



Volume V • Edition II

The
Podium

November 2020



An important note: All opinions and ideas expressed in The Podium are the personal opinions and convictions of featured student writers and are not necessarily the opinions of The Podium staff, the Belmont Hill History Department, or the Belmont Hill School itself.

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The Interior of the Newly Renovated Chapel

Obtained from: Buner/Cott Architects

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Letter from the Staff

Dear Reader,

Volume V - Edition II of The Podium is poised to be one of our largest, most varied editions yet -- despite the pandemic. And with our largest staff ever, the magazine has been able to accommodate more subjects and opinions than in past editions. We also remain committed to hosting a sound and informative publication inclusive of all perspectives on campus. Last, *The Podium* plans to release a brand-new website in the coming weeks, where more research essays and op-ed competitions will be published alongside each full edition.

Edition II begins with a number of research essays from the Lower and Upper Schools, covering topics from Israel and Palestine to Chinese dynasties and the Treaty of Versailles. Belmont Hill's History Department kindly nominated a variety of essays -- although not all could be included in the Edition, it is always a pleasure to receive well-written arguments from students across campus.

This Edition includes two winning op-ed pieces on the subject of a "return to normal" and a potential vaccine. Daniel Bittner ('22) predicts in his op-ed that because of Belmont Hill's demography (young, healthy students), the school could be among the last to broadly receive a vaccine, no matter how early it is released. Howard Huang ('22) includes in his essay that, although a vaccine should be mandated, it will be met with tremendous resistance -- both outside of and within federal and state governments. Congratulations again to these two submissions!

Last, this Edition concludes with three staff-written articles: *Amy Coney Barrett and the Severability Principle* on the newest Supreme Court justice (Luke Carroll), the COVID-19 Tracking Project (Kevin Jiang, Howard Huang), and a data breakdown from our revealing College Admissions Fairness Poll to students in grades 9-12 (Charles March, Jack Kendall). While it's certainly been an eventful few months since our last Edition, the staff has worked diligently to cover a number of interesting topics.

Luke Carroll '22 | **President**

Howard Huang '22, Kevin Jiang '22, and Abe Tolkoff '21 | **Executive Editors**

Lawrence Tang '22, Jack Kendall '22, Charles March '22, Thomas Madden '22, Owen Gerah '22, Luke Hogan '22, Will Seward '22, Gabe Klug '22, Morris Smith '22, and Jason Wong '23 | **Podium Staff**

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Nominations

For Research Papers and Essays

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Timo Simonin '22

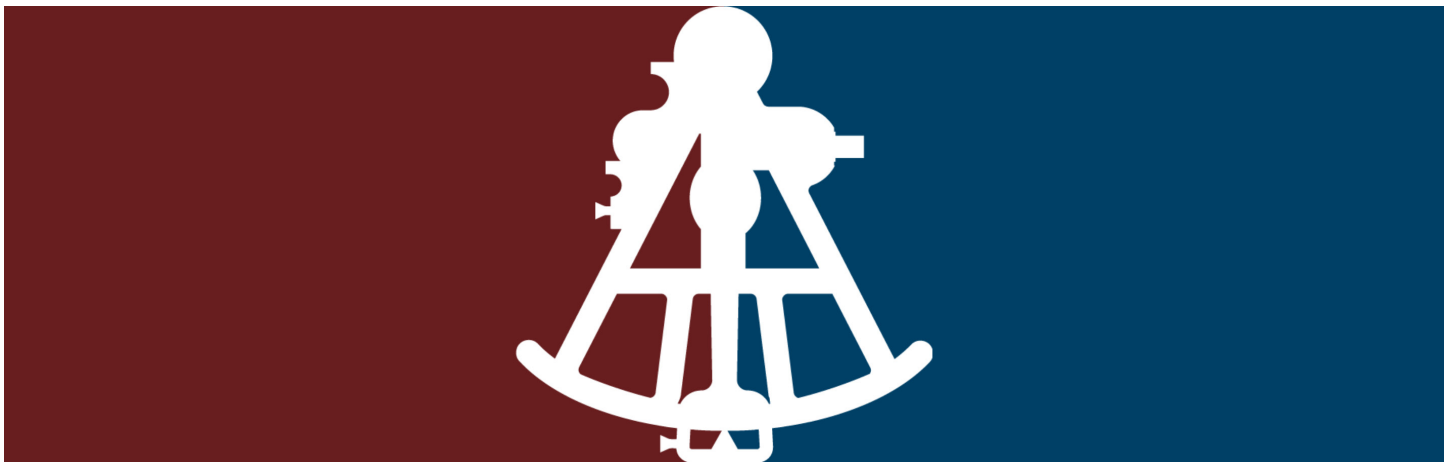
Form III **M.E. & China**

Bribery. Fraud. Breach of Trust

Daniel Drucker '23

The Effects of World War II on
Egypt

Cameron Connell '23



Thank you to the History Department for their assistance in identifying strong essays and papers. Their dedication to The Podium is vital to the success of the final publication.

A stylized blue graphic of a scale of justice, centered on the page. It features a wide, flat top platform, a central vertical column, and a smaller platform at the bottom. The top platform has three horizontal lines near its edges. The central column has rounded, bulbous shapes at its top and bottom where it meets the platforms.

Opinion Pieces



Vaccine: Choice or Force?

Author-Howard Huang '22

Section-Opinion Pieces

The COVID-19 Pandemic has hampered learning at Belmont Hill by distancing students from teachers; however, an end is in sight with the development of a functional vaccine for the virus potentially being able to reduce the risk of infection. Depending on the source of information, the vaccine is set to roll out anytime from December of this year to 2022. Operation Warp Speed is an initiative by several government agencies that has the sole goal of providing 300 million doses of a vaccine as soon as possible. More than \$10 billion of funding has been provided by Congress, and the operation already is running vaccines through test trials while planning distribution of the doses to Americans. Once a vaccine that can provide immunity to the virus is released, though, should schools require students to get vaccinated in order to attend school in-person? Yes, this is a common sense measure school boards should pass.

In the past years, social media has permitted the spread of disinformation in groups that are against vaccinations which has made the scientific consensus on the usefulness of vaccines overridden for some by badly researched conspiracy posts and political opinions. Luckily, these so-called “anti-vaxxers” are a relatively small portion of the population meaning that herd immunity is still in effect; however, if enough students fail to get vaccinated before in-person school starts, Belmont Hill could still suffer an outbreak within its campus.

On the other hand, families would have good reason to refuse to send their children into an unrestricted school to get infected with the virus if there is no vaccination requirement. Although

the students are at relatively low risk of life-threatening symptoms of Covid-19, they could easily infect high-risk family members.

Congress and the President are unwilling to mandate vaccination because it would alienate a portion of voters for the next election; however, it is likely that once a vaccine is released, the federal government will undertake a major vaccination campaign that would quickly achieve herd immunity. If any government attempts to make vaccination a law, then there will likely be much protest against a perceived infringement of a right to make medical decisions, so the burden is on schools, companies, and independent institutions to mandate vaccination for its members.

Studies have shown that even simple measures like social distancing and mask wearing can limit the spread of the virus; however, these are not the airtight solutions that parents are looking for to send their children into potential danger. Students should absolutely be required to get vaccinated for the virus if able before returning to in-person school. Schools have the duty to protect the health of their student population by enforcing vaccination to prevent outbreaks.

Gradually Returning to Normalcy

Author-Daniel Bittner '22

Section-Opinion Pieces

Ever since the beginning of the pandemic, people have often hoped that the creation of a vaccine will immediately precipitate a return to normal life. However, this prospect of a quick return to normalcy is impractical and unrealistic, as the process of manufacturing and distributing vaccines will likely be conducted slowly and in phases. In accordance with this slow distribution of vaccinations, Belmont Hill will similarly only be able to return to its normal structure gradually. Only when enough of the Belmont Hill community is immune to COVID-19 that the remaining portion of the community is safe can Belmont Hill safely relax restrictions and return to normal.

American vaccine-manufacturers and immunologists alike have reiterated to the American public that after the creation of a safe vaccine, its initial manufacturing will likely be slow and only be available to select portions of the population. The individuals who would likely first receive the vaccine include people with preexisting conditions and those who live in communities and states that have been the most hardly hit by the pandemic. While these demographics represent a considerable portion of the American population, they only constitute a small part of the Belmont Hill community, as the majority of the community is relatively young, healthy, and living in areas which have effectively controlled the pandemic relative to other sections of the country. Furthermore, while some individuals from Belmont Hill will receive early access to the vaccine, the large majority will be delayed in receiving it, and thus will still be prone to contracting the virus long after the vaccine's initial distribution. Only when the vaccine becomes more widely available and the majority of the community has the ability to receive it can Belmont Hill consider a return to normal.

Nevertheless, even when the majority of the Belmont Hill population has access to

a vaccine, Belmont Hill will still have to wait until the people without immunity have a low enough risk of contracting the virus in order to return to normal. In order for this situation to occur, a certain percentage of the Belmont Hill population must be immune. Such a situation can only occur through a principle called "herd immunity". Herd immunity is the notion that if a certain percentage of a community is immune to a disease, the disease will not be able to effectively spread and affect the remaining individuals. In contrast to some recent ideology suggesting that herd immunity can be achieved through intentionally infecting low risk individuals, this strategy is simply too dangerous in exposing individuals to the virus. Instead, herd immunity can only be realistically achieved through mass immunizations. While the percentage of a population needed to achieve herd immunity tends to be different for every virus, and while scientists predict that around 70% of the population must be immune to achieve herd immunity, the exact number for COVID-19 has yet to be determined. In order for Belmont Hill to be able to return to normal, the percentage of individuals who are immune within the community must reach this number, allowing the remaining population to remain safe from the virus.

To ensure that the threshold of herd immunity is achieved, the required percentage of the Belmont Hill community will either have to receive the vaccine or produce a positive antibody test. Since individuals will likely be tentative to receive the vaccine at first, this threshold may not be initially met by the community, in which case the school should continue to maintain its current precautions and guidelines, and should not require students to receive the vaccine. However, when the vaccine is commonly recognized to be safe by scientists, Belmont Hill should require individuals to receive the vaccine, similar to how schools mandate that students receive the

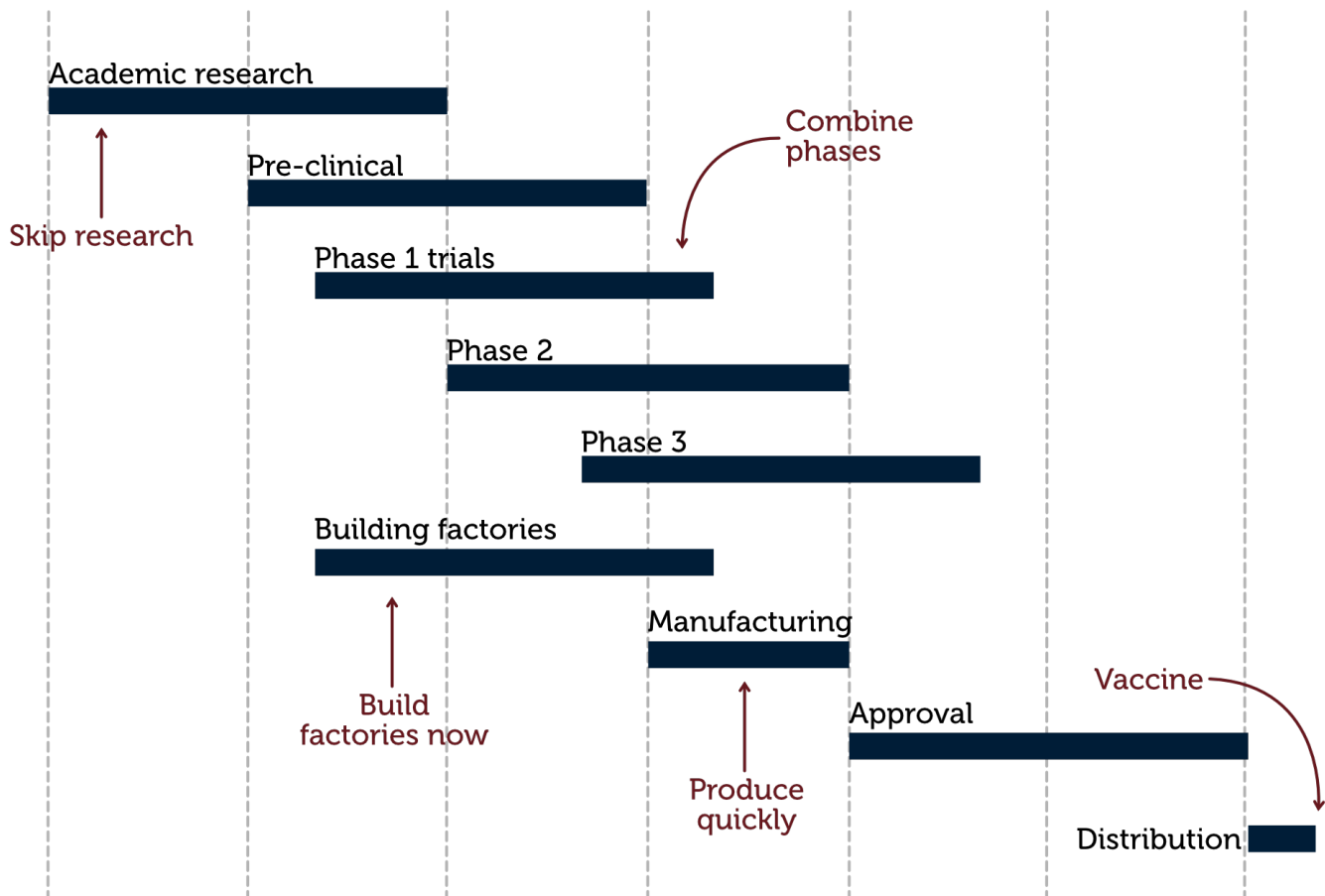


flu vaccine. Only then, when the percentage of the community required to achieve herd

immunity is vaccinated and immune, can Belmont Hill fully return to normal.



Predicted timeline for the creation and distribution of a Covid-19 vaccine



Source: New York Times

First Day of Classes Photos



Source: BH Communications

First Day of Sports Photos



Source: BH Communications

A stylized blue graphic of a classical column capital and base. The capital is at the top, featuring a wide, flat top with three horizontal lines below it. The base is at the bottom, featuring a wide, flat base with a single horizontal line above it. The central shaft of the column is represented by a vertical rectangle.

Research Papers



Weimar Rearmament

Author-William Okurowski '22

Section-Research Papers

After WW1 and the Treaty of Versailles, Germany rose to become one of the most powerful militarized nations in the 20th century. In 1919, the allied nations, because of the Paris Peace Settlements, left Germany economically destroyed with no military force. As a result, Germany entered secret alliances, formed military bases, and revolutionized their military. The Treaty of Versailles, along with its harsh economic reparations and military restrictions, led to an unexpected, secret German-Soviet alliance, influenced the reinvention of the German military tactics and philosophy, and improved Germany's mechanized forces with the development of the Panzer division.

The Paris Peace settlements were negotiated at the Paris Peace conference and signed on June 28, 1919. Happening at the Halls of mirrors at the Palace of Versailles, the Paris Peace settlements brought World War I to an end. The treaty ended the destructive four years of conflict and 16 million deaths from the war. The Paris Peace Settlements aimed to completely economically destroy Germany. In reparation, Germany was required to pay 132,000,000,000 gold marks to pay for the conflict of WW1. The Treaty of Versailles also aimed to destroy Germany's military. By decreasing German military power, the allied nations hoped that there would be no future conflict. The treaty restricted Germany's armed military to only 100,000 men. The League of Nations also found it critical that Germany would not be allowed to produce submarines or airplanes. In addition, German military conscription was banned, so only volunteers could become a part of the German military. Overall, the League of Nations aimed at decreasing the chance of future conflict by crippling Germany's economy and army.

The Treaty of Versailles also led and promoted a new secret alliance between Germany and Soviet Russia, designed to support German military technological development and funding. To restore a pre-WW1 economy, Article 235 in the Treaty of Versailles stated that Germany, had to pay "in such installments and such manner (whether in gold, commodities, ships, securities or otherwise) as the Reparation Commission may fix, during 1919, 1920 and the first four months of 1921, the equivalent of 20,000,000,000 gold marks." These economic reparations were designed to cripple Germany and to leave them without the necessary finances to support future militarization. Under the command of General Hans von Seeckt, Germany began to seek a new, unexpected alliance with the Soviets. Previously, Germany had fought brutally against the Russians in WWI. The long and devastating conflict ended with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918, which forced Russian concessions of significant territory to the Germans. The Treaty of Versailles reversed some of these concessions, but the Russians, at the Paris Peace Conference were virtually shut out, leaving them without Western support against the rise of the Bolshevik led Soviets. This left Germany and the Soviets post-Versailles so vulnerable to Western allies that they were willing to forge new military and economic alliances. At the Treaty of Rapallo in April of 1922, Germany and the Soviet Union formalized their relationship and the two nations renounced all territorial and monetary claims against each other as a result of WWI. Without Western powers knowing, a secret clause was added to the treaty. In the secret clause, the German military would receive

heavy weapons and facilities; meanwhile, Germany was to provide military training for the Soviets and to give annual payments. This secret alliance caused grave consequences for the West by the start of WWII as it allowed the German military to perfect the tactics of military deception and integrate the German industry into a military-industrial complex. Germany's army, to hide their military development and avoid Versailles' sanctions, had private companies take over shipyards, factories for aviation, artillery, grenades, rifles, chemical weapons plants, and other facilities. The first base to open was 600 miles south of Moscow at Lipetsk. Over 1000 German pilots, observers, mechanics, and engineers would live at Lipetsk and the base would become the core for the development of the Luftwaffe.



Figure 1: German and Soviet officers are seen working together at Lipetsk.

After Hitler in 1935 renounced the Treaty of Versailles and publicly revealed the development of the German rearmament, aviation production evolved and returned to Germany. By 1939, at Flossenbürg, a German concentration camp, forced labor from Jews was used to produce German planes. This concentration camp would remain operational until 1945 and would keep German aviation a prominent threat throughout the war. Overall, the Treaty of Versailles, along with its harsh military and economic reparations, coerced Germany to ally with a previous enemy. This unexpected alliance formed after Rapallo allowed Germany to rebuild its army and develop new technologies of war.

The restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles on the German military and economy also fundamentally led to the reinvention of German military doctrine. Article 160 of the Treaty of Versailles notes that later than “March 31, 1920, the German army must not comprise more than seven divisions of infantry and three divisions of cavalry. After that, the total number of effectiveness in the army if the States constituting Germany must not exceed one hundred thousand men.” Also, Article 176 mandated the decrease in German military schools and “all military academies or similar institutions in Germany, as well as the different military schools for officers, student officers, cadets, non-commissioned officers or student non-commissioned officers, other than schools provided above will be abolished.” During WWI, Germany relied on positional warfare and a command-and-control-culture that relied on central orders with top-down mandates from upper staff. These tactics supported slow-moving armies and defensive tactics, maintained by stationary machine guns and massive artillery. Following the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was faced with no general staff, limited troops, and no special training program. Coming from these restrictions, Germany was led to innovate, resulting in new revolutionized military doctrines. These tactics were changed to alter how commanding officers deployed troops, used weapons, and invaded countries. The new philosophy was based on the idea that individual soldiers, at all levels in the military, would have increased responsibility. In the new doctrine, known as *Verantwortungsfreudigkeit*, each soldier in the army would be held accountable for their actions. This original doctrine, based on soldier's independence, eventually evolved into *Truppenführung* by 1933. This developed doctrine was based on the concept that “all leaders must work in all situations without fearing responsibility exert his whole personality. The joy of taking responsibility is the most distinguished leadership quality.” This new philosophy, countering the Treaty of Versailles's restrictions on German leadership and army size, aimed

to train lower-ranked soldiers to think like leaders. Organizationally, this made it easier for the German army to scale up in the late 1930s. On new leadership, coming out of a lost war in the trenches, Germany innovated their military tactics and operations, with emphasis on speed, volatility and maneuverability. Overall, the military restrictions from the Treaty of Versailles, which limited the number of German High-Command military officers, resulted in the complete innovation of German military tactics and doctrine.

Lastly, the Treaty of Versailles led to the complete reinvention of the tank technology and philosophy inside the German military. Article 171 of the Treaty of Versailles prohibited the manufacture and importation of armored cars, tanks, and similar construction suitable for use in war: "The Manufacture and the importation into Germany of armored cars, tanks and all similar constructions suitable for use in war are also prohibited." In WWI, Germany's tank force was much weaker than other countries, only being composed of 20 tanks. Mainly fighting in trench warfare with large artillery, Germany did not find priority in using tanks. In this era, Germany's limited tanks were large, each requiring a crew of over 18 members. In addition, they were slow and often malfunctioned. German tank development then took a significant turn with the Treaty of Versailles. Germany, because of the restrictions in Article 171, could no longer publicly produce tanks, allowing them to rethink production and development altogether. While other countries used outdated, slow, and large tanks, Germany now focused on increasing mobility and decreasing size. Between 1922 and 1933, four facilities were built in secret locations in Russia, primarily focused on advancing chemical weapons, airplanes, and tanks. In the realm of tank development, was the (Panzertruppenschule) facility built along the Kama River, in central Russia. Soviets and Germans studied together and worked side by side to help each others' developments. The alliance allowed the creation of many innovations in tank technology, including a new chassis system, improved

guns, and probably most importantly, a radio that could operate within a tank. This late reentry into tank manufacturing, without being hindered by obsolescent tanks, seen with France and Britain, gave the Germans a significant advantage heading into WWII. With Hitler's rise to power in 1933, Germany finally returned tank production within Germany. In 1934, Allett, a major weapons manufacturer for the German military began tank production on German grounds. The main factory was located in Berlin, but many more factories were soon opened. In these factories, Germany quickly manufactured many Panzer variations based on secret German-Soviet designs. By 1937, Germany was mass-producing the Panzer 4, which ultimately became the most commonly used German tank in WWII.



Figure 2: The German A7v tank. The slow and underdeveloped tank model used in WWI. This is one of the 20 tanks that were developed.



Figure 3: The Panzer IV tank. The faster, more maneuverable tank that was highly developed in the interwar period becoming the most commonly used German tank in WWII.



Overall, the Treaty of Versailles, and its clauses that restricted further tank production, led Germany to secretly innovate the maneuverability, production and use of tanks, giving German tank-warfare a drastic advantage heading into WWII.

Previous analysis by historians has focused on how the punitive damages imposed by the Treaty of Versailles culturally supported an environment in Germany that led to the rise of Adolf Hitler. However, much less analysis has focused on how the treaty of Versailles specifically led to unexpected German-Soviet alliances, influenced the reinvention of German military tactics and philosophy, and improved Germany's mechanized forces. After the Reichstag adopted the Enabling Act of 1933, Hitler rose to authority in Germany. After two years of assuming power, Hitler publicly renounced the Treaty of Versailles in 1935. By this time, tank training and production had returned to Germany at the Alkett factories in Berlin. By 1939 German aviation part production had returned to Germany at Flossenbürg. In the twenty years following the Treaty of Versailles, the German military had risen to become the most operationally and technologically advanced force in Europe. The crisis of the loss of WWI and the Treaty of Versailles influenced change and adaptation in many aspects of Germany's military. The secret Soviet alliance, improved military tactics, and innovative mechanized forces allowed Germany to sweep through Poland, Norway, Belgium, Holland and France at the start of World War II.

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Panzer IV Ausf.A during the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. Photograph. Digital file.

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Israel-Palestine Conflict

Author-Cooper Nelson '23

Section-Research Papers

Many conflicts and wars in modern history have ended with some kind of peace deal. Both sides come together and agree on terms to establish peace. The Revolutionary War ended with the treaty of Paris, and World War I ended with the Treaty of Versailles. Yet the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis has been going on for 70 years and has no end in sight. The reason for this conflict lies in its roots; two groups of people lay claim to the same land, and neither are willing to compromise. The solution to this conflict is often narrowed down to two possibilities: A united Palestine under one rule, or two separate states for the Israelis and Palestinians to live independently. However, these solutions have their faults. A two-state solution is favored by many world powers, but inherently brings too many issues that the two sides cannot agree upon. A one-state solution gives a difficult dilemma to Israel; they would either lose their Jewish state or have to take away human rights from the Palestinians. Public opinion over time has shifted in favor of a one-state solution, but too many Israelis see it as a non-starter. There have been many failed attempts to establish peace, but none have succeeded in the long term. Both a two-state and a one-state solution have too many faults to be accepted by both Israel and Palestine. These issues coupled with the two sides' inability to compromise is why there has been no peace in Palestine.

Historically, a two-state solution has been the primary goal of peace talks in the region. The idea was simple: "Two states for two peoples." Ever since the Zionists movement gained steam in the late 1800s, a two-state plan was their main goal. They wanted a Jewish homeland where they could live separately from the Palestinians. After the UN created the state of Israel, there was an immense amount of violence between the two groups. With all of this fighting, neither side wanted to live with the other. Therefore, all

early peacekeeping efforts seemed to focus on dividing up the land between the two. However, this creates some issues. The biggest one is land: specifically, how it gets divided. Both Israel and Palestine claim the same land, and neither side is willing to compromise. When splitting this land up, there is no agreement about where to draw the line. Usually, peacekeeping talks referenced the 1967 borders before Israel's massive land gains as a result of the Six-Day War as a benchmark. These borders are much like the borders seen today in the region, with Palestine controlling the Gaza strip and the West Bank and with Israel retaining control of Jerusalem. This is problematic for the two-state solution as both states want Jerusalem as their capital. It contains important holy sites for both Judaism and Islam such as the Western Wall, the Dome of the Rock, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Unless some sort of neutral zone is created, only one side will control Jerusalem. This creates a deadlock because neither side will compromise. Israel is unable to give up their control of the sacred city because it is the capital that they desire. Palestinians are unable to move forward without it because they need access to the mosque and security for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in and around the city. They also believe that they have the right to the city because the UN partition initially gave Jerusalem to them. This divide has created a standstill that has prevented the two-state solution from gaining ground.

Another issue that acts as an obstacle to the creation of a two-state solution is the intransigence of the Israeli settlers that aim to conquer the West Bank. Currently, over 400,000 Jewish settlers are living in Israeli settlements in the West Bank, in their own isolated communities. Their goal is to eventually claim the land in the West Bank for Israel. The settlers, if they are to remain in place, would make the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state almost impossible. However,



er, as Heather Lehr Wagner said in her book *Israel and the Arab World*, “Should those who view themselves as pioneers, who have built a living in often-hostile territory, be now forced out?” This seems to be Israel’s mentality as they continue to build them at an astounding rate. This demonstrates to the Palestinians that Israel is “unwilling to hold up its end of the deal” in regards to the Oslo Accords. At this point, it seems as if a two-state solution is impossible without some form of compromise on the part of both the settlers and the Israeli government. Nonetheless, most people in Israel believe the settlements are not an issue, and as of recently, neither does the American government. If Israel is not willing to get rid of the settlements, then a two-state solution will likely never happen.

Additionally, the issue of the right of return for Palestinian refugees plagues the two-state solution. They are currently spread across Gaza and the West Bank and many asylum countries without a place to call home. These refugees number over five million, and many demand a right of return to their native Palestine. However, Israel is very opposed to this, as an influx of Palestinian immigrants would diminish Jewish control of their democracy. The issue of space is also an issue; Israel does not have available housing for millions of people. Since Israel wants nothing to do with the refugees and Palestine demands a solution, they are once again at an impasse. Israel failing to compromise makes this deal impossible, because as Robert Bowker argues in his book *Palestinian Refugees: Mythology, Identity, and the Search for Peace*, “No lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is possible without a comprehensive resolution of the refugee problem.” All of these issues make it impossible for the two sides to come together to form a viable two-state solution.

The feasibility issues of a two-state solution, as well as events like the Intifadas, have shifted public opinion in favor of the one-state solution. At first glance, it has many upsides: Jerusalem is available to both sides, there are no issues over settlements, and no question about the right of return. Since it

solves many divisive issues in the region that have plagued the idea of a two-state solution, it has gained popularity. The increasing support is also partially because a one-state solution encompasses “such a broad spectrum of ideas that both Israelis on the far right and the far left count themselves among its supporters.” A one-state plan could involve completely dispelling one group to create a country controlled by the other group, and it could also mean a combined, democratic state with religious freedom and equal rights for all. This vast spectrum is part of the reason why a one-state solution has gained increased support: because different people have different versions to fit their needs. Another reason it has gained support is described in the previous paragraphs; the two-state solution has some serious issues. The decline in support for a two-state solution in Palestine went from 80% shortly after the Oslo Accords down to only 43% in 2018. Too many people just do not see the issues listed above as solvable with the current political landscape.

The intifadas also shifted public opinion in Israel towards a one-state solution. Among the conservatives, Palestine has no right to a state of any kind. They have no stable form of government that would be able to control a state without giving a terrorist group power. One conservative-leaning author for the *Jerusalem Post* equated giving a state to Palestine to giving a state to the Ku-Klux-Klan. The intifadas for them painted the Palestinians as lawless suicide bombers who would not be able to govern themselves. On the contrary, the liberal segment supports a one-state because they want to bring peace to the region. The intifadas for them did not put the Palestinians in a bad light, they just served to emphasize the urgent need for peace. This combined with the two-states solution’s flaws as well as the failure of the Oslo Accords put a democratic one-state solution as the best option for the liberal demographic. While the widespread support for a one-state solution is one of its strengths, the disparities between the different adaptations of the idea only serve to detriment it. When push comes to



shove, some of these solutions, while they are classified under the same name, are just as different as the one-state and the two-state solutions. Even though the polarity of support for this doctrine makes it difficult to achieve, a one-state solution is often seen as the only viable solution in today's political climate.

However, a one-state solution brings a problematic dilemma to the table for Israel. They would either have to relinquish their control of the region if they were to establish a true democracy, or they would have to create an apartheid-like society where the Palestinians cannot vote. In a true democracy, all citizens regardless of religion or ethnicity would have equal rights. As the authors put it in the book *Two States or One? Reappraising the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse*, the state would be “a state of its citizens rather than of a specific nationality or group.” This inherently means that the Israeli government would not be able to maintain control of the region unless they were to establish a form of monarchy. It also raises the possibility that Palestine, with its high population, would likely hold a majority in government and control the entire country. At the very least, they would have enough say in the Knesset to be an obstacle to the formation of a government amongst a divided Israel. The Knesset elections only require one group or alliance to hold a majority, and if that is attained, that group is allowed to form the government and the minority get very little say. The idea of a pure democracy scares many Israelis because it would mean living under a Palestinian rule. Considering Palestinian rule is in shambles with the PLO and Hamas, many Israelis, especially the conservative side, would never support this type of solution.

Israel's other option would be to annex the West Bank and Gaza without giving voting rights to the Palestinians in order to maintain power. It would essentially make the Palestinians live as second-class citizens in a Jewish state. While it is supported more by the right in Israel, this solution has been dismissed by its opponents as “on the path to apartheid or apartheid outright.” Many in Israel and Pales-

tine alike see this solution as an unacceptable breach of human rights, and it has struggled to gain support across all factions of Israeli politics. For obvious reasons, this plan has no support in Palestine. It would not require an agreement or deal with the PLO or Hamas; it would just involve a military invasion of the territories and a subsequent annexation. Without widespread political support in Israel, this type of plan will likely never materialize. While many people seem to be rallying behind the idea of a one-state solution, it too seems unlikely to ever take shape.

Even when both sides were committed to creating a peace treaty, as they were with the Oslo Accords of 1993, peace was not attained. The Oslo negotiations were unlike previous peace plans because they created direct diplomatic relations between Israel and the PLO. These talks aimed to establish a two-state solution, retaining the current borders of the time, and implied that an independent Palestine would be created after five years under an interim government. It set aside these five years as a time for trust to be built up between the two peoples, and stability to come to the region. However, this period only served to allow each side to focus on what it wanted, and not what they had to give up to attain peace. The agreement was vague and did not address some of the more pressing issues that are crucial to the success of a two-state solution. Therefore, when the time came five years later to settle the conflict, the “failure was all but inevitable.” The issues of Jerusalem's fate and the settlements continued to plague peacemakers as nothing was done to compromise during the interim period. Additionally, the lack of a united leadership organization among Palestinians led to inconsistencies in public opinion among them. After this deal was made, there were suicide bombings from Hamas and other similar groups who did not agree with the acknowledgment of the state of Israel. The Oslo Accords failed to establish a leader for the Palestinians, and therefore there was no clear-cut candidate for who would lead a new state. The Oslo Accords succeeded in ending the first intifada, but

failed to establish long term peace and also served as a precursor to the second intifada years later.

The region today is as divided as ever. The idea of a two-state solution has fallen off in Israel, with many of the major political parties supporting annexation. Palestine continues to desire their own independent state, and groups like Hamas do not accept Israel's right to the land. There is no sign that the creation of Israeli settlements are slowing down. There are more refugees out of place than ever before, and Israel has no plan to provide a home for them. The one-state solution has gained popularity, but it splits Israel in two in terms of what it entails. Without united support, it seems unlikely that it will ever take shape. Many treaty attempts in the past have failed, and continued efforts have not seen any more success. President Trump unveiled his "deal of the century" in January, and the Palestinians very quickly denied it. The deal was authored without input from the Palestinians, and it appeared to be completely one-sided. If peace is to be attained, both sides have to unite and be willing to compromise. In that respect, this deal is a step back behind the Oslo Accords, and today peace seems farther away than ever.

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Figure 1: Map of Israel and Palestine Territory

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The Tang and Song Dynasties

Author-Jason Wong '23

Section-Research Papers

The Tang and Song Dynasties were a period of high prosperity for ancient commerce in China. At that time the bureaucracy had fully understood the relationship between commercial prosperity and national finance and security. Therefore, many suggested that the country should increase the social status of merchants and business owners, encouraging people to pursue individual wealth. During the Song Dynasty, what used to be a state-owned trading system became a relatively free market, and the government published a series of policies to encourage the growth of the market. Those policies further promoted the advancement of national social economy, setting the scene for the prosperity and development of philosophy and social science during the Song dynasty.

During this period, the scale of commerce, business varieties, business methods, and the number of merchants all developed immensely compared with the previous time period. Lin Yan believes that “the business prosperity in the Tang and Song Dynasties was another peak in the history of China’s commercial development after the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. The Tang Dynasty scholar Cui Rong once described the domestic water transport system during the reign of Wu Zetian as such: “All streams and the boats come together, bypass Bahan, and navigate toward Mingyue. All the numerous lakes and rivers lead the way for the commercial ship, and no matter its size, thousands of boats come then leave, trading their goods with each other. And this was the case for every single day.”

The Tang Dynasty historian Du You also depicted the prosperous land transportation at the time: “From Song Bian in the east to Qizhou in the west, along the road were welcoming guests and drinks are overflowing.... There are shops for business travelers. No matter how far the trip is, thousands of miles, there is no need to bring anything with you.”

Highly developed and flourishing commercial water transportation system naturally reflects the prosperity of commerce. Du Fu, a renowned poet in the Tang Dynasty, manifested this vividly in his “Remembering the Past”: “I remember during the prosperous years of Kaiyuan reign, even small towns had ten thousand households each. The rice flowed with oil, the millet was white. Private and public granaries were filled to ceilings.” By the time of the Song Dynasty, there were substantial developments compare to the Tang Dynasty. More advanced business management methods such as pre-buying and selling on credit have become quite common. “Capital’s Dream Life” and other books on the economic life of the capitals of the Song Dynasty realistically reflect the prosperity of commerce at that time.

As a response to the gradually booming commerce, the business ideas and finance policies of the Tang Dynasties also changed accordingly. Lin Yan and Meng Jianwei believed that the imperial courts in the Tang and Song Dynasties focused on the establishment of a new fiscal system, formulating new economic policies and other major strategies. While the research on business thoughts during this period appeared to be weak compared with business practices, but through the excavation and analysis of the thoughts of Su Shi, a writer in the Northern Song Dynasty, he explained Su Shi’s idea of opposing the state’s excessive suppression of commerce. Through her book, Wu Hui also focused on analyzing the business thoughts of Liu Yan, one of the few politicians with anti-business thoughts after the Han Dynasty, and believed that Liu Yan “thought in the scope of economic interventionism”, but “it is not purely focusing on official business and suppressing private business, but advocating that while developing government-run business is beneficial for state’s economy, it is important to pay attention to the enthusiasm of private business to operate properly in or-



der to keep the circulation channels open.” Wei Xiangyuan believes that although the concept of merchants being low-class in the Tang Dynasty did not completely change, but in general, the government’s attitude towards business and the policies it implemented were more enlightened. In the Song Dynasty, a group of thinkers who defended the right of merchants emerged as a result of movement that treated merchants as valuable resources for the state. For example, Chen Liang, a representative of the Yongjia School in the Southern Song Dynasty, believed that business owner’s wealth can be used to support the country: “If the rich can’t accumulate their wealth and businessmen can’t make a profit, the country will be in trouble.” Another example of those reformer is Ye Shi, who suggested that the “rich business owners” should be offered special treatments; since they are the “states and counties’ and the rest of the country depends upon them. The thoughts and propositions of the scholar-officials in the Song dynasties on business was similar to Chen’s. The scholar-officials at that time had fully realized the relationship between commercial development and the imperial finances and even national security; for which they advocated that the state should take measures to improve the social status of private business owner. Making them a position that encourages people to pursue individual wealth and a higher quality of life. From the aspect of establishing a supportive policy on small businesses, the institutionalization of regulated commerce and taxation to change the government commercial policy fostered the country’s social and economic progress and laid a solid material foundation for the development of social civilization in the later ages.

Han Yu, a well-known ancient scholar in the Tang Dynasty, believed that the material demands of life cannot be obtained by each person’s own production, but should be produced by a collective effort of people from all occupations in the society, including agriculture, industry, and commerce”, which is “the way of mutual growth and mutual support.” He said: “The millet, the crop is born. If

cloth and silk, they must be silkworms, and then they will become successful. All other health-preserving tools need to be completed after manpower. I rely on it; but people cannot do it everywhere. It is appropriate for each to regenerate each other.” Han Yu affirmed the necessity of having different roles in the society, while assuring the important of agriculture at the same time. He thought that the traditional agriculture and modern commerce can be used to support each other, thus make both industries more productive than they were. In addition, he also had a positive attitude towards foreign trade, believing that foreign trade will not only bring considerable economic benefits, but also have the effect of securing borders and good-neighborliness in politics. This clearly lay the foundation of modern globalization in China and was contrary to the Chinese traditional belief of its closed-door policy.

Han’s endorsement of foreign trade was certainly scattered throughout Chinese history, but those unconventional theories was relatively common considering the circumstances of the Song Dynasties. By 1067, the death of Yingzong emperor, the economy and culture of China’s feudal society had reached unprecedented prosperity, a number of outstanding economic thinkers put forward their own theory of profit and desire at this time. Especially for Li Mei, who believed that the people’s desire to pursue material wealth is natural, and that financial profit is the basis for the generation of rituals and justice. Li also emphasized the necessity of industry and commerce, but at the same time pointed out that “Although it is people’s natural intention to become wealthy, there must not be too many merchants in the society.”

At that time, the famous writer and reformer, Wang Anshi, who despite advocated for state power, thought that “the method government chooses should not take too much power from small businesses”, because they contribute the most to national taxation than any other classes or occupations. He argued that the intervention of government to ensure a fair and healthy market is vital to the econo-



my of the state.

In line with the prosperous commodity economy and ideas that emphasizes the role of business owners, the commercial policies of the Tang and Song Dynasties also undergone profound changes.

Firstly, it changed from government monopoly to focusing on soliciting businesses. The monopoly system began with Guan Zhong's policy of "Guanshanhai" in Qi State, that is, the production and sale of salt and iron are government owned industries. By the Western Han Dynasty, salt, iron and wine were all included in the scope of the state monopoly. When Liu Yan in the Tang Dynasty carried out reforms, he changed the government's mandatory intervention in economic activities into economic management. In the work of queuing salt, he implemented the operation mode of civil system, official collection, commercial transportation, and commercial sales. He also changed the idea of targeting merchants away from core industry to a certain extent that turns businessmen into assistants for the country to implement reforms. In the Song Dynasty Wang Anshi's Reform, the issue of tea negotiation was also reformed. Wang Anshi advocated the official collection of tea taxes and "trafficking by the people.

Secondly, the prosperity of commerce in the Tang and Song Dynasties was also manifested in the government's standardization and institutionalization of the commercial tax system. The Tang Dynasty set up a special organization for levying business taxes and the business tax field, which also showed the state's tendency to recognize and protect private business, which further promoted the vigorous development of the commodity economy. By the Song Dynasty, the collection of commercial taxes had become a national economic policy. Compared with the Tang Dynasty, the commercial taxation field agency and its management system have been further improved. A rigorous tax agency has been formed from the central to the local level.

In terms of foreign trade, during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dy-

nasty, a city porter was established in Guangzhou to encourage foreign trade. Han Yu once described the scene at that time as "the arrival of foreign goods, the scented rhinoceros, the tortoiseshell strange objects, overflowing in China, are uncountable". In the four years of the opening of the Northern Song Dynasty, the city and shipping department was established in Guangzhou. With the development of overseas trade, the city and shipping department were successively established in Hangzhou, Mingzhou, Quanzhou, Mizhou and other places, while focusing on protecting the legal equality of foreign businessmen. The number of merchants from outside of China is unprecedented and import tax income has become an important source of fiscal revenue in the Song Dynasty. This shows that the government at that time attached great importance to foreign trade and commercial development.

Looking at the ideas regarding business owners and commerce policies of the Tang and Song Dynasties, it is manifest that it was the prosperous commerce during this period that gave birth to ideas that emphasized the rational development of business and protected the legitimate rights and interests of businessmen, which in turn led the government to formulate a series of policies that encourages the accumulation of personal wealth. This series of policies to support business development in turn promoted the further development of national economy, and at the same time achieved the government's goal of increasing fiscal revenue and solving social conflicts. From this point of view, as one of the four key factors of civilization of "government, agriculture, manufacture, and commerce", the "commerce" factor also played an equally pivotal role in the development of civilization in China.

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Nuances of Malcolm X & MLK Jr.

Author-Henry Moses '21

Section-Research Papers

The discourse surrounding the history of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. is one that frames the two figures as opposites: X was radical, while King was a bit more mild mannered. In his book, *The Sword and the Shield*, Dr. Peniel Joseph takes a different approach, reframing the debate to suggest that the two were more similar than is often portrayed in the mainstream narrative. By evaluating this, Joseph brings the two of them onto a level playing field, one that doesn't condemn X for being too radical or King for being too mild. This approach has its merits, but the same criticism can be made of it as can be made about strictly contrasting the two: it can dull the merits of each of them alone. It's impossible to paint the comparison between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. as one of only opposites or only similarities. Rather, a nuanced approach is required, one that recognizes that they shared a common goal of black dignity in America and human rights for oppressed people internationally, but sought to achieve this through different means: black nationalism through self defense for Malcolm, and integration through nonviolence for Martin.

At a base level, both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. were fighting for the equal rights of black Americans. However, as each of them grew older, their perspectives widened, ultimately leading both of them into the advocacy for human rights for all oppressed people around the globe. For much of his early life, Malcolm X championed black nationalism, an exclusive mindset that focused on the fight for the self determination of black Americans through an independent black nation. This view, while understandable, as explained later, was inherently insular. However, in 1959, Malcolm embarked on a trip through the Middle East, which would end up having lasting effects on his perspective. Though he became aware of the possibilities of complete international solidarity after he learned of the Bandung Conference, it was after the trip that

he truly transitioned into an internationalism that focused on fighting for the dignity of oppressed groups everywhere. The clearest demonstration of this international solidarity came in his famous "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech, when he said, "Whenever you are in a civil rights struggle, whether you know it or not, you are confining yourself to the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam," (The Ballot or the Bullet, Malcolm X, 1964) He's arguing for the expansion of the "civil rights" mindset by saying that it is an inherently American perspective that doesn't necessarily help the same cause in other parts of the world. Human rights, on the other hand, is a more wide reaching, and therefore more dignified approach. This attitude, coming in the mid-sixties, was certainly a hard one to sell. Trapped in the Cold War rhetoric, attitudes among American citizens were cultivated into ones which resented the enemy and upheld American global supremacy. Malcolm saw through this, instead advocating for an anti-imperialist approach that connected the black struggle in America to the struggles of the subjugated everywhere.

Martin Luther King Jr. shared the same goals as Malcolm; both fought for the economic and social justice of black Americans, and championed human rights around the globe. While radical in its own right, King's early activist career focused specifically on the black struggle in America. However, towards the end of his life, he moved from that view into a more international perspective. This demand for international solidarity came as a result of King's analysis of the Vietnam War. In his "Beyond Vietnam" speech, he accurately argued that the Vietnam War was an imperial war with no point but to send poor black and white Americans to fight until their death, while also subjugating the Vietnamese people to unjust suffering. He knew that his stance on the war would sever the ties he maintained with white liberals, but clearly, the issue was too important to him to remain silent. In



his outspokenness, he transitioned from a distinctly American activist to a global one, showing similar international solidarity to that of Malcolm. The development of the goals of both Malcolm and Martin followed a similar path: a focus on black dignity and justice in America at first, then a wider global demand for the human rights of all oppressed people. However, it is in the strategies and tactics that the differences between the two emerge.

In looking at their respective backgrounds, the framework for each of their philosophies begins to make sense. Malcolm's parents were both followers of Marcus Garvey, a prominent black nationalist. It is in this household that Malcolm was exposed to the ideas he would later be a proponent of. Another defining aspect of his childhood was the murder of his father at the hands of white supremacists. When considering the conditions of his childhood, it's not surprising that he believed in black nationalism as the only way to bring black America out of a racist society. King on the other hand, was the son of a prominent pastor, academic, and community member. His upbringing was decidedly more "white collar" than that of Malcolm and in many ways started on a higher step. King's father was a proponent of nonviolence and civil disobedience, so like Malcolm, King's ideologies were with him since his upbringing. Within this context and knowing that they both fought for black dignity and international human rights, the strategies of the two men differed; Martin believed black dignity would come through integration into the white society and he thought this would come through civil disobedience, while Malcolm thought black dignity would only come through black nationalism through self defense. In his famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Martin explains the power of a nonviolent approach. He writes, "Actually, we who engage in non-violent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with." (Letter from a Birmingham Jail, MLK, 1963) He contrasts the use of violence

with the subtleties demanded by nonviolence and the power of that. He argues nonviolence is more potent than the opposite because it is not what is expected, but rather subverts expectations in a way that makes onlookers stop to think. Malcolm X thought this approach was naive, that abstinence from violence in the form of self defense didn't make sense. In 1964, Malcolm delivered a speech to Peace Corps Workers, in which he said, "...it doesn't mean that I advocate violence, but at the same time I am not against using violence in self-defense. I don't even call it violence when it's self- defense, I call it intelligence." (Speech to Peace Corps, Malcolm X, 1964) He believed by committing to nonviolence, you leave yourself susceptible to the action of those who are not opposed to violence, leaving oneself weak. They both sought after the same thing, but nevertheless advocated for opposite strategies to achieving that end.

A nuanced evaluation of the relationship between Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X is required; while they both fought for dignity and equality for black American and oppressed peoples around the globe, they advocated very different approaches to this end, Malcolm championing Black Nationalism through self defense, and Martin championing integration through non-violence. However, while Malcolm and Martin differed in their approach to the same goal, when they are viewed together within the context of the civil rights movement, the power of each of them becomes apparent. Malcolm provided the urgency to Martin's appealing approach, and their respective techniques complemented the other's. If Malcolm was the sole figure of the movement, it would have been easy for not only conservatives, but also liberals to pass him off as too radical. Whereas if Martin was the sole figure, there's a chance liberals would have gotten complacent in making action, and that the movement would have lost steam. Without the two of them fighting for the same thing at the same time, the progress made would have been even smaller. As power has switched back and forth between Republicans and Democrats over the years since the civil

rights movement, change towards the goals of Malcolm and Martin has been incremental. The denial of systemic injustice and the picking oneself up approach of the right is clearly misguided. But the changes put in place by the liberals often are very surface level. It's clear that the confines of the current political

climate of the country aren't conducive to the radical change that is needed in order to ensure the dignity and justice for all Americans. In what ways does American political thought need to evolve in order to ensure these goals are met? How should the approaches of the two men be incorporated?

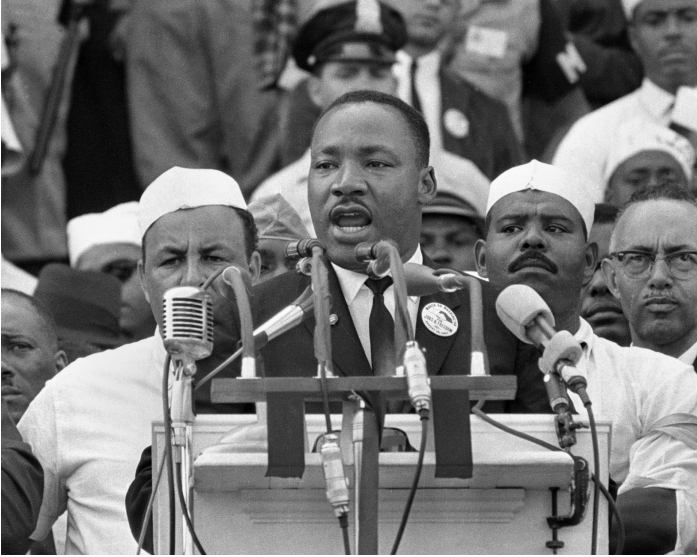


Figure 1: Martin Luther King Jr. Speaking in Washington D.C.

Credit: Associated Press

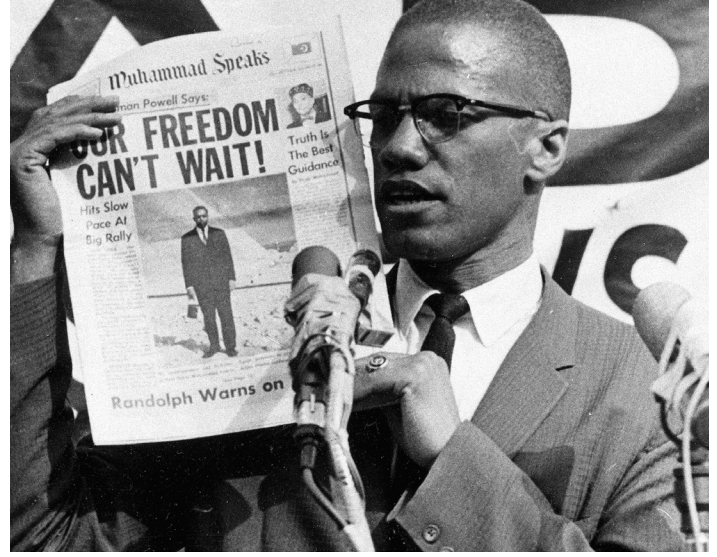


Figure 2: Malcolm X holds up paper during rally in New York City.

Credit: Associated Press

A stylized blue graphic of a computer monitor and keyboard. The monitor is at the top, with a wide base and a thin bezel. Below the monitor is a keyboard, represented by a series of rounded rectangular keys. The entire graphic is in a solid blue color.

Data Analysis



College Admissions Poll

Author-Jackson Kendall '22 & Charlie March '22
Section-Data Analysis

The first four questions of the poll addressed college readiness and students' greatest worries about the college process and college admissions. The first questions asked if students planned on going to college straight after graduating. 85.2% of students replied that they planned on attending college right after graduation, 12.3% said maybe, and 2.5% said they would not attend college immediately after graduating. Even at Belmont Hill, not all students plan on college immediately, whether it be for a gap year, financial preparedness, or a simple lack of desire. They also helped offer insight into the next question which asked if students feel prepared for college. 56.8% of respondents stated that they felt they were prepared for college, with 30.9% saying that they haven't thought about it and 12.3% responding "no." The survey was sent to all high school students at Belmont Hill, so it is understandable that some of the younger freshmen and sophomores have yet to think about the college process or are not prepared for college. Considering this, a relatively large amount of students feel prepared for college. The third question further examined question two, asking those who replied "no" to select why they may not feel prepared for college. The largest reason for not feeling ready for college was confusion concerning academic paths, with 55.6% of respondents. With degrees and majors becoming increasingly important in the professional world, students realize that their college academic choices will likely shape the rest of their professional lives, causing them to worry about academic selections.

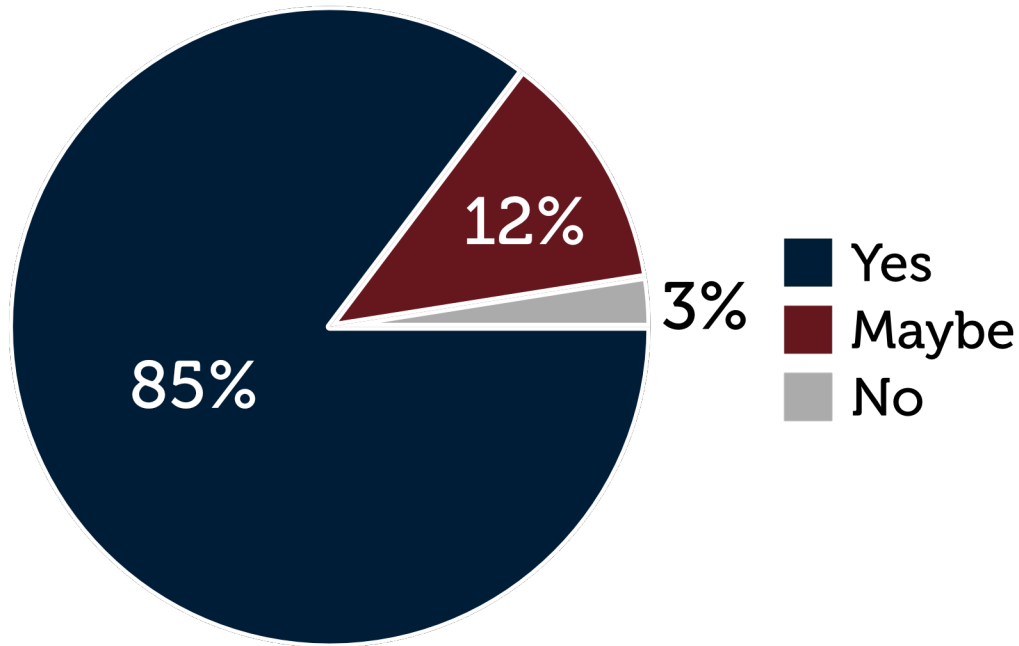
The remaining 44.4% stated that they were worried about the financial burden, that they hadn't thought about it, or a combination of the choices. Howev-

er, no students selected that they were worried about the difficulty of college classes. Perhaps due to the already-difficult nature of Belmont Hill's classes, students seem to feel prepared for the academic rigor that colleges require. The fourth question asked what students are most concerned about regarding the application process for college. The most prominent selections for this question were standardized testing (SAT and ACT), college essays, interviews, and the overall application process, with nearly half of students selecting these choices. The next closest were extracurricular activities and grades, with 37% of students selecting these choices. Clearly the most worry comes from how students perceive colleges will judge their academic performance. While many students are concerned about not standing out to colleges, they must realize that there are no mediocre students at Belmont Hill. Overall, while many students are concerned about college, there is still time to gain confidence.

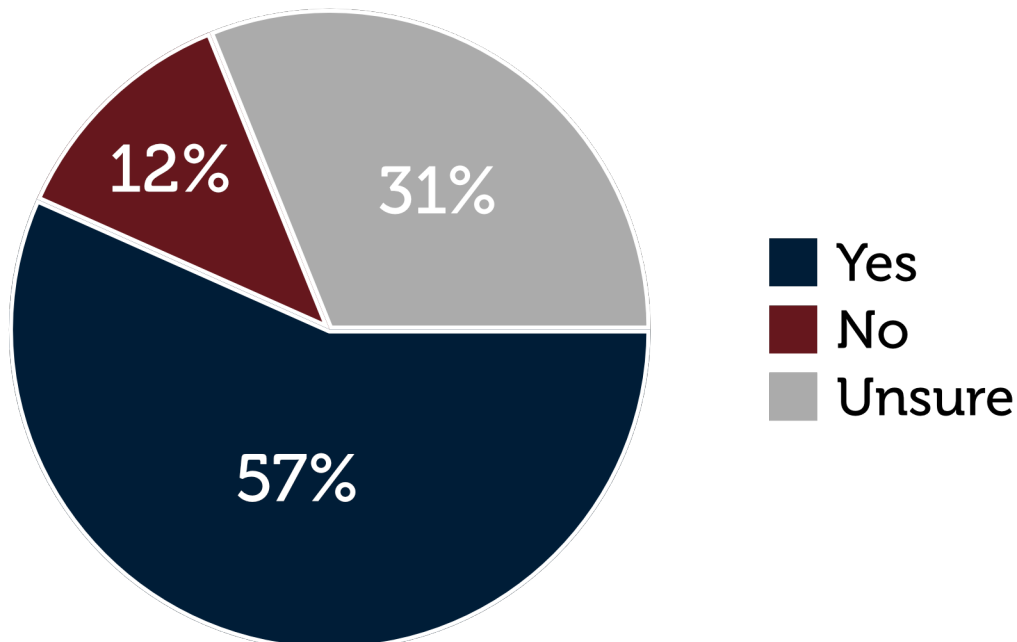


Data

A Do you think you will go to college immediately after high school?



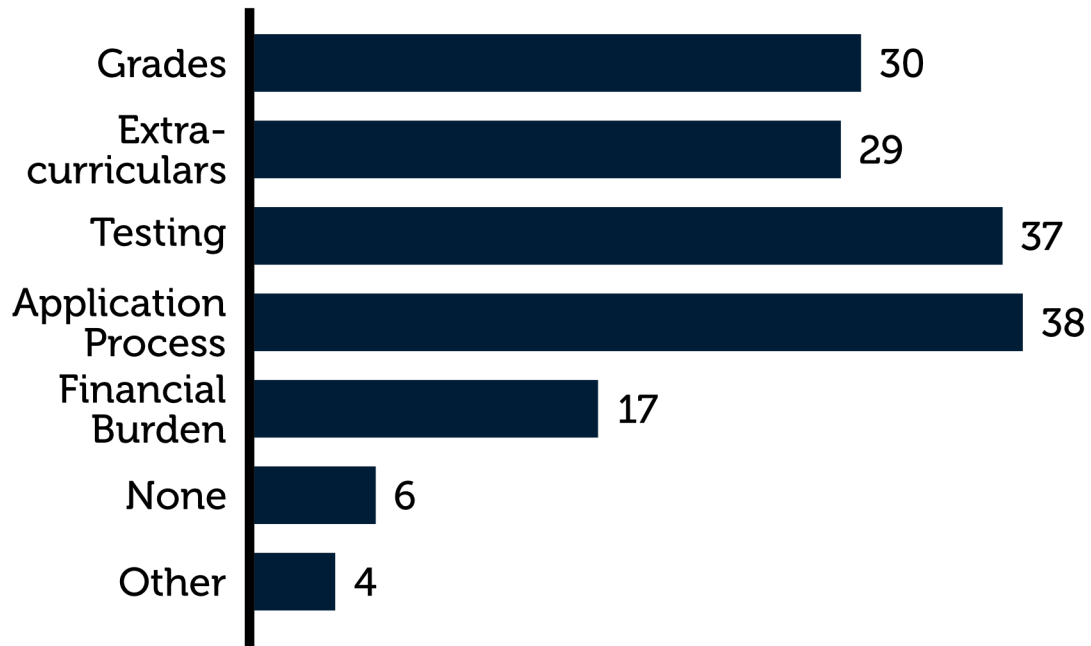
B Do you feel that you are prepared for college?



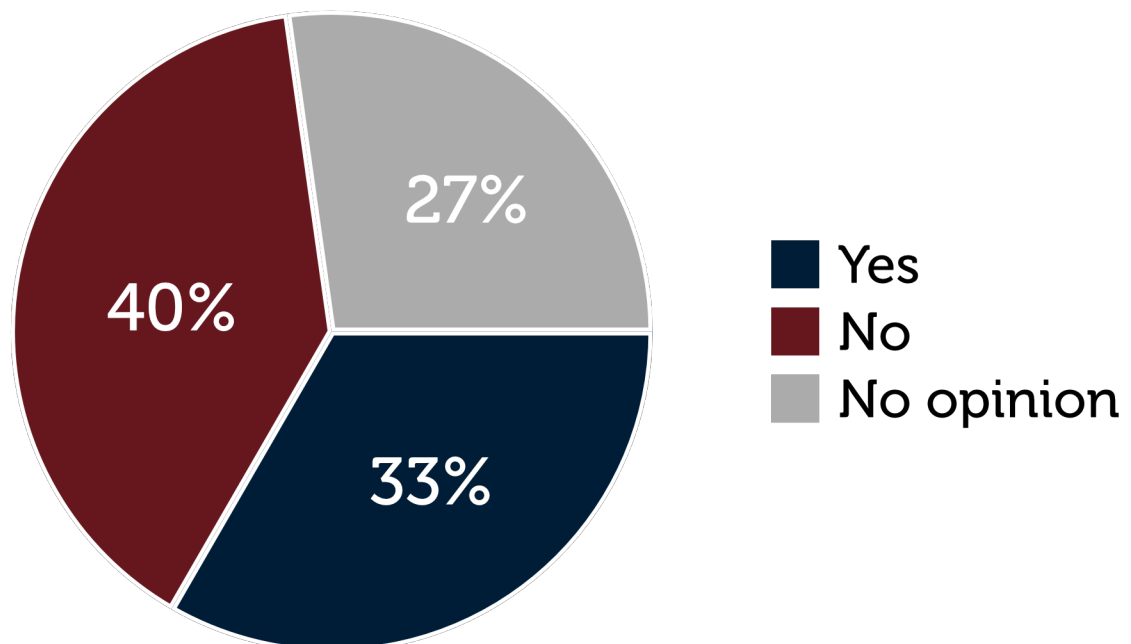


Data

C In the college process, what are you most concerned about?



D Do you think that all colleges be test-optional?



A stylized blue graphic in the background, resembling a classical column or pedestal. It has a wide top flared section, a narrow central shaft, and a wide base flared section. The word "Miscellaneous" is centered over the central shaft.

Miscellaneous



Covid-19 Research Project

Author-Howard Huang '22, Kevin Jiang '22, and Will Seward '22
Section-Miscellaneous Essay

Introduction

On December 31st, 2019, the first reports of a new, pneumonia-like virus originating from Wuhan, China reached were publicized by the Chinese government, paving the way for arguably the largest medical catastrophe since the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic. Later identified as SARS-CoV-2, or Covid-19, the high transmissibility of the deadly virus and failure to affect necessary mandates have led to its rapid worldwide spread. About three months later, on March 11th, 2020, the Covid-19 outbreak was formally given “pandemic” status by the WHO, the first time since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic to receive this designation. Now, nearly a year after the initial reports of the virus, there have been almost 47 million worldwide cases and more than 1.2 million deaths caused by Covid-19. As this pandemic, which has forced the doors of both schools and business alike to close and has caused an unprecedented stagnation in global economy, continues its inevitable spread even to this day, researchers and experts are racing to create an accessible and effective vaccine in hopes of putting an end to this international disaster as soon as possible. The rest of this paper will chronicle the developments of the Covid-19 pandemic from the first cases in Wuhan to current political and ethnic controversies surrounding the virus.

Early Starts in China

Covid-19 first emerged in Wuhan, China, with it being isolated from a tight cluster of acute respiratory illnesses and inexplicable cases of pneumonia. At first, doctors and scientists working for the Chinese government and the WHO thought it was the reemergence of a new strain of SARS, which appeared in China in 2002, but it is now believed to be of zoonotic

origin, specifically from bats. The first infections in Wuhan were recorded on December 31, and within 2 weeks the first death was recorded of a 61-year-old man who had visited the live animal market that is believed to be the original source of the virus. By January 23, Chinese authorities had imposed a severe lockdown on Wuhan limiting any traffic to and from the city to try to contain the virus to a single region, but by then cases had already been reported in several countries including Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States. By January 30 the WHO had declared a public health emergency of international concern, which has only occurred 6 times in the past. During all of these developments, Chinese authorities tried to suppress the spread of information about the new virus in hopes that they could get it under control before the rest of the world found out. This attempt failed as whistleblower doctors informed foreign media outlets of the new virus raging through Wuhan; however, by the time foreign nations found out about the virus, it was too late to stop its spread completely.

Early Spread and Italian Crisis

After its origin and concentration being mainly in China, Covid-19 began to spread abroad, reaching almost every corner of the globe. The next “hotspot” of the virus was Northern Italy, with the first confirmed cases being reported on January 30, when two Chinese tourists arrived in Rome carrying the virus. Soon, cases in Italy surged with more than 6,500 cases reported daily at its peak. A possible explanation for the high number of infections in Italy compared to other European nations is expanding air travel with China. Out

of all European nations, Italy has the highest number of air connections with China, and since signing a memorandum of understanding concerning the Belt and Road initiative with China in January of this year, transportation between the two countries is at an all time high with 164 weekly flights between the two. Additionally, in 2019, the number of visas granted to Chinese tourists increased by 20 percent, and Italy received more than 3 million Chinese travelers. At the end of 2019, Italy became the number one tourist destination in Europe for Chinese tourists. This heavy influx of tourism from a virus-ravaged China in combination with other factors such as poor government control has been the root cause in the development of Italy as a virus “hotspot” during the spring of this year.

Entrance into U.S. & The Biogen Conference

Even though the earliest known case of Covid-19 in the US was in a Washington man returning from a visit to Wuhan on January 21, infections did not pick up until early March by which point interpersonal transmission and the first death had already occurred. In

early February before the severity of the new virus had come into the national spotlight, a Biotech company called Biogen held an international business conference in Boston that quickly became the epicenter of a major outbreak in Massachusetts. Due to this early spate of infections, Massachusetts’s case numbers would lead the nation for the first months of the pandemic since later studies found that the conference may have led to the infection of up to 20,000 people in the ensuing months. By mid March, major outbreaks had already developed in some European countries like Spain and Italy, so President Trump declared a state of emergency on March 13 and quickly banned the entrance of non-citizens from China and Europe. Starting from late February, the stock market began to plummet as investors realized that the pandemic would initiate an economic recession from unemployment data, which showed a massive spike to 15%. Over the course of a month, the S&P 500 Index, which is often used to judge general market trends as it covers most of the important companies, dropped by 1000 points, nearly a third of its original peak.

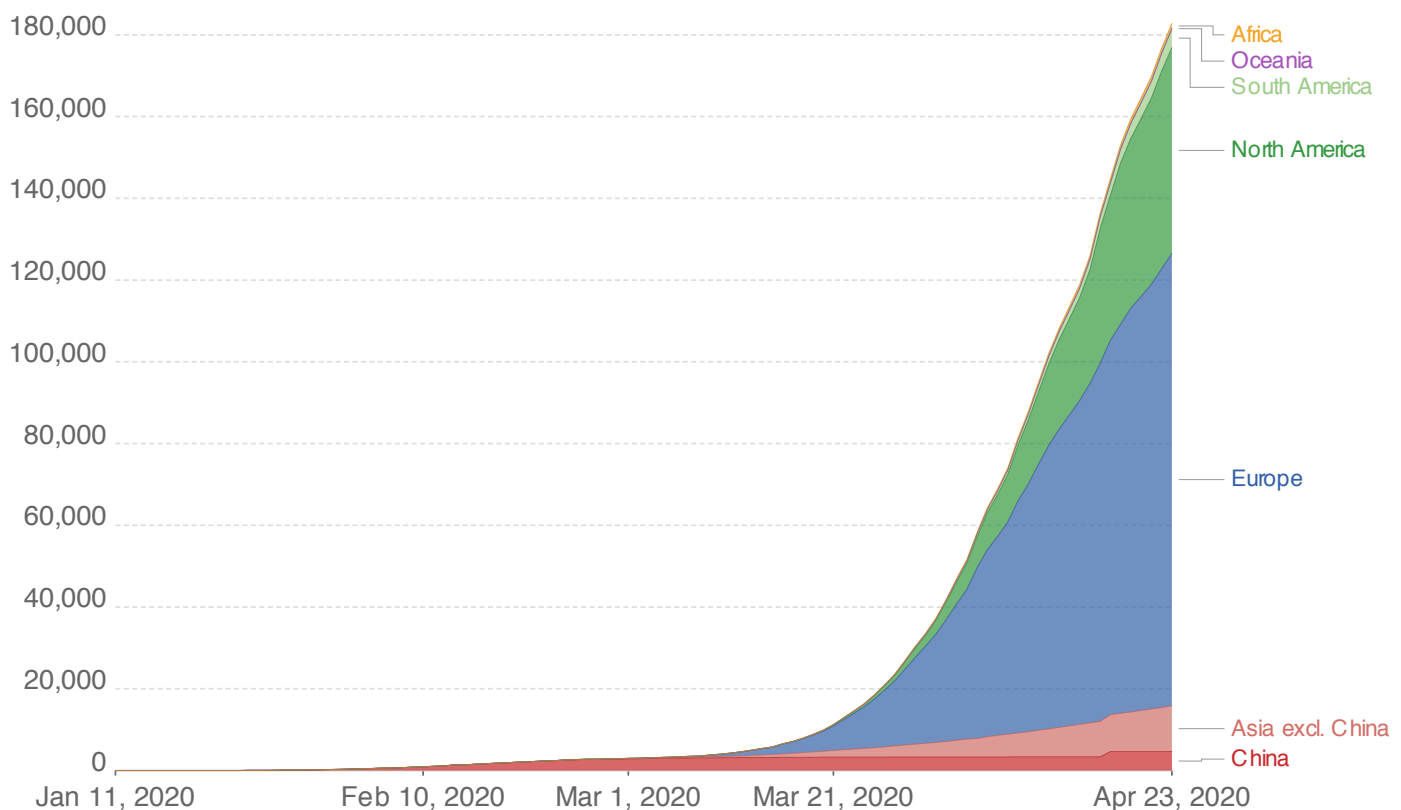


Figure 1: Reported Coronavirus Deaths by Continent by April 23, 2020

Source: European CDC



U.S. Explosion - New York, President Trump's Response

Beginning in early March, cases began to skyrocket in the US, with daily confirmed cases reaching its peak on April 24 with 36,415 confirmed cases reported on that day. Perhaps the hardest hit US state during this initial surge of the virus was New York. On March 7, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo formally declared a state emergency stating, "I have officially done a declaration of emergency which gives us certain powers to help local health departments that are very stressed." Since Cuomo's declaration, cases in New York continued to only rise leading to widespread panic and chaos. As reported by The Metro, New York's staggering amount of cases can be attributed to its large and dense population (18,804,000 total people, approximately 27,000 residents per square mile), reliance on public transportation, and steady influx of tourists. Even with the state's high number of world-class hospitals, access to some of the best resources in the country, and third most doctors per capita of all American states, the rapid surge in cases proved to be too much for the established healthcare systems to handle, leading to overflowing hospitals and even the deployment of a Navy hospital ship—the USNS Comfort— by President Donald Trump to aid the city's existing health infrastructure. While the 1,000 bed ship ultimately returned to Virginia after only treating approximately 180 coronavirus patients, it was initially welcomed with open arms by Governor Cuomo. In addition to the massive ramifications of the virus on entire metropolitan areas, other, more local institutions were equally affected, including schools and universities. On March 10, Harvard University became one of the first U.S. colleges to force students to move out and assume a fully remote paradigm. In a letter to students, university president Lawrence Bacow wrote, "Students are asked not to return to campus after Spring Recess and to meet academic requirements remotely until further notice." With the precedent set, schools all across the country began to shut down, hop-

ing to slow and halt the spread of the virus.

Summer Wave and Supply Shortages

By late May, US COVID-related deaths had surpassed 100,000 and cumulative cases were nearing 2 million, and the President and many companies were looking for a ray of hope that the pandemic would be over soon so the economy could rebuild. There were many attempts at vaccines and cures which will be detailed later in the paper; however, all of them failed leaving the fastest estimates for getting a vaccine into circulation around late in 2020 or more. With this dire prediction, companies, schools, and event organizers had to develop new ways to keep their proverbial boats afloat. By May, most schools had already been canceled due to local cases of coronavirus, and administrators looked to find ways to teach students such as holding online classes over video chat applications like Zoom, Google hangouts, or Skype. Belmont Hill, in particular, canceled school starting on March 13 and primarily used Zoom for online classes after spring break. Although the teachers and students were all dedicated to having the best learning experience possible during online classes, the quality of learning during the third marking period tended to drop for most students. This effect of worsened learning and knowledge retention plagued public schools with fewer resources and massive student bodies even more, and with no hope on the horizon for reopening in-person classes, these schools would have to seriously overhaul their teaching methods to adapt to the new situation.

School Reopenings, U.S. Cases Decline

Towards the end of the summer, covid cases began to drop, dipping from well over 60,000 new cases a day down to around 40,000 in late August. This prompted schools to resume in-person learning, whether that was through a hybrid plan like Belmont Hill or full-time. In Massachusetts particularly, novel cases dropped under 400 per day, which, when compared to upwards of 1,500 to 2,000 at summer's beginning, reasons that schools

could come back at regularly scheduled dates. However, such numbers were short-lived. Beginning almost immediately in conjunction with school reopenings around the country, cases started to spike, steadily increasing from late August through mid-October. Novel cases again surpassed the 60,000 a day mark, matching the high previously seen during the mid-summer. Specifically, hotspots in Florida, Texas, California, Wisconsin, and Illinois contributed to many of the new cases, and to a lesser extent states such as Missouri, Tennessee, Indiana, and Ohio as well. Massachusetts has enjoyed being one of the states less hard-hit, allowing schools to stay open for some sort of in-person learning. Weekly or even daily testing for students physically attending school such as Belmont Hill has helped to limit the number of novel cases, halting the spread of Coronavirus as well as possible.

Awaiting the Vaccine

Although hundreds of attempts at a coronavirus vaccine have been made, development takes months, meaning that there might not be one until at least 2021. A host of different stages must be passed in order for a vaccine to be approved, including the exploratory stage, pre-clinical stage, clinical development, regulatory review and approval, manufacturing, and quality control. According to the WHO, over 100 vaccines are currently in various stages of development around the world, but still may not be released until the new year due to quality control, as the speed of development is unprecedented and only a fraction of the usual time needed. Vaccines use a plethora of methods to be successful. Most vaccines use mRNA, which carries instructions for producing the protein needed to induce an immune response. This forces cells to act as if the virus has already come in contact with them, giving some protection. One company that uses this technique is Moderna, which has been one of the frontrunners for a potential vaccine since January. In partnership with National Institutes of Health, Moderna has accrued over \$1 billion in support, while its vaccine has reached the final testing trial.

Comparable to the mRNA method is another vaccine that carries DNA designed to trigger a similar immune response. Two companies using this method are the Indian-based Zydus Cadila and the Japan-based AnGes, both at testing Phase 2. Other potential vaccines use previous knowledge from the development of the Ebola vaccine, weakened strands from the virus that causes the common cold, or even versions of the coronavirus itself. The similarity lies in the fact that all vaccines are designed to teach the immune system to target the coronavirus so that it can be quelled quickly before it takes over the body and becomes contagious.

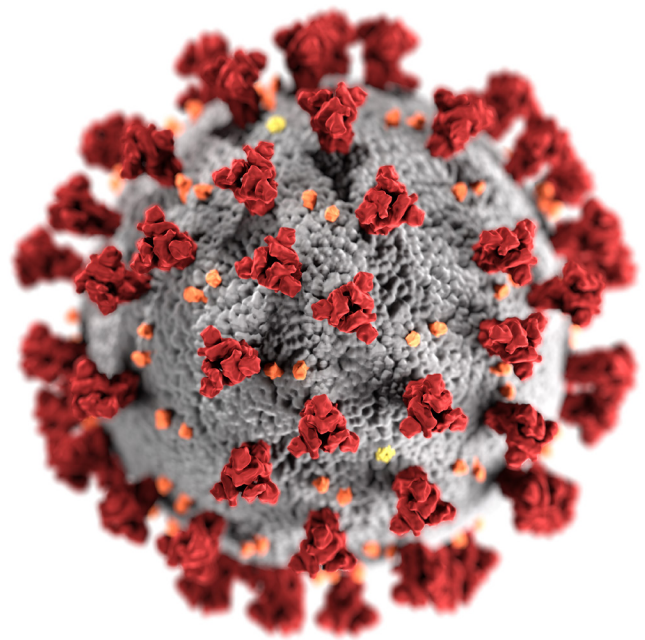


Figure 2: Render of the Virus that causes Covid-19 infections. The accuracy of this model is disputed.

Source: CDC Online Image Library





Amy Coney Barrett

Author-Luke Carroll '22

Section-Featured Person

California v. Texas, a unique challenge to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), will be heard on November 10, 2020, by a Supreme Court which by then will include recently-appointed Justice Amy Coney Barrett. During her week of hearings and independent meetings in the Senate, Democratic Senators made clear that the threat she posed to the ACA was grave enough to oppose her confirmation, let alone their questions of the legitimacy of the nomination so close to a general election. Democrats focused closely on the *California v. Texas* case, where the threat to the 2010 health law might actualize. Judge Barrett, however, has alluded to a stance on the principle of severability, which may save the ACA in the November case.

Judge Barrett stated in her testimony that the severability option for a court holding could be described as a tool for the Judicial Branch to assist the Legislative; even if a statute's provision were to be ruled unconstitutional, it could reasonably be severed from the remainder of the statute if not vital or salient to the overall law (and its execution). In this way, the Supreme Court could enforce Constitutional law in a more surgical manner, preserving most of the legislation crafted by another branch of government -- "the Court and Congress working hand in hand," in Judge Barrett's own words. As long as the remaining law effectuates the intent of the Congress that passed it, the law as a whole could still stand.

"Severability is like a Jenga game ... can you pull one [provision] out while it all stands?"

California v. Texas is a challenge to the ACA's minimum essential coverage provision, otherwise known as the individual mandate. The mandate provides for a financial penalty on Americans that do not maintain a minimum level of health

insurance coverage, through either private or public options. However, as of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), the individual mandate has been leveled down to zero dollars per year. The lawsuit, filed in February of 2018, litigates only this newly-flattened mandate, not whatever past penalties may have existed before 2017 or may have injured plaintiffs. So, in Judge Barrett's own terms, a provision with no real effect (even if ruled unconstitutional) could be severed from the rest of the statute without obstructing Congress' initial intent. In passing the TCJA and leveling the individual mandate, Congress has made clear its intentions for the law -- the individual mandate is almost certainly not vital or salient for the execution of the ACA as a whole.

Judge Barrett has been precise in concealing any "forecast" or "clue" as to how she may rule as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court; still, she does openly approve of the use of severability as a tool at the Court's disposal. For this reason, the ACA may not be at tremendous risk on November 10; in fact, this narrow provision of the law which both Democrats and Republicans have sought to strike down in the past may simply be removed after years of controversy, possibly for the betterment of the law. And even if the mandate is deemed non-severable from the remainder of the law, the Court could pursue another path -- only ruling the provisions of the law that injured plaintiffs as unenforceable (a broader but still recoverable setback for the ACA). While Judge Barrett has only revealed a position on the severability principle, there are several avenues for the ACA to survive this threat to its legality as it has done for more than a decade.

History | Current Events

