as low as 2-3 percent or as high as 30 percent.[10] It is hard to determine how prevalent miscarriages were as the statistics only include pregnancies which were medically recorded. Regardless, considering that nutrition is a major cause of fetal loss and can cause changes in a woman's hormones by limiting the amount of progesterone produced and increasing stress hormone production, we can establish the high risk on women during famine[11] Progesterone provides uterine support, while extreme stress strains the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems, which may harm the fetus or even result in

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[6] Ibid., 641.

[7] Zhou Xin, "Famine in the Communes (March—September 1 1958)," in *The Great Famine in China, 1958-1962: A Documentary History* (Yale University Press, 2012): 6.

[8] Xizhe Peng, "Demographic Consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's Provinces," Population and Development Review 13, 4 (December 1, 1987): 642.

[9] Ibid., 643.

[10] Yong Cai and Wang Feng, "Famine Social Disruption, and Involuntary Fetal Loss: Evidence from Chinese Survey Data," *Demography* 42, 2 (2005): 301.

miscarriage. As malnutrition significantly increases the chance of miscarriage, it is unsurprising that miscarriages skyrocketed during the Great Famine. In 1957, before the Great Famine, miscarriages affected an estimated 3 percent of pregnancies.[12] Nearly 5 percent of pregnancies reportedly ended in miscarriage in 1961, though the actual rate is assumed to be much higher. Official records do not include miscarriages, which usually were never reported or properly identified. Thus, it is estimated that 10 to 15 percent of Chinese women who became pregnant during the famine suffered miscarriages.

Reported stillbirths also increased during the famine. Stillbirths are easier to track than miscarriages, as many miscarriages occur in pregnancies that last less than two months and may go unrecognized or unrecorded. Though official records may not account for every stillbirth that occurred, there was a marked increase in stillbirths from 1957 to 1960. In 1957, about 1.5 percent of pregnancies resulted in stillbirths, though this number rose to nearly 2 percent by 1960. The sharp increase in miscarriages and stillbirths during the famine shows the effect of the famine on women's reproductive health. Since nutrition significantly impacts prenatal health, there is a clear link between the famine and pregnancy-related issues. In this vein, the Chongqing City People's Committee reported that pregnant women suffered from low blood pressure, low red blood counts, and malnourishment, factors which help account for the increased prevalence of miscarriages, stillbirths, and other pregnancy-related complications.[13]

In Nanzheg County, a rural area in the Shaannan mountains, reports published in the mid-to-late 1950s indicated that two women had miscarried because they were overworked. The Great Leap Forward demanded that agricultural production expand at untenable rates straining the labor force. Women in Nanzheng County recalled that "'humans are changed into cattle'" under the pressure to work the

[12] Ibid., 304-308.
[13] Zhou Xun, "Seasons of Death" in *The Great Famine in China, 1958-1962: A Documentary History*: *An Oral History* (Yale University Press, 2012): 54-58.

fields. [14] With the Great Famine, the troubles of female farmers only increased. The state requisitioned crops that villagers needed to survive, while malnutrition made farming work more arduous. For pregnant women, these challenges would have been markedly worse. For example, in Nanzheng County, two women reportedly worked so far into their pregnancies that they gave birth in the fields. Nanzheng County offers a striking example of how the famine imperiled the reproductive health of pregnant women by turning them into "'women backbone cadres'" obligated to work in the fields even when it threatened their wellbeing or their unborn. [15]

Post-Natal Complications and Childhood Struggles

The effects of the Great Famine on women's health can also be examined through the experiences of children. A report on rickets and malnutrition by the Chongqing City People's Committee in the Sichuan province reveals that birth defects were increasingly among children. The Chongqing City People's Committee reported that "owing to the famine, food supplies in the city have become scarce. Many pregnant women suffered ill health, negatively affecting the health of their babies." [16] For example, adverse prenatal conditions such as low hemochrome count and low blood pressure resulted in low birth weights." Furthermore, "about 90 percent of mothers stopped producing milk within three months of giving birth," contributing to malnutrition among infants. The Chongqing report also outlines how the famine affected women's labor, as "since the Great Leap Forward, many women have been encouraged to go into full-time employment." Not only did this leave "a number of children at home with no one to care for them," it meant mothers suffered the physical burden of agricultural work and dealt with the profound pressure of producing food and providing for their families amid a famine. [17]

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[14] Gail Hershatter, "Farmer," in *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (University of California Press, 2011): 137

[15] Ibid., 137.

[16] Zhou Xun, 53.

[17] Ibid., 53.

Many mothers tasked with feeding their children amid the famine resorted to begging and scavenging for food while working in the fields. This included Zhang Linying's wife. Zhang and his wife were from the Zhangjia hamlet, and his wife was responsible for looking for food substitutes to feed their six children. She did this in addition to attending the fields each day. However, the family ran out of food, and Zhang's one-week-old infant died. Zhang's wife had been pregnant and lost her baby all while trying to feed her other children and work the fields. This was so demoralizing that Zhang's wife "mixed two packets of rat poison with the last bit of flour and baked one loaf of bread. She ate most of it and gave a little bit to her child."[18] Though the child survived, the mother did not. Zhang's wife took her own life to escape the loss and struggle she faced due to the famine. Unable to get proper access to nutrition, her baby had died, and her family was starving despite her best efforts to feed them.

Zhang's wife is a specific example of how the Great Leap Famine adversely affected women's health. However, she was not the only woman whose mid-life health was harmed by the famine. For instance, in a 2007 study of women born in mainland China in 1961 who later moved to Hong Kong, it was found that the children of these women were 8 percent more likely to suffer from a low birth weight.[19] The famine, therefore, had a long-lasting effect on women's health, causing low birth weights during the famine and for the next generation. While men born during the famine reported long-term health issues in middle age, these issues were more pronounced in their female counterparts. This is reflected in a 2005 Chinese General Social Survey in which 184 men and 229 women born from 1959-1961 rated their health on a scale of 8-40.[20] On average, men rated their general health as 32.78 out of 40, while women reported their general health as 31.23 out of 40.[21] Women rated their general health 1.5 points lower than men. The study did not

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[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] W. Fan and Y. Qian, "Long-term health and socioeconomic consequences of early-life exposure to the 1959-1961 Chinese Famine," *Soc Sci Res.* (2015): 60.

[20] Ibid., 60.

[21] Ibid., 60.

reveal a significant connection between the famine and men's mid-life health, though its impact on women's mid-life health were profound, especially for women born in regions which suffered high excess death rates.[22] This that the long-term effects of the famine are more severe for women than men.

It is also possible that sexism in Chinese culture played a role in girls' health during the famine. Traditionally, Chinese families valued sons over daughters, especially in rural areas where sons were seen as more valuable for agricultural labor. When resources were limited, sons might be prioritized over daughters. For instance, after her son succumbed to sickness in 1958, a Women's Federation activist reported that her husband told her that "ten daughters in flowered clothes are not worth one cripped son."[23] To this woman's husband, a daughter was worthless compared to a son, an opinion that was not uncommon in rural China. Consequently, limited food may have been given to sons while daughters received less to eat, making them more vulnerable to malnutrition.[24]

Furthermore, the differential impacts of the famine based on sex is evident in gynecological health outcomes. For instance, Sichuan province, which was especially hard-hit during the Great Famine reported to the Ministries of Finance, Civil Affairs, and Health and Hygiene that "more than 1.4 million women in Sichuan province have been found to be suffering from gynecological problems each month, including amenorrhea and uterine prolapse." [25] This amounted to about 4 percent of the total female population in the Sichuan province. The report estimates that three million women needed medical treatment for medical issues related to gynecological issues caused by the famine. Outside of Sichuan, women also suffered from uterine

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[22] Ibid., 59.

[23] Gail Hershatter, "Mother," in *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (University of California Press, 2011) 200.

[24] Wen Fan and Yue Qian, "Long-term Health and Socioeconomic Consequences of Early-life Exposure to the 1959–1961 Chinese Famine," Social Science Research 49 (August 2, 2014): 58.

[25] Xun Zhou, "The Great Famine in China, 1958-1962: A Documentary History," Choice Reviews Online 50, 04 (December 1, 2012): 56.

prolapse, amenorrhea, the cessation of menstruation, and the weakening of the muscles that hold the uterus in place. [26] Thus, the issue was not isolated to Sichuan, but malnutrition affected women's health more profoundly in the areas hardest hit by the famine.

Women's Labor Before and During the Famine

Changes in production and labor, which were central to Mao's Great Leap Forward movement, contributed to the famine and imperiled women's physical health. The program Great Leap Forward was "initiated to adopt radical economic and social policies to accelerate the process of industrialization by "squeezing" the agricultural sector."[27] Collectivization was a key strategy to achieve these goals. This included collective living, land management, and communal eating, among other attempts to reallocate land and resources. [28] Collectivization was intended to increase productivity by mobilizing workers to work collective plots of land instead of their own small disparate plots. Women workers were mobilized to work this land and became the brunt of the agricultural labor force as men were shifted to work on irrigation, mining, and steel smelting. Many young women were also dispatched to work on these construction and industrial projects.[29] Some of the best male workers were taken from agricultural jobs and assigned to coal mining and iron production,[30] implying that women and children were left behind to tend the fields and livestock.[31]

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[26] Ibid., 56.

[27] Jinhu Li and Nidhiya Menon, "Echo Effects of Early-Life Health Shocks: The Intergenerational Consequences of Prenatal Malnutrition during the Great Leap Forward Famine in China," *Institute of Labor Economics,* 13171 (2020), 6.

[28] Kimberely Ens Manning, "Marxist Maternalism, Memory, and the Mobilization of Women in the Great Leap Forward," *China Review* 5, 1 (2005), 84.

[29] Ibid., 86.

[30] Xizhe Peng, "Demographic Consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's Provinces," Population and Development Review 13, 4 (December 1, 1987), 639.

[31] Kimberely Ens Manning, "Marxist Maternalism, Memory, and the Mobilization of Women in the Great Leap Forward," *China Review* 5, 1 (2005): 86-87.

Diminishing the rural workforce and extricating foodstuffs to fuel industrialization diminished food production significantly from 1959-1961. The Great Leap Forward exacerbated the famine and placed new burdens on women. For example, when communes were established in summer 1958, women were expected to care for their children as well as the collective. This had a significant impact on women's emotional and mental health, as well as their physical health. Communist ideology suggested that true gender equality could only be realized if women worked and received the same wages as men. This encouraged the rise of what political scientist Kimberly Manning calls the "Marxist maternalist" approach in which the CCP "liberated" women from the feudal patriarchy by allowing them to work as men did.[32] By fully integrating women into the workforce, however, the CCP exposed female workers to extensive physical challenges intensified by the famine.

The CCP's pressure on women to work and have families took a physical toll. The party contended that women needed to have children and create the ideal socialist family. Men, on the other hand, did not have the double burden of women and were not expected to bear and raise children while laboring for the state. The CCP encouraged men to participate in household chores, but it also expected women would "fulfil their biological destiny through motherhood" by raising a family, cooking, and cleaning.[33] The party-run *People's Daily* published an editorial in 1956 that proclaimed that "participating in agricultural production is the right and duty of rural women. Taking care of children and dealing with housework, however, is also a responsibility which women cannot reject."[34] This mentality contributed to the famine's unequal impact on women as opposed to men. Firstly, women bore the physical toll of working, running a household, and bearing children. Moreover, many women struggled to feed their children during the famine, especially when the communal dining halls created as part of the Great Leap Forward ran out of food. By the 1950s, many rural families had five or more children. Childcare was

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[32] Ibid., 87.
[33] Ibid., 88.
[34] Ibid., 88.

traditionally the mother's job, and as the CCP pushed women to work outside the home, caring for multiple children became increasingly difficult.[35]

Many women prioritized their children's nutrition over their own, which could have negatively impacted their health.[36] An extreme example of this comes from, Luo Guozhen, a villager from Hongya county. Luo told Zhou Xun that his mother "gave all her food rations to my three younger siters" and that "every time my mother brought food back from the canteen she would let my sisters eat first, while she would go and find wild grass or bitter buckwheat for herself…She even ate mud."[37] Many children died of malnutrition, and others were never born, since a lack of proper nutrition prevented many women from bearing children. "Most of them were having a hard time keeping themselves alive," Luo recounts, "Never mind raising children, people weren't even able to carry any children."[38]

In addition to working outside of the home, women were pressured to fulfill their "biological destiny" of raising a family, though for many women childbearing was impossible during the famine. Those with children had to balance often-laborious jobs with their family lives. Birth control and family planning were not popular or accessible in rural areas, leaving many families with multiple children to feed. Mothers worked outside of the home, cared for the family, and had to find enough food to keep their children alive during the famine. Such were women's tasks during the Great Leap Famine. The physical and mental toll of such demands had deleterious effects on women's health. Agricultural labor was already arduous, but the Great Leap Forward and collectivization placed extreme stress on workers to reach lofty quotas. Instead of working on small, family-owned farms for self-subsistence, farmers were expected to feed the burgeoning communist state. The heavy burden of this

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[35] Gail Hershatter, "Mother," in *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (University of California Press, 2011) 183.
[36] Ibid., 104.
[37] Zhou Xun, "Memories of the Famine,' in *Forgotten Voices of Mao's Great Famine, 1958-1962: An Oral History* (Yale University Press, 2013) 154.
[38] Ibid., 156.

arduous labor was shifted to the shoulders of women, as men were drafted to work on construction or industrial sites. While the Great Leap Forward fully incorporated women into paid collective work to promote gender equality, it also caused many women to become physically unwell.[39] Thus is the unique effect of the famine on women's lives, labor, and physical health.

It is important to note that the Great Leap Forward also assigned some women to work on construction projects like digging canals, constructing dams, and mining iron.[40] This taxing work took a significant physical toll on those women's bodies. These work sites, however, offered unique opportunities for women who wished to be independent, so many younger women escaped their villages for these worksites. Theoretically, women might have used these remote worksites as opportunities to escape violent domestic relationships, offering a situation in which these construction projects would have a positive effect on women's health. Construction and industrial jobs, however, are physically demanding, so even if this work improved a woman's psychological health, it could negatively impact her physical health.

Labor and Reproductive Health

The personal stories compiled by Kimberly Manning with dozens of female famine survivors who recounted their experiences in agricultural labor and its implications on their physical and reproductive health offer a window into the horrific experiences of the famine of reproductive health. As the famine worsened, reports of abuse and mistreatment of female workers increased. One interviewee Li, recalls that female workers were harshly harshly during the mobilization. Li claimed that Zhang, the women's head leader in XI Cun village punished her and her sister-in-law for arriving to the communal dining hall late by making them work the fields until sunset.[41] Other women reported being

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[39] Kimberely Ens Manning, "Marxist Maternalism, Memory, and the Mobilization of Women in the Great Leap Forward," *China Review* 5, 1 (2005), 89.

[40] Ibid., 96.

[41] Ibid., 97.

made to work during their pregnancies or were refused maternal leave. Leaders like Zhang forced women to work in adverse circumstances so she could obtain food and personal advancement while villagers in Xi Cun went hungry. This sort of corruption was widespread, especially given the increased reliance villagers had on local cadres after the onset of collectivization. The power of local cadres enabled them to extort and abuse rural peasants, as Zhang did when forcing female workers to labor long hours in the field, even if they were pregnant.

Women in Henan and Jiangsu offered similar accounts. One woman claimed that leaders demanded she prove her post-natal condition.[42] A report by the Sichuan Provincial Party Committee claimed that 24 pregnant women suffered miscarriages after being forced to work in the field in the Hongzhu administrative district.[43] Women also might choose to work late into their pregnancies, particularly if their family could not afford to lose their income. During a famine, access to money and resources was critical, and those who did not work could not eat in communal dining halls. Some women expressed less concern for their health, claiming that it was "'no big deal'" to work in the fields while menstruating, while others claimed not to worry about their period when working. Moreover, many women were not comfortable speaking up about their menstrual cycle.[44] This stigma could have resulted in women working when they were otherwise unfit to do so.

On paper, reproductive health was a cornerstone of the CCP's agenda. For instance, the state coined the slogan "One pregnancy, one live birth; one live birth, one healthy child."[45] Beyond the slogans however the state did not adequately support maternal health. Many women were either ignorant

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[42] Ibid., 101.

[43] Zhou Xun, "Seasons of Death" in *The Great Famine in China, 1958-1962: A Documentary History*: *An Oral History* (Yale University Press, 2012) 46.

[44] Kimberely Ens Manning, "Marxist Maternalism, Memory, and the Mobilization of Women in the Great Leap Forward," *China Review* 5, 1 (2005), 102.

[45] Gail Hershatter, "Midwife," in *The gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (University of California Press, 2011) 156.

of provisions line the 1950 Marriage Law and other state programs which provided reproductive care or altogether chose to disregard them For instance in Wenhe, women chose not to attend the a maternal health center because they believed the head of the center was too young and inexperienced to deliver babies.[46] The state's objective of replacing traditional midwives with new slate of midwives trained in modern medicine did not factor [47] how new practices were viewed with suspicion in rural communities. Furthermore, as the state began to focus on agricultural and industrial output during the Great Leap Forward, reproductive care received less attention. Many poor areas simply lacked access to maternal care and still relied on old midwifery tactics which were sometimes ineffective or even harmful.[48] Overall, women primarily relied on their mothers, mothers-in-law, or older neighbors to care for children while they were at work. [49] Most women refused collective childcare because they did not believe their children would be treated well enough in such facilities. The burden of working during the Great Leap Forward and the Great Famine threatened conventions of family and social relations while imposing practices that were not trusted. Even when offered a break from work during menstruation, maternal care, and childcare facilities, many women opted not to use these resources.

Sexual Harassment and Abuse During the Famine

The Great Famine saw more than just women's labor exploited. Food shortages and widespread hunger made women particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. Women engaged in sexual activities with local officials to get foodstuffs to ensure the survival of themselves, their families, and their communities. When they had nothing else, women could use sex as a method to procure food. This was not fully consensual and opened the

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[46] Kimberely Ens Manning, "Marxist Maternalism, Memory, and the Mobilization of Women in the Great Leap Forward," *China Review* 5, 1 (2005), 102.

[47] Gail Hershatter, "Midwife," in *The gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (University of California Press, 2011): 156.

[48] Ibid., 156.

[49] Kimberely Ens Manning, 102.

door to extensive sexual abuse. Although the physical and mental health of women were greatly impacted by the famine, sexual harassment was another factor affecting women which was exacerbated by food shortages.[50] The famine shaped local politics, placing "'power in the hands of local rural officials'" who could take advantage of women sexually because of their monopoly on power. Local officials controlled food distribution, and this power over foodstuffs could be used to exploit women sexually.[51] Rural women faced catastrophic food shortages and had to navigate a system in which they were at the mercy of a few powerful men.

Sexual abuse was pervasive in rural areas most affected by the famine, like Wuwei County, where the county commander Gu Xianmu used his authority to sexual abuse and exploit at least eight women from 1955 to 1961.[52] One woman, Mrs. Zeng, approached Gu to ask if he could give rice to her brigade. Gu outranked her and could deny her and her brigade food in the face of the famine. This power imbalance enabled Gu to molest Mrs. Zeng and take her to his room, where they engaged in sexual intercourse. This did not mark the end of Gu and Mrs. Zeng's relationship. Mrs. Zeng later asked Gu to borrow tools, and "he promised to provide her with whatever she lacked, dragged her to the bed, and had sex with her." Gu used his control over these supplies to sexually extort a desperate Mrs. Zeng.

Gu also sexually exploited a woman named Ms. Liu. Gu asked her to sleep in his bed multiple times, though Ms. Liu declined. Gu groped her and she slapped him. Gu also molested a woman called Ms. Ch. He harassed and assaulted these women on the pretense of giving them more prestigious jobs and access to food. Sexual relationships could result in pregnancy, a very dangerous condition during the famine. Likewise, Mrs. Zeng asked Gu "'what happens if we make a mistake,'" or what would happen if she became pregnant.[53] Mrs. Zeng's fears reflected a dangerous reality:

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[50] Bin Yang and Shuji Cao, "Cadres, Grain, and Sexual Abuse in Wuwei County, Mao's China," *Journal of Women's History* 28, 2 (2016): 34.

[51] Ibid., 43.

[52] Ibid., 36.

[53] Ibid., 40.

sexual abuse from powerful male cadres like Gu could be cataclysmic for the female victims.

The power imbalance between female villagers and male officers was exacerbated by the famine and enabled sexual exploitation, harassment, and even assault which could impact a woman's health in numerous ways. The government was largely ineffectual in preventing this exploitation, as it failed to prosecute sexual offenses. Some officials even protected cadres who committed such crimes. Indeed, not a single "corrupted" cadre was prosecuted for sexual crimes.[54] Consequently, powerful male officials used their authority to abuse women already facing starvation, poverty, or powerlessness. The poor health conditions of women during the famine were exploited by these officials in the form of sexual crimes, which further worsened women's physical and psychological health.

Conclusion

The experience of the Great Famine was fundamentally different for women than for men because of the distinct impacts it had on women's health. Women experienced gynecological and reproductive issues and girls born during the famine had worse long-term health outcomes than their male counterparts. The roles of women changed during the Great Leap Forward, which caused the subsequent famine to affect them differently than men. The famine altered women's experiences when it came to bearing and raising children. The Great Leap Forward changed and expanded the role of women in the labor force, requiring them to participate in often taxing labor as they also sought to support their families. The famine also created conditions which enabled powerful male officials to use their authority to extort sexual favors from women. The result was both short- and long-term health complications, extreme expectations for women to both care for the family and commit themselves to agricultural production, and the objectification and commodification of women's bodies.

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[54] Ibid., 36.

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Eternal Flame, Eternal Virgin:

Vestal Virgins, Crimen Incesti, and the Stability of the Roman State

Ryleigh Stine

In 483 BCE, a priestess of the Roman goddess 'Vesta' was placed on a funerary bier and carried through the streets of Rome to be buried alive in an underground cell. Oppia, this 'Vestal Virgin' had been found guilty of being 'violated' and conducting her religious rituals while being impure. [1] Between 770 BCE- 384 CE, at least twenty-eight Vestals of the known sixty-five were accused of this crime–*incestum*– and nine were buried alive. At least five others were sentenced to a death of their choice, and two others committed suicide.[2] The crime of *incestum*, as evidenced by the harsh nature of the punishment, was extremely serious for a Vestal to commit. The purity of the Vestal Virgins was important to Roman society as the Vestals both reflected and reinforced Roman identity and the strength of the state. The unusual and specific punishments for a Vestal condemned of *crimen incesti* evidence how important their purity was to the state. However, such punishments were often used to manipulate the Vestals as political and religious instruments of power during trying times.

Religion in Rome was centered on the concept of *pax deorum*: pleasing the gods. Public rituals were extremely significant and were conducted by three major religious officials. These religious officials were the *pontifices*, the

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[1] Emma Southon, *A Rome of One's Own: The Forgotten Women of the Roman Empire* (Abrams Press, 2023): 67-72. Oppia is the name used by Livy, but she is also referred to as Opillia, Opimia, and Popilia by various sources.

[2] Ann R. Raia, "Names of Known Vestal Virgins Listed Chronologically," Online Companion to *The Worlds of Roman Women,* ed. Ann R. Raia and Judith L. Sebesta, revised 2021. https://feminaeromanae.org/ListofVestals3.pdf.

augures, and the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*. [3] The *pontifices* were the priests and priestesses who handled ritual activity. Ritual was overseen by the *pontifex maximus*, the *rex,* and *regina sacrorum* who were not associated with specific gods but primarily managed the rituals. Under the *pontifex maximus* and *rex* and *regina sacrorum* were the fifteen *flamines*; *flamines* were priests and priestesses assigned to particular gods. For example, Jupiter had two *flamines,* the *flamen* and *flaminica Dialis*, as he was one of the three major gods in Roman society. Lesser gods received only one *flamen*, and minor gods had none.[4]

The Vestal Virgins, being priestesses to the goddess Vesta, were also members of the College of *Pontifices*. Vesta was the Roman goddess of the earth, home, and family. Unlike the other gods, who had at most two *flamines,* the Vestal Virgins were a group of six women. They were appointed by the *pontifex maximus* at ages between six and eleven. While the Vestals could be either patricians or plebians, it was important that they came from "ideal" families (i.e., two living, married parents) and had no physical or mental defects.[5] This was because the Vestals were figureheads of the Roman state as a whole, and they thereby represent the idealized "family unit" on a societal scale.

Vestals completed many religious activities including guarding *sacra* (sacred objects), but their most vital role was tending to the sacred 'eternal fire' in the Roman Forum. Centered at the very heart of Rome in the Temple of Vesta, the sacred fire was the primary symbol of Roman power. It was believed that if the flame ever went out, Rome would fall. Dionysius of Halicarnassus states that "the extinction of the fire, which the Romans dread above all misfortunes…[is] an omen that portends the destruction of the city."[6] The fire's significance shows the importance of the role of the Vestals in Roman life. The six Vestals were appointed to tend to this fire for a total of thirty years: ten years being

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[3] George J. Szemler, "*Religio,* Priesthoods and Magistracies in the Roman Republic," *Numen* 18, 2 (1971): 105.

[4] Southon, *A Rome of One's Own,* 62.

[5] Meghan J. DiLuzio, "The Vestal Virgins," in *A Place at the Altar: Priestesses in Republican Rome* (Princeton University Press, 2016) 120.

[6] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities,* 2.67.5

educated on the rites, ten years completing the rites, and then ten years educating their successors. Most Vestals chose to remain in their position for life.[7]

From the very foundations of Roman history through the division of the empire, the Vestal Virgin remained one of the most important figures in the Roman state. 500 years following the death of Oppia, Horace writes that "[Rome] will continue to grow fresh with the praise of posterity, as long as the *pontifex* climbs the Capitol beside the silent virgin."[8] Founded in at least the 7th century BCE, the Vestals remained an official religious institution until they were dissolved in 380 CE when the emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the official religion of the empire and outlawed paganism.[9] For over one thousand years, through ever-changing conditions of the empire, the Vestals persisted as an important aspect of Roman life, both ritualistically and symbolically. They appeared prominently in the very earliest Roman myths, where they were already inextricable from the identity of the state.

In Roman mythology, Rhea Silvia, a princess of Alba Longa, was forced to become a Vestal by her uncle Amulius for fear that any children she had would overthrow him as king. Although she was under the orders of the Vestals, Rhea Silvia became pregnant with the twins Romulus and Remus, who would go on to found the city of Rome.[10] In Ovid's *Fasti,* "The images of Vesta are said to have covered their eyes with their virgin hands; certainly the altar of the goddess trembled, when her priestess was brought to bed, and the terrified flame sank under its own ashes."[11] This excerpt shows the severity of the crime: Vesta could not excuse *incestum even* when it resulted in the birth of the founders of Rome. Imagery of the sacred fire extinguishing is present in many recorded cases of *incestum,* supposedly proving the

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[7] Ibid, 2.67.2

[8] Horace, *Carmen Saeculare,* 3.30.7-8

[9] The Edict of Thessalonica, decreed by Theodosius I, banned all non-Christian cults in 380 CE. The last known Vestal is Coelia Concordia, who was dedicated a statue by Aconia Fabia Paulina in 384 CE., as evidenced in the inscription *CIL* VI, 2145.

[10] Livy, *History of Rome*, 1.4

[11] Ovid, Fasti, 3.43

transgression and the wrath of the goddess Vesta. Additionally, letting the fire go out or tending to the rites while in a state of impurity was a serious crime. As evidenced by the death of Oppia, the punishment for the *crimen incesti* was severe. In Oppia's case, she was charged with being 'violated' by two men, implying that she had lost her virginity. The men were "scourged in public and then put to death at once," and Oppia was buried within the walls of the city.[12] The crime was not Oppia losing her virginal status, but rather that she had approached the fire and completed her rites while "impure."

Several scholars, including Mary Beard, have called attention to the notion of virginity in the broader Mediterranean world as not being considered an aspirational status. Sex in general, however, was thought to pollute sacred spaces.[13] Virginity, therefore, was a requirement for the Vestals as they could not be separated from the Temple of Vesta or the sacred fire for any significant period. Handling the sacred fire while in this state of impurity would be a *vitium*– an imperfection in the sacred rites, violating the reciprocal contract with the gods. Meghan DiLuzio argues that "their sexual status was figured as a sign that the body politic was internally unified and impervious to assault. The failure of female chastity, on the other hand, placed the entire community at risk."[14] The Vestals were viewed as a microcosm of the Roman state, wherein any physical "invasion" committed against them would also occur in the empire.

The punishment devised for a Vestal condemned of *incestum* is nearly as ancient as the college itself. Numa, the legendary second king of Rome, is credited with establishing the Vestals, almost certainly adopting the practice from Etruscan neighbors.[15] Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes about Lucius Tarquinius, or Tarquin the Elder, stating, "He seems also to have first devised the punishments which are inflicted by the pontiffs on those Vestals who do not preserve

[12] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities,* 2.89.5

[13] Mary Beard, "The Sexual Status of the Vestal Virgins," *Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980): 12.

[14] DiLuzio, "The Vestal Virgins," 144-145.

[15] Livy, *The History of Rome,* 1.20.3

their chastity, […] and these punishments, according to the interpreters of religious rites, were found after his death among the Sibylline oracles."[16] The Vestal Pinaria is the first recorded for the crime of *incestum*, during the reign of Tarquinius. The extremely specific punishment of a living burial for the Vestals indicates both the significance of the Vestals themselves and the severity of the crime.

Many cases of *incestum* coincided with other political or social misfortunes in Rome. Oppia's accusation came at a time when Veii and the Volsci were both revolting against Rome. Dionysius of Halicarnassus states

While these things were happening in the [war] camp, in Rome itself many prodigies in the way of unusual voices and sights occurred as indications of divine wrath …the gods were angered because they were not receiving their customary honors, as their rites were not being performed in a pure and holy manner.[17]

This implies that an investigation was conducted to determine what caused the bad omens, and 'at last' Oppia was accused. Dionysius also states that the *pontifices* used torture to extract information about Oppia's crime. In Oppia's case, she was put to death as a scapegoat for Rome's war with the Volsci. DiLuzio postulates that "the Vestals served as a convenient mechanism for restoring stability in times of panic and crisis."[18] This conclusion is true of many other Vestals who were condemned of *crimen incesti*, including Urbinia, who was accused in a remarkably similar manner to Oppia. In 472 BCE, as a plague ravaged Rome, the *pontifices* received information from a slave that the Vestal Urbinia had been guilty of *incestum*. Again, two men were accused of violating the Vestal: "One of the two men who had perpetrated the impious defilement killed himself; the other was seized by the pontiffs, who ordered him to be scourged in the Forum like a slave and then put to death. After this action, the pestilence which had attacked

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[16] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities,* 3.67.3
[17] Ibid, *Antiquities,* 2.89.3-4
[18] DiLuzio, "The Vestal Virgins," 151.

women and caused so great a mortality among them promptly ceased."[19] Urbinia was also carried in a procession through Rome and buried alive.

In 114 BCE, a trial was conducted for three Vestals convicted of *incestum*. Aemilia, Licinia, and Marcia were accused by their slave of impurity while continuing to tend the sacred flame. Though scholars have attempted to argue for a martial reason for accusing and condemning the Vestals, Greenfield argues instead for a political motivation.[20] She observes that there were no serious military actions before the trial that would have warranted the death of the three Vestals. However, there are suspicious matters regarding the trial, including the fact that Licinia and Marcia were originally found innocent. They were later retried under a different judge after the public called for their death. In addition, *incestum* trials were meant to be judged by the *pontifex maximus* himself, but Licinia and Marcia were sentenced by a civic politician. Greenfield's study on the causality of Vestal condemnations demonstrates that there was often political or martial motivation behind every *crimen incesti* accusation and that there is certainly a pattern of Vestal deaths being linked to instability in the empire. As DiLuzio writes, "The vestals served as a convenient mechanism for restoring stability in times of panic and crisis." [21] Moreover, as the Vestals were viewed as a representation of Rome itself, their sacrifice right at the walls of the city was assumed to physically strengthen it. The sacrifice was deemed necessary because their bodies had been physically "invaded," bringing the same possibility to Rome itself. Burying them at the city's walls was simultaneously a punishment, a sacrifice, and a symbolic reinforcement of the empire.

The ancient tradition of the Vestal Virgins served as the physical embodiment of the Roman state. Their cementation into the city's walls help reinforce Vestal's relationship to the eternal flame of Rome and it is assumed that the fire is

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[19] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities,* 9.40.4
[20] Peta Greenfield, "Virgin Territory: The Vestals and the Transition from Republic to Principate," (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2011).
[21] DiLuzio, "The Vestal Virgins," 151.

extinguished when the Vestal has ceased to be an eternal virgin. When Vestals became unchaste, they are sacrificed to return Rome to the favor of the gods. Although Livy argues that the Romans did not commit human sacrifice, the ritualistic act of the Vestal burials and the religious rituals indicate that the Vestals were sacrificed to appease the gods, to restore the compact of *pax deorum.*[22] The sacrifice of the Vestals also had political connotations. When the empire was tumultuous, a method of restoring peace was the sacrifice of a Vestal and holding them responsible for the social disorder. Placing blame on a single person and punishing them was a simple solution to an abstract issue that the public could not understand. The public trial and procession of the Vestal shows that this sacrifice was a mode for reining in public chaos. The Vestal Virgins were such an important aspect of the Roman identity that they remained an official college for over a millennium, and the unique method of punishment for their transgressions shows that they were inextricable from the Roman state.

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[22] Livy, *The History of Rome,* 22.57.6

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Shared and Comparative Unionism among students in the US and Vietnam during the 1960s

Anh Quynh Nguyen Do

The Cold War sparked ideological conflicts across the world, but it also generated profound transformation within the United States as the baby boomer generation witnessed one of the most chaotic yet affluent periods in US history. President John F. Kennedy's idea about the responsibility of youth in a democratic society and his call that they answer their country's call to defend "the Free World" in Vietnam resonated with many young people. However, it also generated arguments from supporters of the anti-war movement, which inspired more individuals to advocate for human rights both within the nation and for the people of Vietnam. The appearance of a well-known student union, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), during the Vietnam War marked a new shift in students' political participation, Vietnamese students also made their voices heard by using the same set of direct actions, writing their new "Song of Freedom" and "Song of Independence" for Vietnam. Therefore, real-time experiences and a strong sense of national identity significantly shaped the perspectives of Vietnamese students on the war. Their ideology reflected principles similar to those of the SDS in the US, revealing a shared struggle for civil rights and justice that transcended borders and cultural contexts. They also differed in significant ways that reflect their domestic politics and nationalism

To gain a broader understanding of the "real-time experiences" of Vietnamese students during the Vietnam War, it is significant that the war is known today among the Vietnamese as the Resistance War Against America [Kháng chiến chống Mỹ][1]. Vietnamese students were opposed to both

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[1] Lê Thị Thu Hằng, Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Statement on the

the repressive government of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) in the South at that time and the American invasion of the country. During the rule of former President Ngô Đình Diệm, Vietnamese students encountered a period of repression when the RVN government restricted fundamental civil rights and freedoms, and the ruling regime manipulated elections. [2] One of the most widespread restrictions was universities' denial of autonomy and exclusion from politics and religion.

The 1967 Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam provides that "*University education will be autonomous.*"[3] However, universities were required to obtain approval from the Ministry of Education and the General Department of Public Service [Tổng Nha Công vụ] before making any public announcements. [4] The RVN government interfered in all aspects of university decision-making, including the management and establishment of majors or departments, financing, budgeting, employment, and academic affairs. They decided to replace the executive board of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy (UMP) [Đại học Y khoa Sài Gòn] and change the institution's name to the Center for

Documentary Film *'The Vietnam War.'* The Vietnam News Agency [Thông Tấn Xã Việt Nam],
https://vietnam.vnanet.vn/english/print/us-resistance-war-a-war-for-national-independence-and- freedom-201727.html

[2] Van Nguyen-Marshall, *"Student Activism in a Time of War,"* J*ournal of Vietnamese Studies* 10, 2 (Spring 2015): 44–45.

[3] The Office of the Permanent Observer of the Republic of Vietnam, *The Republic of Vietnam constitution*, 1 April 1967, chap. 6, art. 10. Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections Wesley R. Fishel Papers (UA 17.95) Box 1192, Folder 11.

[4] 4 Le Thanh Minh Chau, former President of Hue University, *Journal of Social Development (Vietnam Association of Social Sciences)*:185-192 [Theo lời của Giáo sư Lê Thanh Minh Châu, nguyên Viện trưởng Viện Đại học Huế, dẫn theo Tập san Phát triển xã hội (Hội KHXH Việt Nam), Phỏng vấn về giáo dục đại học, tr.185-192]

Medical Education (CME) [Trung tâm Giáo dục Y khoa].[5] As a result of this change, UMP medical college was removed from the university system and placed under the direct control of the government. Students protested because this transition was considered unconstitutional and a violation of the university's autonomy. The policy was deemed to be limiting to students' freedom of speech because the government was concerned about the infiltration of communism among students, possibly influencing them to oppose the established government. So, any ideas published in student journals that contradicted the government or had the potential to oppose the former ruling regime were often censored, whereas those in favor of the RVN were printed in full.[6] Nevertheless, with many radical publishers like Điện Tín, Sao Sáng, Đại Dân Tộc, etc., many students were still able to read underground journals without the knowledge of the RVN.[7]

President Ngô Đình Diệm purposely utilized religion as a vehicle to gain support from Vietnamese citizens in the South. Before being handed over to the US, Vietnam was under French colonial control, which introduced a new religious belief, Catholicism, and made it the official religion embraced by many South Vietnamese, including the Diệm family. He restricted other religious beliefs, such as Buddhism because he believed these such other faiths could influence peoples' perceptions of the government and potentially lead to uprisings. Some of the new religions, like Cao Đài and Hòa Hảo, built up military groups for their own purposes and posed a challenge to Diệm's government.[8] His

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[5] "*School Historical Benchmarks*," University of Medicine and Pharmacy, UMP. Accessed November 31, 2024. https://ump.edu.vn/gioi-thieu/lich-su-phat-trien. [*"Lịch Sử Phát Triển"*, Đại học Y Dược Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Truy cập vào ngày 31 tháng 11 năm 2024. https://ump.edu.vn/gioi-thieu/lich-su-phat-trien]

[6] Huỳnh Tấn Mẫm, interview by Thượng Tùng, "*Bác sĩ Huỳnh Tấn Mẫm: Tôi may mắn được nhiều người yêu thương"*, T*uổi Trẻ News*, Fall 2008

[7] Van Nguyen-Marshall, *"Student Activism in a Time of War,",* 48.

[8] Heather Stur. *"To Do Nothing Would Be to Dig Our Own Graves: Student Activism in the Republic of Vietnam," The Journal of American-*

effort to keep new religious groups under his control led to many street battles and further damaged his reputation among students, especially students from the Buddhist university. The RVN oppression and denial of civil liberties were obvious and undeniable, reflecting the turmoil that Vietnamese students had to go through.

As one student at the meeting in Saigon in 1965 stated, "To do nothing would be to dig their own graves."[9] One of the most well-known methods among student groups was direct action, which included meetings, protests, sit-ins, and strikes. They planned these actions in public to attract more attention and raise awareness among Vietnamese citizens and overseas friends about the realities of the war. In fact, they attained their goal since many photos of students' activism in the South appeared in newspapers across the US and among American students. Also, in 1965, following President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision to escalate US involvement in Vietnam, the number of Vietnamese students joining activism groups rocketed to 69,000 and tripled one year later, reaching 260,000 in 2 years. [10] Alongside a proactive effort by Vietnamese students to influence the former government, some politically neutral student groups shifted their focus to community-based activities. Their vision was to focus more on their people and on how to improve their living conditions rather than fighting against the government. Before 1961, all educational institutions taught only French

[9] 10 Van Nguyen-Marshall, "Student Activism in a Time of War,": 51.

[10] 11 Hoàng Thị Hồng Nga, *"Students activism in South Vietnam (1954-1975)"*, Military History Magazine, No. 271 (July 2014): 22-27. [Hoàng Thị Hồng Nga, *"Một số phong trào đấu tranh của sinh viên miền Nam Việt Nam (1954-1975)"*, Tạp chí *Lịch sử quân sự*, số 271 (tháng 7-2014), tr.22-27.]
https://his.ussh.vnu.edu.vn/vi/news/nguyen-thu-ha/mot-so-phong-trao-dau-tranh- cua-sinh-vien-mien-nam-viet-nam-1954-1975-5757.html

or English, which led some students to protest for the right to learn the Vietnamese curriculum. Although the RVN agreed to incorporate a Vietnamese curriculum into university systems, they postponed the implementation for four years. It was not until 1967 that the government translated lectures into Vietnamese, except for science majors.[11] There was a debate about this change, as many believed that switching the current official language to Vietnamese would limit the opportunities to adopt breakthroughs from developed countries like the US or France. Others were more worried about preserving their customs and traditions if Vietnamese did not speak Vietnamese.[11] The activism of students motivated other Vietnamese citizens and other passionate individuals around the world.

The principles of student unionism varied and sometimes appeared ambiguous in the movement. There was much internal complexity among student groups, and many were divided along two major ideologies that coexisted during the 1960s, tearing Vietnam apart. Many of these students came from families that fled from the North to the South to escape the communist government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.[12] So, from the beginning to the mid-1960s, they only criticized the RVN for its dictation, corruption, and oppression. During a meeting of South Vietnamese students in 1965, many members of the Saigon Student Union wanted to emphasize that while they desired peace, it did not mean they were willing to allow the communist government in the north to take control of the south. At the same time, others expressed dissatisfaction with the involvement of foreign countries in Vietnam, believing that it complicated the already difficult situation between the two sides.[13] The entanglement

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Peter Hansen. "Bắc Đi Cư: Catholic Refugees from the North of Vietnam, and Their Role in the Southern Republic, 1954–1959." *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 4, 3 (2009): 173–211. https://doi.org/10.1525/vs.2009.4.3.173.

[13] Heather Stur, *"To Do Nothing Would Be to Dig Our Own Graves: Student Activism in the Republic of Vietnam.",* 286-287.

became more apparent by the mid-1960s when one of the most influential student unions, the Federation of Sài Gòn University Students [Tổng Hội Sinh Viên Sài Gòn] (FSGUS), was believed to have been infiltrated by communists. [14] There was no clear standard for evaluating and identifying which individuals were communists. Thus, while the unions continued to advocate for student rights, they were not confident in asserting that those groups were free from the influence of communism. This underlying suspicion created instability within the unions.

Furthermore, no leader could maintain a clear vision or effectively guide the unions. The RVN government closely monitored unions, which relied on federal aid from both RVN and the US. To establish and run an organization, students had to obtain approval from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and all members were required to undergo background checks. [15] Therefore, the formation of any organization, whether supportive or opposed to the government, was subject to regulation to some extent. As previously mentioned, activist organizations received funding from both federal and foreign aid to organize meetings and activities that contributed to the movement and social life. The RVN collaborated with US advisors to hold summer work camps, attracting thousands of students to participate in various groups and social activities. [16] Both ideologies impacted Vietnamese students, who were caught in an ideological war between two worlds, making it difficult for student activists to maintain their independence and transparent principles.

One notable characteristic of Vietnamese student activists was the influence of religion in their movement. Religion served as a motivator, inspiring Vietnamese students to stand up and fight for their people. This aspect made their movement distinct from that of the SDS. While the SDS's ideological concept of a "Great Society" targeted the prosperity and dominance of the United States, Vietnamese students fought for a faith that had been passed down through generations. Buddhism had been

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[14] Van Nguyen-Marshall, *"Student Activism in a Time of War,"* 55.
[15] Ibid., 65.
[16] Ibid., 51.

passed down since Vietnam's first dynasty, long before the French brought Catholicism to the country.[17] Buddhism was perceived as a "core ideology" of the Vietnamese. The decision to suppress the growth of Buddhism in the south, coupled with the conflict surrounding Thích Quảng Đức's self-immolation in Saigon in 1963, heightened disappointment among Buddhist students. They began marching in the streets to voice their demands (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Students and Buddhists from Buddhist student organizations protested against the suppression of Buddhism by the US and the RVN in May 1963. (Vietnam News Agency).

More than five thousand students gathered at Diên Hồng

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[17] Ngọc Anh, *"Understanding the process of proselytization and developing Buddhism in Vietnam,"* Kon Tum Committee for Religious Affairs, June 9, 2020.

Park in District 1 in protest notably led by female students in Vietnamese traditional costume, Áo Dài, who carried banners (Figure 2). Unfortunately, the Saigon police responded harshly, deploying troops and opening fires on the demonstrators. In this tragic event, female student Quach Thi Trang was shot and killed, and many others sustained injuries. After the protest, students faced severe repression and terror from the government, leading to the arrest of over 4,000 students from various schools in Saigon for their involvement in strikes and protests by the police. [18] The United States missed the opportunity to attract more Vietnamese students to support their involvement, especially as animosity toward the RVN increased, and the US was seen as a partner of the RVN. If US advisors had considered Vietnamese culture and scrutinized Ngô Đình Diệm's decisions regarding religious matters, they might have gained greater support and commitment in their fight against communism.

In the United States, the Students for a Democratic Society launched a new chapter in the student anti-war movement following Tom Hayden's speech, "The Port Huron Statement," which articulated the organization's principles. The SDS aimed to advance civil rights and the anti- war movement through direct actions, cultural dissent, and participatory democracy.[19] Before shifting its vision to the anti-war movement, the students began to voice their concerns about increasing racism in the South and the threat posed by atomic bombs, which endangered human life worldwide in the Cold War era. [20] The prosperity they inherited varied, but it also included disillusionment with the failure of the US to establish a government "of the people, by the people, for the people."[21] Many young students were

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[18] *Saigon Student Movement (1954 – 1975).* Museum of Ho Chi Minh City, January 9, 2024.

[19] [20] Adam Tomasi. *"Anarchists, Marxists, and the New Left: Culture and Conflict in Students for a Democratic Society, 1960-1969."* Left History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Historical Inquiry and Debate 23, 2 (Summer 2020).

[20] Tom Hayden, Students for a Democratic Society, *The Port Huron Statement* (New York: The Student Department of the League for Industrial Democracy, 1964)

[21] Ibid.

inspired by John F. Kennedy's speech about how young people could contribute to building a great society where everyone enjoyed freedom and equality. However, the corruption in school administration and the government in general made it challenging to realize a truly democratic society for all. When viewing the SDS this way, Vietnamese and American students shared the same perspective on a free world and the role of government in achieving it.

One principle that set SDS apart from the Vietnamese student movement was its concept of participatory democracy. To promote that idea, the SDS attracted members from diverse backgrounds, including those with socialist and democratic perspectives. Following its National Convention in 1965, the organization decided to eliminate the clause in the constitution that prohibited Communists from being members. If Vietnamese students were concerned about communist infiltration within the groups, it was important to note that the Marxist Progressive Labor (PL) was part of the SDS's political strategies.[22] In other words, the presence of Marxist and communist ideas within the SDS should not have been seen as an infiltration but rather as a partnership, which also only appeared after the mid-1960s. During an interview for a history project conducted by undergraduate students from the University of Michigan in 2015, Tom Hayden stated, "The nutshell of Participatory democracy was learning by doing… Listening [to people] enough that they would participate in the construction of your idea..."[23] In response, in 1965, while the Vietnam War gained popularity among students, the teach-in concept spread on the University of Michigan campuses. This tactic encouraged students to learn about US foreign policy and the political and economic reasons behind American intervention in Vietnam and Southeast Asia in general.[24]

As the war progressed, members of the SDS from various states, including Maryland, created leaflets to distribute

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[22] Adam Tomasi. *"Anarchists, Marxists, and the New Left: Culture and Conflict in Students for a Democratic Society, 1960-1969."*, 9.
[23] [24] *"Tom Hayden Interviews: Part 1,"* Resistance and Revolution: The Anti-Vietnam War Movement At the University of Michigan (1965-1972).
[24] Ibid.

around campus to raise awareness among other students about the war and encourage students to refuse the drafts. [25] The leaflet highlighted the significance of understanding Vietnamese history and encouraged readers to seek information from independent sources (Figure 3) while also indicating references for students who wish to delve deeper into this topic (Figure 4). It encouraged scrutiny of the US decision to determine whether it violated the Geneva Accords. The questions in the study guide also clarified Vietnam's territorial history. It raised doubts about the US military's support for the RVN in opposition to the Vietnamese people. Additionally, the SDS pointed out the deception in the US claim of protecting Vietnam from communism, arguing that the US contributed to the war by providing troops and financial aid, which harmed American soldiers and innocent Vietnamese civilians. The entire paper illustrated that sympathy for its cause existed not only in a small country in Indochina but also among citizens in the wealthiest country on the opposite side of the globe. Although they spoke different languages, had different cultures, and held different nationalities, they shared a
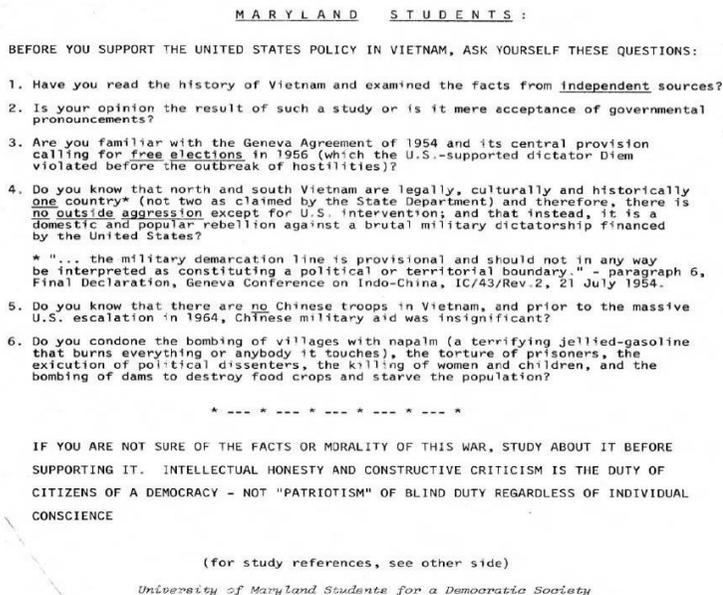
MARYLAND STUDENTS:

BEFORE YOU SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES POLICY IN VIETNAM, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

1. Have you read the history of Vietnam and examined the facts from independent sources?

2. Is your opinion the result of such a study or is it mere acceptance of governmental pronouncements?

3. Are you familiar with the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and its central provision calling for free elections in 1956 (which the U.S.-supported dictator Diem violated before the outbreak of hostilities)?

4. Do you know that north and south Vietnam are legally, culturally and historically one country* (not two as claimed by the State Department) and therefore, there is no outside aggression except for U.S. intervention; and that instead, it is a domestic and popular rebellion against a brutal military dictatorship financed by the United States?

   * "... the military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary." - paragraph 6, Final Declaration, Geneva Conference on Indo-China, IC/43/Rev.2, 21 July 1954.

5. Do you know that there are no Chinese troops in Vietnam, and prior to the massive U.S. escalation in 1964, Chinese military aid was insignificant?

6. Do you condone the bombing of villages with napalm (a terrifying jellied-gasoline that burns everything or anybody it touches), the torture of prisoners, the exicution of political dissenters, the killing of women and children, and the bombing of dams to destroy food crops and starve the population?

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IF YOU ARE NOT SURE OF THE FACTS OR MORALITY OF THIS WAR, STUDY ABOUT IT BEFORE SUPPORTING IT. INTELLECTUAL HONESTY AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM IS THE DUTY OF CITIZENS OF A DEMOCRACY - NOT "PATRIOTISM" OF BLIND DUTY REGARDLESS OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE

(for study references, see other side)

University of Maryland Students for a Democratic Society

Figure 3. Questionnaire about Vietnam's historical background. (University of Maryland Student for a Democratic Society)

[25] *Vietnam study guide*, University of Maryland Students for a Democratic Society: Spring 1967.

standard value of tolerance for human life. They did not allow lives to go to waste for the profit of the elite status quo. In other words, the SDS aimed to prevent Vietnamese students and the Vietnamese community from experiencing a similar civil rights crisis.

STUDY REFERENCES ON VIETNAM

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   Congressional Record, Senate, Jan. 15, 1965, Vol. 111, No. 10
                           March 16, 1964, p. 5150
                           March 12, 1964, p. 4869
                           March 10, 1964, Vol. 110, No. 46
                           March 11, 1965, Vol. III, No. 46

Speeches by Senator Morse -
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   by Bernard Fall, Revised Edition, N.Y., Praeger Press, 1964

plus - many articles in back issues of the New Republic and Nation


                   (see other side)

       University of Maryland Students for a Democratic Society
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Figure 4. Speeches and articles on Vietnam's history and US involvement in the war. (University of Maryland Student for a Democratic Society)

Could events in 1967 have been different in a way that would have galvanized student energy, idealism, and

nationalism in support of South Vietnam's cause? [26] Assessing whether the US could have improved its probability of winning against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam requires examining the initial goal of the US invasion, which was to support the fight against communism. The US government did not follow the Constitution's requirements to officially declare war, so US advisors were limited to providing guidance through the RVN government. Neither the US consultants nor the Republic of Vietnam government could trust students, as the diversity of their views made it difficult to track the development and evolution of their ideas. Also, the infiltration of communism among students affected their perspective on the former government in the south, making it difficult for Americans to identify potential allies and easier for the National Front for the Liberation of the South [Mặt trận Dân tộc Giải phóng miền Nam] to tear them apart and recruit them to its side. [27] The Tet Offensive in 1968 reinforced the decision for reunification under the Democratic government in the north, as it was seen as the only option to end the war.[28] Although the RVN might have tried to suppress and restrict the student movement in the South, they could not influence the students' thoughts. As Tom Hayden answered in an interview in 2015, even though it was mystical, the Port Huron Statement was written to them, and they could sense that the Vietnam War result would turn sour.[29] The former US government may overlook the reality that despite investing millions of dollars in numerous initiatives to attract Vietnamese individuals, those students remained Vietnamese. Unless the US government planted "the seeds" to have their "own

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[26] Heather Stur. *"To Do Nothing Would Be to Dig Our Own Graves: Student Activism in the Republic of Vietnam."* The Journal of American-East Asian Relations 26, 3 (August 27, 2019): 315.

[27] Ibid., 289.

[28] Ibid., 315.

[29] *"T*om Hayden Interviews: Part 1*," Resistance and Revolution: The Anti-Vietnam War Movement At the University of Michigan (1965-1972).*

Vietnamese-American people," there was no guarantee that Vietnamese students living in Vietnam would remain loyal to the US when adversity came.[30]

In conclusion, during the long sixties, students transformed their mindsets and found the courage to advocate for their communities, condemning the politics that disrupted peace for the people. With US students, their decisions were shaped by the domestic issues they faced at home, including the civil rights movement and international concerns like the nuclear tensions between two superpowers. For Vietnamese students, their religious beliefs and their desire to preserve their national identity, especially after numerous conflicts, changed their attitude toward the war. Even when students' perspectives might vary from time to time and from group to group, their hearts resonated with a shared desire for freedom and peace that transcended the Cold War. Vietnamese students' ideology appeared to align with that of the Students for a Democratic Society, likely because they were experiencing the same war at a similar stage in life and were involved in the most controversial decade marked by the conflict between two major ideologies.

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[30] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince,* trans. George Bull (London: Penguin Classics, 2003)

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From Popes to Princes: Martin Luther's Shift from Clergy to Nobility in the Early Reformation

Noah Glorioso

Introduction

In 1517, Martin Luther published his *95 Theses*, a series of topics to be debated by university staff in the hope of starting a church reform movement.[1] In fact, he even dedicated a copy to the sitting pope, Leo X, hoping to draw the pontiff's attention to the matter.[2] Luther was not a radical revolutionary; he had simply noticed some issues in the church that he felt needed to be addressed. Yet just three years later, in his 1520 letter "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation", Luther quite drastically changed his tone, accusing the church in Rome of being "in the fellowship of Antichrist and the devil,"[3] and recommending for secular rulers to "take action, without regard to papal bans and fulminations."[4] In his address, Luther abandons hope for reforms by the church hierarchy, turning instead towards the secular authorities of the Holy Roman Empire. This marks a clear change in his theology and a radical break with the church. What is less clear at initial inspection is Luther's motivation for this radical break. A deeper look into the material and a study of the historical context makes it clear that Luther had important practical motivations for his shift. These

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[1] Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (United Kingdom: Wiley, 2010), 124-125

[2] Nathan Montover, "Luther's Responses to Claims of Papal Authority in 'To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,'" in *Luther's Revolution* (The Lutterworth Press, 2011), 104

[3] Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Improvement of the Christian Estate, 1520" ed., trans James Estes, in *The Annotated Luther, Volume 1: Roots of Reform*, ed. Timothy Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017) 392

[4] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," 392

include the reactions of the clergy and the laity to his ideas, and theological justifications. Luther was forced to change audience because of the resistance he met in the church and because he was welcomed by his local nobles. He justified this change through his emerging theology.

Many historians have advanced explanations for Luther's shift to the laity, tending to focus on his theological justifications for the change. John Witte provides an excellent analysis of Luther's doctrine of two kingdoms. According to Witte, Luther's doctrine opposed the traditionally hierarchical structure of the Catholic church and made both secular and religious institutions equal before God,[5] thereby legitimating the ability of the laity to correct the church. Nathan Montover, investigating Luther's address, comes to a similar conclusion. While Montover briefly discusses Luther's practical situation, including the growing divide between Luther and the church in addition to the similarities of Luther's proposals to the German *gravamina*, he largely focuses on Luther's theological development. He ultimately concludes that Luther's attacks on papal authority stem from a new conception of the world order that placed the church and the magistrates on the same footing.[6] Both authors focus their analysis on Luther's views on papal authority which legitimated his shift to the laity.

A few other scholars have also provided insight into the practical considerations that drove Luther to the laity. Richard Serina provides an overview of the church councils of the century prior to Luther's writing. While these councils identified many of the same issues as Luther, they failed to make any real changes, and Luther

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[5] John Witte, "From Gospel to Law: The Lutheran Reformation and Its Impact on Legal Culture," *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 19, 3 (2017): 276-277
[6] Montover, "Luther's Responses," 120

does not refer to their reforming character.[7] Having met fierce resistance in his own time, it seems Luther would have little reason to believe that the clergy was willing or able to enact his reforms. In studying correspondence between Luther and the German nobility, Victor Thiessen advances another practical motivation for Luther's shift. Thiessen asserts that Luther had received promises of aid from many German nobles and recognized the power they held.[8] These letters assured the reformer that he would find supporters for his ideas. Carter Lindberg's book on the Reformation also provides some valuable context to the subject, covering the events leading up to the publishing of the reformer's address, especially his growing conflict with church officials. Serina, Thiessen, and Lindberg, however, give less analysis on Luther's theological ideas or his address to the nobility, and focus instead on the context in which he was writing. Each approach offers only part of the story, together they explain much more.

Luther's shift to the laity in 1520 was necessitated by several events leading up to the publishing of his address. In attempting to instigate reform within the church, Luther had met only intransigence. In the three years between the publishing of his *95 Theses* and his address "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," it was made clear that the church would resist any movement towards reform. Also, Luther saw no precedent of reform within the church, and those clergymen who did engage in dialogue made their resistance to his proposals clear. While the church was pushing him away, several German nobles were drawing closer to Luther. He received several letters indicating direct support and offering protection for

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[7] Richard Serina, "Irreparable Breach or Late-Medieval Reform? Luther's Address to the Christian Nobility and Conciliar Reform Tradition," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 20, 2 (2020): 106
[8] Victor Thiessen, "Nobles' Reformation: The Reception and Adaptation of Reformation Ideas In the Pamphlets of Noble Writers from 1520 to 1530" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Queen's University, 1998), 96-97

him and his reforms. Consequently, Luther increasingly tied his interests to those of the nobility in his reforms, and in his address approaches many of the abuses of the church from a German civil context. All of these ideas are made clear in his address and the events leading up to its publication.

This shift was not without theological justification. Having been forced into opposition against the church, Luther had to rethink how he saw the world. If the church had erred and was resisting even the suggestion that this was the case, then the reformer would have to abandon more orthodox ideas of power. Instead of accepting that the church itself was infallible and superior to the temporal authorities, Luther became convinced that spiritual and secular institutions were in fact equal before God, meaning the lay princes had the right to step in and correct the church when it went astray. This conception of the hierarchy of power would legitimate Luther's call for the nobles to lead reform when the clergy refused. Luther then, was not motivated solely by his theological convictions. While they were certainly central to many of his proposed reforms and provided important justifications for his changing tactics, it was the practical issues facing the reformer that necessitated shifting his focus from the clergy to the laity. He had been left with no other choice in the years leading up to 1520.

Luther's address begins by attacking what he calls the 'three walls' that the papacy has built to protect itself from change. These walls are the assertions by the church that secular authority has no jurisdiction over spiritual authority, that only the papacy may interpret scripture, and that only the pope has the authority to convene a council.[9] These three walls served to deny legitimacy to any reform movement that may threaten the power of the church in Rome. Luther presents arguments against each, claiming that their illegitimate authority will not stand and that they can be made subject to the magistrates. Having

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[9] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," 380, 387, 390

dismantled the barriers to reform, Luther proceeds to outline the general issues within the church that need attention. The first problem he addresses is the pridefulness of the pope. Luther complains that the pope wears a 'triple crown,' elevating himself above the secular rulers who wear only one, and that his focus should not be on power, but on being holy and devoted to God. The pope had become preoccupied with increasing his temporal power and neglecting his spiritual duties. This, according to Luther, led to the degradation of the church and was more than enough reason to justify a council correcting it. Luther's second target was the cardinals, who he felt serve to extract wealth from Germany and transfer it to Rome, as he claims has already occurred in Italy. Again, the focus of the church is not on holiness, as it ought to be, but on accumulating wealth. This section ends by addressing the ever-growing number of people within the papal court. This large court needed funding, so payments from Germany to Rome increased. Luther complains that Rome is constantly taking control of more benefices,[10] funneling money out of Germany and into its own pockets. This does not benefit believers, he argues, but rather generates revenue for Rome and represents yet another reason reform was so badly needed.

The final section of Luther's address, by far the longest, is a set of twenty-seven specific reforms to be carried out by the secular authorities, if a reformist council could not be convened. The proposals suggested solutions to a wide range of issues, such as reverting to the old appointment system established at Nicaea, wherein the two closest bishops or the archbishop would confirm any new bishops.[11] He proposed that secular rulers should restrict pilgrimages to Rome, where common believers are led into sin by tradition.[12] There are also several proposals that do not directly address the church, including a discussion of the Bohemian question, university reform,

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[10] Ibid., 394-398.
[11] Ibid., 409.
[12] Ibid., 419-420.

and the faults of the secular rulers. Luther also argued that while the pope claims authority over the Germans because his predecessor anointed them the Holy Roman Emperors, this claim is invalid as it was God who truly orchestrated the event. [13] Having established the unwillingness of the church to enact reform, Luther addressed these proposals to the Christian nobility. While Luther still believed a council would have the authority to do so if one could be convened, he called directly on the laity in his address.

Resistance from the Church
The reaction of the clergy to Luther's ideas necessitated his shift to the nobility. In the first few years after 1517, it quickly became apparent to Luther that he would not have much success in instigating a reform from inside the existing church structure. The actions of the church, on both individual and institutional levels, convinced Luther that he would need to find another avenue for reform. His concern over the resistance of the church is reflected in his "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation." Interactions between Luther and defenders of the pope also forced Luther to rethink his approach. They quickly turned the conversation from a request for debate to an attack on the church, casting Luther in the offensive role. When looking into the history of reform within the church, he found little precedent. All these together meant Luther had little choice but to change tack.

Luther's frustration with Roman intransigence and power is evident in his address. In his words, "the Romanists have very cleverly built three walls around themselves. Hitherto they have protected themselves by these walls in such a way that no one has been able to reform them."[14] Luther explains quite clearly how the church has stymied his push for change, such that it has become impossible for anyone to even begin the process of reform. Where his opponents in the church asserted that

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[13] Ibid., 457.
[14] Ibid., 380.

spiritual authority has jurisdiction over secular authority, that only the pope can accurately interpret scripture, and that the pope alone has the authority to convene a church council, Luther argued that the church could thereby disregard all legitimate calls for reform. The clergy had stiffened their necks and committed to maintaining the status quo via structural means.

It was important for Luther as well that the construction of these walls was recent. They were innovations of the papacy rather than commands from God. As he puts it, the idea that only the pope has the authority to interpret scripture is pure innovation, "[the church] cannot produce a single letter [of Scripture] to maintain that the interpretation of Scripture or the confirmation of its interpretation belongs to the pope alone."[15] In resisting reform, the pope and his followers were not maintaining the integrity of the church, but were changing canon law to support their own privileges and power. This represents a dangerous departure from scripture towards papal absolutism. For Luther, if only the pope may interpret scripture, then believers may as well "burn the Scripture and be satisfied with the unlearned gentlemen at Rome."[16] Luther bolsters his argument by citing scripture rather than church tradition. In rebutting the claim of the preeminence of Spiritual authority, Luther cites 1 Peter and Revelations, where Paul and Jesus appear to clearly negate the theory papal monopoly on scriptural interpretation. Similarly, he refers to Matthew's command for believers to correct one another in his argument against papal absolutism. For Luther the current position of the church represents a deviation from its beginnings. It amounted to an innovation from Rome not to improve Christendom but to cement the authority of the pope. Clerical authority had been centralized in Rome to stymie any changes that would threaten the position of the pope.

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[15] Ibid., 388.
[16] Ibid., 387.

Leading up to the publishing of his address, Luther engaged the Dominican monk Prierias and the papal legate Cajetan in intense debate. Prierias saw Luther's *95 Theses* not as a proposal for internal discussion, but as an attack on the Dominican order and their involvement with indulgences and papal power. Instead of engaging in conversation with the reformer, Prierias accused Luther of heresy and reinforced the infallibility and authority of the pope.[17] Here, one can see the foundations of the three walls discussed above. The church, or at least one of its loyal supporters, has rejected attempts to address issues in the church in favor of maintaining the power of the pope and church conventions. What had begun as a request by Luther to discuss problems within the church had been reframed by his opponents as a heretical attack on the pope. As Lindberg puts it, "Luther was now forced to recognize that a particular 'abuse,' indulgences, could not be reformed without addressing the larger context of the church's self-understanding and theology."[18] This early confrontation with his opponents made it clear to Luther that the issues he saw in the church ran deeper than he may have first thought. Indulgences were not just an abuse by wayward clergy, but a symptom of a church structure designed to center power in Rome. Luther would continue to meet such resistance from supporters of this structure.

The legate, Cajetan, had a similar reaction to Luther's ideas. When Luther was requested for a trial in Rome, his noble sponsor, Frederick the Wise, negotiated a more favorable hearing to take place in friendlier Augsburg, giving Luther a chance to defend himself without settling on a final judgement.[19] As the reformer and his patron understood the situation, Luther would be able to again present his ideas for consideration, to set the stage for the debate he had requested. By the time the interviews with Cajetan began, this hope had vanished. Cajetan

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[17] Lindberg, *Reformations*, 156-157.
[18] Ibid., 159.
[19] Ibid., 165-166.

offered him two choices: recant his statements and stop spreading his ideas or accompany Cajetan to Rome in custody.[20] The concerns generated by his earlier dialogue with Prierias were therefore confirmed by the papal legate. The attitude of hostility was not limited to a single Dominican monk but permeated the entire church hierarchy. Rather than engage in the debates that Luther requested, the church decided to silence him, to prevent any substantial criticisms of their own structure. Resistance to reform went far deeper than a few conservative clergymen.

Scholarship on church reform prior to the sixteenth century also suggests that Luther would have seen little, if any, precedent of reform within the church. Serina covers two councils of the fifteenth century, arguing that while they proposed reforms on some of the same issues as Luther, they largely failed. That Luther makes no reference to them in his address demonstrates that he did not find these councils significant enough. The councils held at Constance (1416) and Basel (1431) attempted to reduce the size of the papal court but failed due to the needs of a papacy that became closer and closer in form to a secular monarchy.[21] Here, reform from within the church had been quashed before Luther ever had a chance to learn about it. Indeed, Luther identified similar problems as the councils, even if he did not have knowledge of the conciliar tradition. In his tenth proposal, Luther demands that the pope renounce his claim to rule a number of Italian kingdoms, insisting that the Holy Roman Emperor not recognize papal control of these lands. [22] While Luther may not have had specific knowledge of these failed reforms, he did observe the same structures and could see their potential to hamper change.

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[20] Ibid., 167.

[21] Serina, "Irreparable Breach," 102-103.

[22] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," 416-417.

The similarity between Luther's calls for reform and their failed conciliar counterparts reinforces the idea that the reformer saw no precedent for reform from within the church. The councils at Constance and Basel both presented the idea of abolishing annates and attempted to address the topic of reservations.[23] Similarly, Luther begins his list of reform proposals with a call for the secular rulers to forbid the payment of annates to Rome, for the nobles to abolish this system of payments.[24] In his fifth proposal, he asks the magistrates to stop recognizing reservations of benefices by the pope and to ignore any bans or penalties that arise in response. The lack of reference to the earlier councils, however, implies that Luther did not draw on their reform traditions, but other sources. Serina suggests that Luther could have drawn more directly from the German *gravamina*, a collection of complaints from the nobility of the region, rather than conciliar tradition.[25] Church history provided him with no such tradition of reform.

The reaction of the church left little room for Luther to maneuver. It was clear by 1520 that Luther could not look to the clergy to correct themselves. It is clear in the text of his address that the reformer recognized that the church was structured to prevent any reforms. The three walls, which Luther dismantled, had been constructed by Rome to centralize the authority of the church and maintain that centralization. This had been made clear to Luther on a more visceral level as well, when he immediately met resistance to the ideas brought forth by his *95 Theses*. First another monk, then a papal legate charged him with heresy. Luther's position had made him an enemy of the church, though that had never been his intention. It is clear too that Luther's reforms are not directly descended from earlier, conciliar reforms. Instead of appealing to the clergy, Luther looks outside the church and asks the nobility for support, circumventing the

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[23] Serina, "Irreparable Breach," 100-103.
[24] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," 407.
[25] Serina, "Irreparable Breach," 106.

church structure designed to stymie change. Considering all of these events, Luther had little choice but to abandon the church. They had made it clear time and again that they would tolerate no change. It is no surprise that the reformer looked to another audience when presenting his ideas.

Support from the Nobility

If reform was not possible from within the church, Luther would have to look for support elsewhere and the secular authorities of Germany became the obvious choice. In the foreword to his address, written to another professor, Nicholas von Amsdorf, Luther explains that he hopes "that God may help his church through the laity, since the clergy, to whom this task more properly belongs, have grown quite irresponsible."[26] Between 1517 and 1520, as the church branded Luther a heretic, German nobles drew closer to him. By the time he penned his address, the German nobles had become his strong allies. Luther saw in the nobles a potential for reform, driven both by his assessment of their position as Christians and his correspondence with several nobles who offered the reformer legal support and physical protection. He also saw himself on the same side as these German nobles in the growing conflict with the church. Like them, he saw the pope not as a priest, but as a tyrant hellbent on extracting as much wealth and power as he could from the Germans.

Luther was confident that nobles would listen to him when he asked them to push for reform "without restriction and without respect to persons, whether it affects pope, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or anyone else."[27] It is clerical resistance, not noble hesitance, that is stopping the secular authorities from acting to reform the church. If Luther could convince nobles of the righteousness of his cause, then they would swiftly support him. Thiessen notes that it is clear Luther already saw many of them as

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[26] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," 376

[27] Ibid., 384.

his allies, and he was trying to win over those who weren't with him.[28] Before writing his address, several nobles had made it clear in their correspondence that they agreed with him and were willing to enact his proposals. One noble had even contacted Luther for help in staffing his churches with other reformers from Wittenburg. While the church rejected him, the nobles wanted to hear what Luther had to say.

Luther was also emboldened to abandon the church by the physical protection offered by several nobles. In 1519, he received letters from two German nobles informing him that his recent disputation at Heidelburg had inspired reformers across the empire and offering him refuge at the knight Franz von Sickingen's castle.[29] Luther thus knew that it was safe to continue speaking against the pope. It was soon after receiving these letter that Luther wrote to his friend Spalatin announcing his decision to directly address the German nobility. The nobility had presented themselves to Luther as allies in the growing conflict with the church. After being rejected by the church, the reformer had found a more willing audience. He had decided that the nobles were worth talking to, worth trying to convince of his arguments. Indeed, Thiessen notes that in another letter to Spalatin, Luther expressed that these assurances gave him the courage to continue writing.

It is this courage that gave Luther the freedom to write, "if [the pope] is not the Antichrist, then somebody tell me who is."[30] The reformer no longer fears papal ban or imperial outlaw. He had abandoned the structure of the church and found support in the secular world. No longer need Luther try to convince the pope of the error of his ways, there were already powerful forces at play that had accepted the reformer's ideas. He knew that he had support in the nobility, that they were willing to fall behind him and enact his reforms.

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[28] Thiessen, *Noble's Reformation*, 57
[29] Ibid., 51.
[30] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility, 443.

While Luther had received support from his local elector and university patron, Frederick the Wise, the letters from other nobles provided a much more solid basis for support. While he supported and protected Luther, Frederick was still invested in the Catholic church. The Saxon noble's support arose, at least in part, from the fact that Luther was an important investment. His notoriety had propelled the young Wittenburg University to prominence, and Frederick did not want to lose this standing. [31] This, however, was not the elector's only source of notoriety. The German prince also had a collection of over 19,000 relics, providing him with a substantial stream of income. [32] Luther and the university were not the prince's only source of prestige, and his relic collection would have tied him to the existing structure of the church. Indeed, even when protecting Luther after his excommunication and outlaw at the Diet of Wurms, Frederick remained willfully ignorant of where the reformer was being held. Despite helping to organize the plan, he maintained a level of plausible deniability before the pope and emperor. [33] While Frederick clearly wanted to ensure Luther's safety, it is the assurances of other nobles that convinced Luther that he would be kept safe from the assault of the papacy. It was these promises of support, not those from Frederick, that emboldened Luther to continue his work.

Though separated from the church, Luther was not alone. He also saw a growing divide between Rome and the nobles of the Holy Roman Empire, placing himself on the side of the secular leaders. Luther called on the princes, nobles, and cities to ban the payment of annates to Rome, labeling annates "a robbery to the injury and shame of the whole German nation." [34] They are an abuse by the pope against the nobles Luther had come to see as allies,

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[31] Lindberg, *European Reformations*, 138.
[32] Ibid., 130.
[33] Thiessen, *Noble Reformation*, 63.
[34] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," 407.

a method of extracting German wealth for Papal projects. Luther and the nobles shared the view that Rome was siphoning not only money out of the German nobility, but authority too. In his fourth proposal for reform, Luther demands that secular matters be left to the secular authorities, rather than being transferred to the spiritual authorities in Rome. Later, in his ninth proposal, the reformer argues that "the pope should have no authority over the emperor, except the right to anoint and crown him at the altar."[35] The church in Rome has usurped these powers, which Luther believes belong to the nobility. While Luther's push for reform had begun as an attempt to address what he saw as doctrinal issues within the church, it entered into the rivalry competition between the papacy and the nobility. Rome was actively seeking political domination over the Holy Roman Empire, and Luther and the German nobles pushed back.

In his twenty-sixth proposal, Luther dives deeper into this political rivalry. Separate from his theological justifications, he advances a historical argument for the authority of the Holy Roman Empire over the pope, who had appointed the Germans as rulers of this empire. As Luther sees it, the pope gave the title of Roman emperor to the Germans to ensure the papacy would be more able to solidify its control of the empire when the emperor in Constantinople was uncompliant. [36] The pope was not bestowing a gift upon the German nation but forcing them into a submissive role in which the church in Rome held all the power. It was little more than an attempt to subordinate the Roman empire, through the compliance of the Germans to papal control. This, however, does not invalidate the position of the German emperor as the Holy Roman emperor. Luther argues that while the pope did this with ill intention, it is "certain that God has used the pope's wickedness to give such an empire to the German nation," and that the Germans should "rule it wisely and in the fear of God, as long as it pleases him for us to rule

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[35] Ibid., 410, 414.
[36] Ibid., 456.

it."[37] This authority legitimately belongs to the Germans, among whom Luther counts himself, not the Roman clergy. While the pope may not have had pure intentions, God must have willed that the empire be renewed in Germany and that the Germans control it. In asserting the authority of the empire as independent from papal control, Luther aligns himself with the interests of the German nobility.

All these factors make it clear why Luther would turn to the nobles as his new allies. They had presented themselves as invaluable supporters to the reformer. Many had been inspired to begin reform in their own provinces after hearing his ideas and offered to protect him from any reaction from the church. The reformer knew that he would be welcomed by his new audience, and that they would help ensure he could continue reforming the church. As well, Luther's growing view of the conflict with the church as a German problem made German nobles an obvious choice. He views the current church structure not as a system providing guidance and support to German Christians, but as a system of wealth extraction designed to centralize political power in Rome. In his assessment of the situation, the church had entered conflict not only with his own ideas and followers, but with the German nation itself.

Theological Justification

It is important to remember that Luther was first and foremost a theologian, and neither a politician nor a revolutionary. While the reactions of the church and the nobility to his ideas obviously necessitated a shift in thinking, he could not make this shift without a theological justification. It was his theology after all, that had originally led him to question the church that had now cast him out. It would be cynical to suggest that Luther simply formed his doctrines in an attempt to garner as much support as he could. Rather, the reformer, having

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[37] Ibid., 457-458.

been educated in the church traditions and recognizing severe flaws within the church hierarchy, could not reconcile these two ideas. His changing theology, placing power in the hands of the laity and decreasing the authority of the clergy, was an attempt to resolve these contradictions. Luther's theology emerged in opposition to the traditional hierarchy of power prescribed by the church. An early form of his doctrine of two kingdoms, relying especially on the reformer's commitment to the idea of the priesthood of all believers, legitimated his shift away from the clergy by leveling the authority of the church and the secular leaders and even further, placed a level of responsibility on the nobility to correct the wrongs he had observed in the church.

Luther's belief that the church had erred, and the existing church doctrine were simply incompatible with one another. As discussed above, the church had branded Luther as a heretic and rejected his ideas that the church needed reform. In his letter disputing Luther, the Dominican monk Prierias had argued that in matters of faith, the pope was infallible.[38] As Montover puts it, while "the concept of papal infallibility was not an official teaching of the church during the Middle Ages, the doctrine of papal authority virtually established papal infallibility."[39] This placed the church above reproach. In this framework, the mere suggestion by Luther that the church may have strayed from the proper path is unacceptable. Even more absurd would be the suggestion that the church now needs to be corrected by the secular authorities. If Luther took issue with decisions the pope had made, he was effectively taking issue with Catholic doctrine. A desire for change necessitated a new lens through which to view the power structures of late medieval Europe.

The development of Luther's new framework can be seen in his address. While the church maintained that it was

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[38] Lindberg, *European Reformations*, 157.
[39] Montover, "Irreparable Breach," 116.

above secular rulers, Luther's doctrine of two kingdoms, though not fully developed until the later 1520s, espoused a different structure. For him, the church and the secular rulers embody separate realms without one being inherently superior to another.[40] This view radically changes the dynamics between church and state with the pope no longer superior to the state, able to resist any pressure to change, and may be corrected when necessary. Indeed, Luther claims that the first wall of the papacy, that the clergy is part of a spiritual estate that is above the secular estate, is nothing more than a lie, going on to explain that priesthood is merely an office which anyone, even laymen, are capable of holding.[41] Holding this office, then, does not give a person jurisdiction over the secular authorities, but over spiritual matters in their community. It follows then that these office holders are not infallible. They are not above reproach, and any lay believer can correct them, even depose them.

Viewing late medieval Europe through this new framework of power, Luther justified his change in tactics. Luther called for a drastic reduction of the privileges afforded to the clergy. This can be seen especially well in Luther's attack on the second wall of the papacy. While his opponents claim that only the clergy in Rome may interpret the Scripture, the reformer himself turns to scripture to argue that all believers have been given this authority.[42] The clergy cannot take this ability from the laity, it has been ordained by God in his holy text. The church has no justification for this doctrine, and to Luther it is just another method of centralizing power in Rome. In this attack on clerical privilege, he drastically levels the playing field. The papal monopoly on doctrine is demolished; those who point to the errors of the papacy are not heretics, but true believers seeking to help realign the church with God's will. Luther questions, why "should we reject the word and understanding of good Christians

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[40] Witte, "From Gospel to Law," 275-276.
[41] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," 381-383.
[42] Ibid., 387.

and follow the pope, who has neither faith nor intelligence?"[43] The church has shown itself to be morally bankrupt. Luther's assessment that the church has centralized all power in Rome shows that the pope is acting not out of love or good doctrine, but to increase his own power. He has no more authority over scripture than the layman, having demonstrated that he cares far more about his own status and influence than the wellbeing of the lay believers.

Luther's interpretation of the priesthood of all believers also justifies the nobles who had shown interest in Luther's ideas. The reformer argues that if all are priests, then all can judge right from wrong in matters of faith.[44] Again, the Roman clergy are not the only people with the authority to create doctrine. In siding with Luther, the German nobles are not heretics, they can judge his ideas for themselves and exercise the authority given originally to them by God and only later taken over by the clergy. In fact, these secular authorities are "ordained of God to punish the wicked and protect the good … whether it affects pope, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or anyone else."[45] It is not just their right, but their duty to discern good from evil and, in this case, correct the errant church. Here is the justification for Luther's numerous calls for the nobles to ignore any reaction of the church when carrying out the reformer's plans. The clergy is not above the laity; the pope is not any closer to God than the German nobility; the church has no jurisdiction over the magistrate. When the pope warps doctrine to serve his own ends, and extracts wealth from German lands for no other purpose than his own greed, it falls to the nobility to step in and bring an end to these injustices.

This new duty of the nobility also guides a few of Luther's proposals for reform. In his twelfth proposal, the reformer suggests that pilgrimages to Rome should be abolished

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[43] Ibid., 388.
[44] Ibid., 389.
[45] Ibid., 384.

by secular authorities, as many have been tricked by the church into thinking that this is a good work and will earn them spiritual merit.[46] Having the authority to judge right from wrong, as Luther argued they do, the secular authorities would be able to see this deception where the common man may have missed it. In recognizing this, it then falls on the secular authority to protect their subjects from this deception. In his eighteenth proposal, Luther asks the secular authorities to abolish, or at least diminish the amount of festivals, citing the harm they cause to the common man in distracting him from his work, causing him to spend his money, and weakening his body.[47] Here again, the secular authorities are asked to step in and save the common man from the abuses of the church. What may have been intended as occasions for worship had morphed into festivals that weakened the working man. The magistrates, able to recognize the consequences that the common man appears to have overlooked, and the abuses the church has defended, are the only ones capable of stepping in. It is their duty to prevent such harm to their subjects.

Thus, Luther's changing theology helped him to resolve the contradictions between the doctrine of the church, in which power was centralized in Rome as delegated by God, and the reality he saw, in which the church had become corrupted and obsessed with wealth and temporal authority. The pope had not been given authority over the world by God, he had stolen it from the hands of the nobles, especially in Germany. Luther's developing doctrine of two kingdoms changed the dynamics of power in Europe. According to his arguments, the church and the state were equal before God, without one being inherently superior to the other. This stripped the clergy of many of the privileges they had previously enjoyed, and, importantly, brought the papal monopoly on doctrine to an end. No longer did the church write all the rules. This also meant that the secular authorities held

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[46] Ibid., 419-420.
[47] Ibid., 431-432.

much more power than the church had suggested. In a world where the church had fallen to such depths, it was on the nobles to step in and set things right. Having the authority to determine good from evil, German nobles could act to protect their subjects. God had ordained them for just such a purpose. Ideas of papal infallibility and church supremacy could not help but crumble in a world where the papacy had morphed into a corrupt system bent on extracting wealth and authority from German lands. If the church did not enjoy this authority, then there would be no issue with Luther calling on the magistrates to make change.

Conclusion

Thus, it becomes clear that Luther had no choice but to abandon the clergy in favor of the nobility, that the conditions of the world he lived in necessitated a change in thinking. Luther encountered a church that sought above all else to centralize its power and dominate the secular authorities of late medieval Europe. The clergy placed itself above reproach and labeled anyone who disagreed, including Luther, a heretic. There could be no reformation if Luther limited himself to working within the church. While this had not been his initial intention, the church had forced Luther into opposition by refusing to accept any of his criticisms. The nobles were the next logical audience for the reformer. Several nobles had already voiced their support for his reforms and offered both legal and physical protection should it be required. Luther also began to see many of the issues he had with the church in a German context. Actions by the church served not only to centralize their own power, but to dominate German rulers and extract wealth from German lands. Having been set against the church himself, Luther found a natural ally in the nobles. This context, necessitating a change in tactics, pushed the reformer to change the lens through which he viewed the world. He could not accept the infallibility of a church that had branded him a heretic for merely pointing out problems, that did everything in its power to subjugate the

magistrates to papal rule. In his emerging theology, it became clear that the church did not have this authority, that the individual has the power to interpret the word of the Lord, and that the magistrates can correct the church. If he wanted to reform Christianity, Luther had no choice but to turn from the pope to the princes.

This turn had drastic consequences for the trajectory of the Reformation. Instead of simply reforming the existing Catholic church, new churches were formed and spread across Europe. Whether he meant to or not, Luther sparked a revolutionary moment by abandoning the church in his address "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation." He abandoned the established order and called for the redistribution of power from the church to magistrates. He may have naively believed many would similarly abandon the church and fall in line behind himself, this was not the case. Having demolished the papal monopoly on doctrine, Luther set the stage for a vast labyrinth of confessions to arise over the next centuries. Anyone who disagreed with the doctrine of those around them saw a precedent for breaking away from their established churches. Though Luther felt his own interpretations were correct, he had placed authority not in himself but in the believer and in secular authorities. While heterodox thinkers before Luther, such as Jan Hus just a century prior, had been successfully excommunicated by the church hierarchy, this would no longer be the case. The center of Christianity had moved from Rome to the hearts and minds of individual believers.

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Manipulations of Death and Dying: Sanitarians and the American Funeral Industry

Aspen Huls

Introduction

The death and funeral industry encapsulate the various processes and businesses where a deceased human body is treated by professionals. From when a body is moved from the site of death, to processing the corpse as it is desired by family or dictated in their will, to finally placing the person to rest at the burialsite. Celebration or mourning practices vary widely, especially in the pluralistic cultural landscape of the United States. Furthermore, the funeral industry continuously adapts to these various cultural changes and the, and this includes adopting technological developments that are utilized to meet the deceased's final wishes. The current public discussion and stance tend to focus on the monetary impacts of funerary rituals, or the transformation of the body to being environmentally friendly. These issues stem from the long history of innovation and how cultural stances have transformed regarding the meaning of death and conducting burial practices. Since the 19th century sanitarian movement and the nation's first ever cremation, American perspectives on death have been shaped by the various debates over the image of the human corpse from death and dying practices.

This article explores the concept of body erasure from American death practices from America's first modern cremation, and the sanitarian movement that inspired it. The adoption of popular technological developments by the death industry, including alkaline hydrolysis (colloquially known as water cremation or aqua cremation) and natural organic reduction (or human composting) demonstrate the historical journey in which corpse removal became the industry standard. Contemporary American viewing practices of burial will be

examined to express the significant contributions of the sanitarian movement that led to the establishment of public burials and overcome fears of the contamination or grotesqueness of the dead.

Prior to the late 19th century, the primary way to proceed with the death of a loved one was through a burial ceremony.[1] This required the preservation of the corpse to enable that the family may be alerted from various locations. The formal burial system soon had to contend with the concurrent rapid urban development which created dense populations within a limited area. Cemetery space also became limited, assumed commercial commodity, and turban cemeteries filled quickly. Increased corpse density within these centers became a popular concern for the public and area of study for scientists and public health officials, who would later be dubbed sanitarians.[2] Sanitarians discussed the decomposition of these bodies and its impacts on the living population in the vicinity of cemeteries. 19th century scientist and sanitarian Henry Thompson reports that:

> *Thousands of human lives have been cut short by the poison of slowly decaying...the grave-yard pollution of air and water alone has probably found a victim in some social circle known to more than one who may chance to read this paper.*[3]

Thompson captures the public concern regarding the presence of the corpse in society was a serious threat and thus must be removed from populated areas for fear of sickness and death. While some sanitarians wanted to exhume bodies, and move them to less populated cemetery centers, others (including Thompson) felt that

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[1] Stephen R. Prothero, Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2001),\ 15.

[2] Ibid., 17.

[3] Henry Thompson, "The Treatment of the Body After Death." (London, *The Contemporary Review, 1873):* 321.

other changes in funeral practices should be pursued. Cremationists, condemned the usage of the traditional burial system and held it responsible for the dead body crisis. Instead they advocated for cremation practices to be implemented and incorporated into death rituals. [4] However, they had to go against a well seated tradition and historical doctrines of burial including arguments that cremation meant diluting the purity of the body through foreign elements being mixed with human ashes A funeral pyre was out of the question for the predominantly Christian nation. Christians argued the importance of the everlasting body within Christian perspectives regarding belief in the future resurrection and deemed the concept of burning a body at all as blasphemous. In response, cremationists had to partially accede to the American Christian population on keeping foreign residue from mixing in with the ashes. The need for preserving the purity of the body, meant that cremation had to be modernized. In the United States' first cremation, the modern or scientific solution was placing the body into an oven.[5]

Dr. Francis LeMoyne is credited with conducting the first modern cremation in Washington, Pennsylvania in 1876. He cremated Baron Joseph Henry Louis Charles DePalm, who was contained in a brick-and-mortar oven at 2300 degrees Fahrenheit in LeMoyne's brand new crematorium.[6] In this building, cremations could be done back-to-back and ventilation systems were installed to prevent excess pollution even if large amounts of bodies were processed. [7] This was done intentionally, as the

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[4] Stephen R. Prothero, Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2001), 16-17.

[5] *"The Cremation of Baron de Palm," Scientific American 35, 26 (December 23, 1876): 401–401,*
https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican12231876-401b.

[6] Ibid.

[7] *"Baron De Palm's Request," The New York Times, December 4, 1876.*

quicker remains could be processed the less danger they could present to the American public.

LeMoyne's Crematorium, photos taken by author Nov 14, 2024

This performative cremation of Baron DePalm attracted debate across the United States. LeMoyne had hoped the public spectacle would demonstrate the effectiveness of cremation as an alternative to burial. However, Christian groups found his work to be fundamentally immoral and blasphemous because of the destruction of the body. Many Christians attended DePalm's cremation and took advantage of the larger audience of journalists to protest the immoral practice.[8] After witnessing three hours of body burning, [9] many of who were initially neutral afterwards felt that "the scenes...savor strongly of

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[8] *"The Cremation of Baron de Palm," Scientific American 35, 26 (December 23, 1876): 401–401,*
https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican12231876-401b
[9] *"Baron De Palm's Request," The New York Times, December 4, 1876.*

disgust," [10] Reminded that cremation was justified because families previously buried their dead at various stages of decomposition. DePalm's cremation provided an actual image of the burning body could be seen through a small window into the oven. The public did not see a dead body burning, but the purgatory of a being and the image of entertainment that the spectacle portrayed. The view that the dead was not rescpected led to later instances of cremation being restricted from families or loved ones watching the burning of the body. Instead, modern cremation became an option to remove rituals and even visuals on the body and amounted to a fundamental change from many families viewing the decomposing bodies of their dead relatives. Ironically, DePalm's crematorium which was reported as "grotesqueness" of burning and decomposition replaced a previous common experience of grotesque burial by providing ways for relatives and loved ones from seeing the decomposition or cremation of their dead.

Despite the reported publicity issues following Baron DePalm's crematorium in Pennsylvania, cremation interest and numbers grew exponentially throughout the American landscape as increased publicity due to the unprecedented incident led to exposure beyond a purely scientific, funeral professional, or sanitarian focused audience. The public began to accept cremation services for their loved ones or modify their will accordingly so that their final wishes of cremation would be respected. The advertisement certainly played a factor, but it was the cost effectiveness of cremation that cannot be ignored. Both forms represent an important culture shift in burial practices in the United States.

As seen on the graph below, there were only 4 cremations between 1876-1879, but only 10 years later it grew by 2875% to 119. By 1895, there were a total of 4647 cremations that year nationally (3805% increase). This exponential growth is startling in the face of the previous backlash, but not unexplainable. Between the cost

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[10] Ibid.

effectiveness of cremation and the heavily publicized benefits of cremating the body, the disgust associated with perception of the cadaver remains prevalent throughout common American societal perspectives.

CREMATORY	'76/'79	'80	'81	'82	'83	'84	'85	'86	'87	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES
Washington, Pa.	4	4	6	I	10	13												40	30	10
New York							(5)	82	61	86	108	152	176	191	236	243	300	1635	1139	496
San Francisco I														42	111	82		235	129	106
San Francisco II																	60	60	37	23
St. Louis										24	20	42	60	64	72	87	90	459	313	146
Philadelphia										14	28	31	51	62	68	74	84	412	276	136
Boston															I	86	83	170	92	78
Cincinnati									11	21	34	45	43	34	42	38	61	329	225	104
Chicago															6	38	64	108	63	45
Buffalo								9	17	16	23	30	37	27	30	32	35	256	170	86
Los Angeles									7	5	12	17	29	41	37	34	35*	217	...	...
Detroit									7	9	17	20	23	34	42	22	22	196	122	74
Lancaster						3	36	14	13	13	3	5	4	5	6	3	2	107	72	35
Pittsburg								14	9	11	8	9	13	14	13	10	12	113	...	...
Baltimore											4	5	12	16	23	15	16*	91	...	...
Troy												4	10	14	15	13	8	64	...	...
Davenport													6	7	13	8	7	41	...	...
Swinburne Island, N.Y.												5	3	67	26	8	I	110	...	...
Waterville, N.Y.															I	I		2	2	...
Pasadena, Cal.																	2	2	2	...
Fort Wayne, Ind.																				
	4	4	6	I	10	16	36	119	125	199	262	363	464	576	673	825	964	4647		

TABLE OF CREMATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1876 to 1895.

Most figures for 1895 comprise only 11 months.   * Estimated.

The Urn, "Table of Cremations in the United States 1876-1895"

The need to minimize the disgust and make the corpse safe remains guided the growth of the burial industry. Cremationists and Sanitarians alike adopted new cadaver processing technologies mainly to achieve cost effectiveness and to minimize the public relations dilemma that botched burials and cremations regularly garnered. Confronted with the uncomfortable reality of decomposition and dying, many scientists and innovators have removed the most intolerable and most human aspect of the dying process from the eyes of families and friends. With this erasure, alternative death and burial practices have been steadily on the rise and the product created from these processes are far from recognizable as the physical human form.

Science and Technologies of Death and Burial

Alkaline hydrolysis, commonly known as and advertised by the name aquamation or water cremation, is performed by placing the body into a solution of water and strong alkali, usually potassium hydroxide (active ingredient in dissolving tissues, only 5% of the mixture),

that is then heated to process the remains.[11] This body processing option is not "new"; it was invented in 1888 during the same sanitation popularity that inspired LeMoyne's construction of America's first crematorium. However, the initial purpose of the technology was for processing animal remains.[12] It was not until 2005 when Indiana-based company Bio-Response Solutions partnered with the Mayo Clinic that aquamation practices were performed on human remains at a commercial and publicized level.[13] Families are not permitted to view their loved ones while they are in the alkaline hydrolysis chamber undergoing this process, and the remains that are returned to them are completely absent of RNA and DNA identifiers.[14] In the words of Bio-Response Solutions advertising, "All organic material is reduced to its most basic building blocks," as well as being "100% safe, pathogen and disease free."[15]

Legalization of this method is still contested over the idea that excess materials from the cadaver are "flushed" into the sewer system. [16] Environmentalists argue that similar to the embalming fluids used in preparing a body for a viewing, Alkaline hydrolysis also disposes hazardous substances into the environment. This feeds the dead body disgust perspective and invites sanitarians and cremationists to prove that the entire method is safe and energy efficient. The contest is usually public, and the best evidence of the more persuasive perspective is that despite public apprehension over the disposal of liquid

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[11] Philip R. Olson, "Flush and Bone," Science, Technology, & Human Values 39, 5 (April 14, 2014), 635.

[12] "Alkaline Hydrolysis," Cremation Association of North America (CANA), n.d.,

[13] "Aquamation Frequently Asked Questions," Aquamation Info, September 19, 2023, https://aquamationinfo.com/.

[14] Philip R. Olson, "Flush and Bone," Science, Technology, & Human Values 39, 5 (April 14, 2014), 668.

[15] "Aquamation Frequently Asked Questions," Aquamation Info, September 19, 2023, https://aquamationinfo.com/.

[16] "Alkaline Hydrolysis," Cremation Association of North America (CANA), n.d.

remnants, cremation and Alkaline continues to draw increasing popularity among the larger American public. This growth can be attributed to the environmental friendliness of the operation, and the public notion of the human cadaver as contaminated and needing to be cleaned or erased.

Remains of aquamation are composed of a powder of dissolved bone fragments, which are then returned to the family in a box or urn of their choice.[17] In comparison to traditional fire-based cremation, these final remnants are a bleached white, and can be easily misunderstood to be inorganic, as demonstrated in the below image that is

used as advertising for water cremation:

Image taken from Bio-Response Solutions "Aquamation Information" Brochure

On the surface, this physical difference may appear as inconsequential, however, the reality is that aquamation is further disguises the corpse within its industry. The stark white powder mix is no longer recognizable as human remains, even arguably further from traditional remnants from cremation that is offered to families and loved ones. The absence of RNA and DNA identifiers from the processed remains removes the last traces of the human body that were present in cremation ceremonies and practices. The corpse not only loses its physical

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[17] Ibid.

presence in death rites but simultaneously loses any proof of identity or humanity. Complete sterility demonstrates the overreaching impact of the sanitarian and cremationist movement on the cultural treatment of corpses.

Sterility therefore amounts to a radical change in human corpse removal. From when burial practices required space and location, the innovativeness of water cremation in funerary practice implied the total eradication of the corpse as an organic matter. The adoption of alkaline hydrolysis practices from agricultural means of recycling animal cadavers, also marked a departure from traditional and religious conceptions of the human body, live or corpse as an embodiment of a spirit. Sterile death process utilized on the human body and corpse appeared to satisfy the continuous public demand for cleaner, safer mortuary operations. The body is further removed and made unrecognizable even in death. Further developments in funerary practice advancement share the similar corpse removal perspective and go even further in regard to unrecognizable human remains.

Natural organic reduction (NOR) of the human body, colloquially known as "human composting" or "terramation," is a recent development in the practice of death, and body disposal. Introduced in 2013, it soon evolved into the first terramation business offering company, Recompense in 2020.[18] Recompose is run by the inventor of natural organic reduction on human bodies, Katrina Spade.[19] Spade's company advertises a peaceful, green, and clean way to turn your loved one back into earth.[20] Rather than the body being placed into an industrial strength oven or tank of water and alkali, the deceased is placed into a vessel full of woodchips,

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[18] Alexis David, "From Death to New Life: The Ethics behind Human Composting," UC Merced Undergraduate Research Journal 16, 2 (April 28, 2024), 4.
[19] "About Us," Recompose, October 31, 2024, https://recompose.life/.
[20] "How it Works," Recompose, October 31, 2024, https://recompose.life/.

mulch, straw, or any similar organic materials. This comes with the intention that foreign matter will accelerate the decomposition process and create a nutrient dense soil, a process that takes 8 to 12 weeks.[21] Within two months, the body is fully decomposed and transformed into a fertilizing soil, leaving behind no bones or other remains for the family to keep other than the fertilized soil left behind. The remains amount to about a cubic yard of soil per body weighing up to 1,000lbs.[22]

Images from Recompose, "How it Works," of the vessels that the cadaver is placed in for NOR

Decomposition is a natural process, and the exact science of what is happening to the body is not incomprehensible to Americans observing traditional death practices. When traditionally burying a loved one after a viewing, this practice is not far removed from what occurs after burial,

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[21] Ibid.

[22] "What is Human Composting?" Recompose, October 31, 2024, https://recompose.life/.

but rather a more environmentally friendly option. However, the removal of the image of the body is still palatable within this practice, partly due to the narrow range of locations that offer this service and the product that families may or may not go home with.

Terramation access remains limited to a few states bing only legal in Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Vermont, New York and California.[23] Its main claim is as a means of speedy transportation of the body through the unimpeded decomposition process of NOR. Embalming of the cadaver in attempts for preservation is not permitted for this practice.[24] Consequently, Americans who are living outside of areas where terramation is offered, must move the body of their loved one quickly, and this may take away time for a viewing or other ritual involving the deceased. Instead, families may choose to have a "celebration of life," where the body is not present. The implication is thus that the body is removed from the death ritual. Like cremation and NOR, terramation practice represents another major shift in the culture of corpse disposal and reinforces increasing American erasure of the corpse from death and burial.

Regardless of its claim to be a safe and environmentally advantageous form of corpse disposal, terramation has also not been witouth its opponents. Those who hold to traditional conceptions of burial continue to challenge the the concept of body erasure There are also logistical problems like transportation which remains an ever-present issue relating to this practice. Although large amount of soil is accumulated by this process, only a fraction of it is made up of the body placed within it. This is a logistical dilemma because upon decomposure it is impossible to separate the body from other organic matters, otherwise the decomposition process would be

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[23] Alexis David, "From Death to New Life: The Ethics behind Human Composting," UC Merced Undergraduate Research Journal 16, 2 (April 28, 2024), 6.
[24] "Transportation From Outside Washington State" Recompose, October 31, 2024, https://recompose.life/.

prolonged. Families often leave behind large amounts of soil and may only taking a portion of what would be their loved one. This accumulation of "waste product," while still relatively environmentally friendly, has still been consistently contested by those who maintain this industry, much like, forensic researcher Dina Cirigliano, a critic of the NOR process who poses the following question:

> *If Recompose of Seattle states that 50% of families pick up the hundreds of pounds of composed soil, that means 50% do not. Some pick up a small containerful. Some do not pick any up at all. The question is, what happens to it then?*[25]

Images from Recompose, "Exceptional Human Composting Services" of amounts of soil that they will ship to you

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[25] Dina Lenore Cirigliano, "Natural Organic Reduction as a Means of Body Disposition," OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying 88, 2 (February 25, 2023), 769.

The straightforward answer here is that the totality of remains is not what matters within the American perspective of those who processed the deceased through NOR. Much of the product can be discarded easily, as ensuring that the presence of the entire body being returned to the family is demonstrated to not be a priority. The components of the corpse itself may not be present in the portion that families receive if they receive it at all, and thus can be promptly removed from mourning processes and understanding of remains through this method. Sanitarian advertise the process as being completely pathogen free, [26] the advertising of which exemplifies the American concerns of the dangers and sickness of the corpse that was not present until the 19th century sanitarian movement.

While the body in its original form has been considered grotesque and unworthy of ceremony and needing to be changed due to its inherent environmental risk, terramation practices offer a clean way to handle a corpse, and allows for some to never look at the body before sending it off to be turned into unrecognizable earth. This is furthering the prevalence of sanitarian ideals where bodies have been allowed to be altered into something "worthwhile," and absent of hazards.

Overall, while there is a growing consensus that cremation services are ensuring environmental friendliness and that they resolve the problems associated with traditional burial, their treatment of the body is simply a byproduct that continues to attract criticism. They represent fundamental shifts in American burial practices that actively emphasize the transformation of the body. Scientific knowledge such as the Biochemistry revolution pushed the changes along by revealing the roles of bacteria in discomposure. Other science and technological tools have further promoted body corpse erasure. To keep up with the competition in the death

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[26] "What Happens to Diseases During Human Composting" Recompose, October 31, 2024, https://recompose.life/.

industries burial businesses have outdone one another in finding the best means of corpse disposal. While options such as embalming practices to preserve, the body have already been prevalent in the United States since the Civil War.[27] There are other avenues have been explored within environmentally detrimental burial practices to make the corpse appear that it is still living, thus making it as equally unthreatening to the comfortability of removing the corpse from death practices within America as other, newer cultural movements surrounding funerary practices.

Reviving the Body: The Endurance of Corpse Preservation

Despite the efforts of Sanitarians, traditional ideas of corpse preservation has not disappeared. Land burials continue to adapt to the challenges of space and expense for instance by creating multiple chambers in burial spaces. Those insistent of keeping the visual corpse have also adopted prosthetics, cosmetics, and other technologies to make a cadaver appear more lifelike. This process is commonly referred to as aesthetic or cosmetic restoration.[28] In this way, the burial industry can preserve burial traditions and at the same time mitigate the grotesqueness associated with dead bodies. Aesthetic restoration is expensive, but remains a popular practice and in the country.[29] Great efforts are taken to make the corpse look lifelike prior to viewings of the deceased, so much so that "in the American way of burial and embalming, the dead could still be said to be sleeping."[30] While there has been Christian opposition to technologies

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[27] Philip R. Olson, "Flush and Bone," Science, Technology, & Human Values 39, 5 (April 14, 2014), 670.

[28] Clifton D. Bryant and Dennis L. Peck, Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience (Los Angeles Calif., California: SAGE, 2009), 231.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Stephen R. Prothero, Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America (Berkeley , California: University of California Press, 2001), 207.

such as terramation and aquamation, this cosmetic practice has not been objected to by popular Christian thought. This form of manipulated bodies for burial rituals allows a masking of the dead from death practices without violating Christian complaints surrounding destruction of the body. The aesthetic restoration of the deceased is a highly personal process, as no face or body is the same, especially in varying stages of decomposition. Due to the popularity of the service and versatility of skill that is required. American mortuary schools focus heavily on cosmetic restoration as part of their curriculum.[31]

The 19th century sanitarian movement initiated the process by which cosmetic restoration became popularized.[32] Cosmetics provided for those who are unwilling to take part in burial because they are disturbed by the corpse could be made comfortable by the cosmetic presentation of the corpse as though it was sleeping. Instead of transforming the cadaver through deconstruction of the body, it became popular to simply manipulate the dead, so that all signs of death were removed. Religious minded persons accepted this form as they could accept that that death did not disfigure the body in ways that were being described within sanitarian circles. Similar to cremation practices this movement has yet to fade out of American burial imagination and instead is consistently reinforced due to fear of the contamination of the dead.

It is difficult to pass any judgement regarding the morality or otherwise of any of the options for the burial of a loved one. It is valuable however to underscore that these innovations evolved as responses to historical and material realities. Scientists and Sanitarians campaign for options that are better for the environment and offer comfort to American families wanting to do their part to ensure that the deceased are properly taken care of in accordance with their final wishes. By the same token,

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Philip R. Olson, "Flush and Bone," Science, Technology, & Human Values 39, 5 (April 14, 2014), 670.

those invested in traditional burials are offered dynamic forms of disposal for the bodies of their loved ones. American federalism provides for choice in burial options in wills and consent. All of these options depict American innovativeness in solving 19th century problems of the grotesqueness of death and corpses. Concerns over the erasure of the body may not ever be resolved for the loved ones of the dead. The very fact of death is an erasure anyway. . Our contemporary funeral system owes much to the innovativeness of 19th century sanitarian and cremationist thinkers.

According to a 2024 study, one of the top five fears of Americans is them or their loved ones dying.[33] While mourning or sadness are appropriate responses to death, the proper burial or disposal of the corpse is a public concern. Traditional burial systems provide for loved ones to continue to interact with their deceased loved ones in an organic as though they are still present. Visits and pilgrimages to burial sites provide a sense of continuity in relationship with the deceased and can mitigate the sense of loss through giving aspect and grace to the dead. Such burials have been transformed from their 19th century forms by the funeral industry through concerted efforts to minimize or completely remove the dead from burial practices. In so doing, the funeral industry distracts from the grotesqueness of death and can either present the body in an acceptable state or not at all. The Sanitarian movement of the 19th century promoted cremation and other forms of corpse dispersal. The pace of science and technology has enlarged the capacity of the funeral industry into other areas such as Alkaline hydrolysis and Natural Organic Reduction (NOR). Cumulatively these innovations have helped to dissipate fear around which was common during the 19th century. At least for this, society owes the revolutionary intervention of the Sanitarians and cremationists.

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[33] Robyn Rapoport, *The Chapman Survey of American Fears, Wave 10: The Complete List of Fears 2024,* Chapman University. May, (2024): 1.

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