AN AMERICAN RHETORIC OF GLOBALISM: PEACE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE WORLD WAR II ERA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

A rhetoric of globalism compelled Americans during the World War II era to imagine a postwar peace that would depend on individual economic security and global economic interdependence. In a time of radical contingency, globalism emerged as an inventive alternative both to the predominant isolationism that preceded the war and to the Cold War logic that would soon replace it. The project has discursive resonances in our current era of economic globalization, perpetual warfare, and domestic and global income inequality; by contextualizing globalism within America’s recent and founding history, and by focusing on the economic aspects of American identity within a globalizing world in a liminal moment, it also offers to the field of rhetorical studies an alternative account of popular, presidential, and institutional discourses in the World War II era.

The study takes as its sites of analysis three rhetorical landmarks in the American history of globalization: Wendell Willkie’s *One World* (1943), President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s State of the Union address, which concluded with an “Economic Bill of Rights” (1944), and the U.S. Congressional debates about the Bretton Woods institutions (1945). Willkie, the failed 1940 Republican presidential candidate, traveled the globe and sometimes served as the President’s proxy, using ethos and presence to encourage Americans to imagine a postwar world that was small and familiar. Roosevelt, via the Economic Bill of Rights, managed Americans’ fears by inscribing economic security as a constitutional and universal right, drawing on the language of the nation’s founding and thus positioning the historical moment as one of kairos of the highest order. Congressional supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods institutions, too, drew on the nation’s history to understand the present moment as radically contingent, using a
constitutive rhetoric of economics to institutionalize globalism. Although globalism was quickly overshadowed by the events of the early Cold War, it remains a rhetorical resource in discussions about American identity as it intersects with the global implications of late capitalism.
In loving memory of my Grandpa Frank
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This project was long in the making. To sufficiently thank each and every colleague, friend, mentor, and professor who supported me at each stage would require writing another dissertation in and of itself—which is the last thing I want to do right now. In this limited space, then, I can only attempt to convey my unlimited gratitude.

The first time I taught college writing was as an undergraduate peer tutor for my work-study job at St. Ben’s and St. John’s in Minnesota. Over fifteen years later, having taught composition and communication classes in a variety of contexts and at a variety of institutions, ranging from the University of Illinois to the Colorado School of Mines, and from the Maricopa County Community College District in Arizona and back again, I am consistently challenged and inspired by my students. They have given me purpose and brought clarity to what I most value as an educator and human being.

Both in and outside of academia, I’ve had the great fortune of meeting and spending time with some incredible teachers and mentors who have shown me what it means to live with authenticity and courage. The deep personal connections found in activist and yoga communities in Urbana and Phoenix have been sources of tremendous sustenance; my parents, family, and closest friends continue to instill unconditional love and support with each turn of the proverbial page. The right people appear in our lives at exactly the right time. Much sweat equity and many thanks are owed to friends and colleagues--too numerous to name--throughout my various iterations of graduate school at the University of Illinois, first as a master’s student in the Center for Writing Studies, then as a doctoral student in the Department of Communication, and finally during these last couple of years during my return to the U of I to finish my degree. In a mutually supportive environment, we have shared our ideas and our processes, commiserated, celebrated, held vigil, and kept each other properly caffeinated.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Historians often note that the post-World War II era was a remarkable episode in world politics and economics, what John Ikenberry calls an “ordering moment” in which the global dynamics of power shifted.\(^1\) The narrative we most usually hear is that the United States, counterbalanced in a modernist bipolar world by Soviet Russia, rose after the war to dominate and lead as a liberal hegemon for the next half century, and that the end of the Cold War brought a new era of globalization characterized by national security through international economic cooperation. Although scholars of the Cold War variously mark its origins and rhetorical trajectories, it is certain that the world changed course when Franklin D. Roosevelt died in office in April 1945, the atomic bombs were dropped in August 1945, Churchill gave his “Iron Curtain” speech in 1946, and Harry S. Truman launched the Truman Doctrine in 1947—which began the policy of Soviet containment and, as one observer states, “helped to enshrine in American popular culture the conviction that the world is a fundamentally dangerous place.”\(^2\)

However, starting roughly in 1940 with debates about Lend-Lease and throughout World War II, a different vision of the future was taking hold of the American imagination, one of peace through global economic cooperation. It is this brief, overlooked era of global optimism, or what I refer to as globalism, that this dissertation project takes up.

Globalism was popular in the postwar planning era. One of its chief and vocal proponents was businessman and failed 1940 Republican presidential candidate Wendell Willkie, whose October 1942 radio address following a famous trip around the world was heard by 36,200,000 listeners—second only to President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Pearl Harbor address.\(^3\) Willkie’s book *One World* shattered publication records upon initial release in April 1943, with Simon & Schuster running four sets of print plates around the clock to keep up with sales averaging
50,000 per day.\textsuperscript{4} Serialized versions of the book circulated in newspapers and magazines across the country, and around the world, reaching hundreds of thousands of readers. So popular and charismatic was Willkie that after the 1940 election President Roosevelt asked him to travel as a personal representative to London in order to boost American public support for Lend-Lease. The two maintained a friendship despite a history of bitter political rivalry, Willkie uniquely able to trumpet globalism in ways that Roosevelt, physically and rhetorically constrained, could not.

Meanwhile, shortly after the Pearl Harbor bombings in December 1941, the Roosevelt administration began making plans for international currency stabilization, fearing a global return to the Great Depression.\textsuperscript{5} Harry Dexter White, Assistant to Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, became the American responsible for negotiating the terms of what would become the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, more commonly known as the World Bank). White and British economist John Maynard Keynes led the July 1944 Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire, and, however faulty or failingly, the discourse of global international economic cooperation began to take institutional form.

On July 13, 1944, a few weeks after D-Day, as delegates from around the world were meeting in the cool mountains of New Hampshire, and as U.S. forces prepared for battle in Guam, President Roosevelt wrote to Willkie as he embarked on a campaign trip: “I want to see you when I come back… I want to talk with you about the future, even the somewhat distant future, and in regard to the foreign relations problems of the immediate future.”\textsuperscript{6} That meeting never came to pass. Willkie replied a week later in a humble letter saying that they should wait until after the November election, “because you in a great way and I in a small one have the trust
and confidence of people who might see in the most innocent meeting between us at the time, some betrayal of the principles which we each respectively hold so deeply.”\textsuperscript{7}

By early October that year, Willkie was dead. Roosevelt, re-elected for a fourth term, passed away six months later in his cottage at Warm Springs, GA in April, 1945. Congress approved the Bretton Woods agreements a few weeks after Roosevelt’s death, just as the first atomic bomb was being tested in Alamogordo, NM. The rest, as they say, is history.

Examining globalism as a popular discourse and deeply held principle in the postwar planning era, this project studies how Americans during the war imagined a future that might have been otherwise. Broadly, I want to know why, from a perspective that considers rhetoric’s instrumental and constitutive effects, the globalism of this era was so dramatically eclipsed. Particularly, I ask how the postwar world economy was imagined by the American public, facilitated by the Roosevelt presidency, and institutionalized in the Bretton Woods agreements. By addressing these questions, I offer the field of rhetorical studies a way to understand the era as liminal or radically contingent; at the same time, I offer to other communities of researchers rhetoric as a methodological intervention that describes the features of globalism and thinks about how American identity was performed in public discourse during the era. A rhetorical approach allows us to direct “attention to roads not taken,” which for David Zarefsky is a valuable reason to study history.\textsuperscript{8} This approach involves paying attention to the arguments used to position Americans within a certain postwar worldview, as well as the language used to articulate an institutional framework for that view.

As a method, rhetoric lends insight into the role of public, presidential, and institutional discourses in shaping, reflecting, and constituting American attitudes toward domestic and international economics. For oikos, the Greek root of the word economics, starts with the
household, and thus what is up for debate during this and every period of historical transition is nothing less than how we will live our everyday lives. As one historian has written about the era, “times of extraordinary strain break down…comfortable barriers between the personal and the political, the domestic and the international.” The study of rhetoric, of “the politically consequential process of public argumentation,” as M. Lane Bruner defines it, offers a lens through which to view the complex, contested, and often conflicting relationships between American and worldwide political and economic interests. Moreover, as James Arnt Aune argued, rhetoricians must “promote more widespread understanding of the strategic and agonistic dimensions of public debate over the economy.”

Looking at globalism over a set of textual landmarks from the postwar planning era, I argue that a discourse of globalism offered to the American public a sense of hope about the future against the backdrop of war, fear, and profound uncertainty. Although the same might be said about liberal internationalism as a political and foreign policy doctrine during the era, I am especially interested in the economic aspect of this discourse as a way of making sense out of chaos, a way for Americans to imagine themselves, their daily lives, in the postwar world. As my analysis in this dissertation will show, globalism provided a set of topoi, with key terms and lines of argument that cohered together as a vocabulary. By examining landmark moments in the mobilization of that vocabulary, I will not only show how it served as an important and influential invention resource in the World War II era, but point to ways it continues to linger in the public imagination today.
Globalism as Constitutive Rhetoric

I use the concept of globalism to denote an optimistic vision of peace through free trade and to name a discourse that was compelling for Americans during the war and postwar planning era. Variously touted or cleverly dismissed at the time as “globaloney,” the rhetoric embodied by Willkie and others was nevertheless powerful.\textsuperscript{12} An economics that promoted trade liberalization, especially, became commonplaces in both American public discourse during the era and in the debates surrounding Bretton Woods. In fact, as Barry Eichengreen states, “there was more enthusiasm in the Congress for the trade-promoting thrust of the Bretton Woods Agreement than for its abstruse monetary provisions; without the emphasis placed on the former in the Articles of Agreement, it is unlikely that the Congress would have agreed to ratification.”\textsuperscript{13} As an ideological and rhetorical resource, the doctrine of free trade had a long precedent, tracing at least back to ancient Greece and Rome; most basically, described by Douglas Irwin, free trade doctrine is a belief system in which the universal brotherhood of mankind will benefit from a global division of labor in which a region or nation uses its natural resources and human capabilities as efficiently as possible in order to create as much income as possible.\textsuperscript{14} The idea of a universal economy, beyond the bounds of nation-states, underlies the discourse of free trade perhaps because of its logical simplicity, the assumption being that the world shall evolve naturally according to God’s will.

In addition to free trade doctrine, Wilsonianism comprised a second major influence in the discourse of globalism in the World War II era. While isolationism was predominant in public discourse throughout the 1930s as the focus was on domestic policy during the Depression, a handful of elite, wealthy Americans in the northeast and in cosmopolitan cities such as San Francisco attempted to keep President Woodrow Wilson’s post-World War I
internationalism alive by forming advocacy and educational groups. As Europe descended into war in the late 1930s, these Americans managed to make the argument that the war was a result of the League’s failure, and by the middle of 1944 some 70% of Americans favored a new international organization; the renewed internationalism of WWII resulted in what Robert Divine calls a “Wilson revival” that even took the form of an August 1944 film entitled Wilson. President Roosevelt used Wilsonian rhetoric throughout his presidency, moving between internationalism and isolationism in careful ways. He built a rhetorical program around what Mary Stuckey has called a “good neighbor” stance, using echoes of Wilsonianism to position Americans and the United States within a globalized world.

Although the vocabulary of what we in the twenty-first century know as globalization was not available during World War II and the postwar planning era, we see it beginning to emerge in public, presidential, and institutional discourses as a forward-looking response to the ravages of war. Globalism offered Americans an economic perspective with which to understand the future during an epochal moment of radical contingency, for liminality prompts rhetorical invention and public deliberation. Dilip Gaonkar, explaining Aristotle’s contingency thesis, states that “if human beings can act in more than one way… then it makes sense to deliberate and choose. Rhetoric is the discursive medium of deliberating and choosing, especially in the public sphere.” Similarly, Thomas Farrell, also drawing on Aristotle, highlights the relationship between rhetoric, contingency, and historical change: “Grasped in unfolding episodes, shared by implicated audiences, rhetoric may—through its various affiliative inferences and dissociative devices—provide definition, impetus, and direction to history in the making, even if we wait impatiently for the heroes and villains to be named later.”
This dissertation project intends neither to heroize nor vilify the cast of characters associated with the rhetoric of globalism in the war and postwar planning era, but it does seek to shine a spotlight on globalism and economic discourse as constitutive resources during a moment of contingency. Both Farrell and Gaonkar explain that contingency is not simply uncertainty; it rather has to do with argumentative proof: “The contingent is neither something that is necessarily the case nor something that could never be the case. Rather, it is something which sometimes is and sometimes is not the case.” Setting aside instrumental questions about whether the globalism of the era failed or succeeded, then, or whether it represented utopian idealism or sound policy, a central goal of this project is to observe how a discourse—as debated and deliberated in public, presidential, and institutional realms—offered a constitutive vision of the postwar world. In this case, globalism had what James Jasinski and Jennifer Mercieca might call “generative potential” as a discourse that allowed Americans to imagine themselves within a postwar world of international economic cooperation and interdependence.

Moreover, globalism in the postwar planning era is an overlooked yet important story that has contemporary reverberations in our current era of war, global economic crisis, and U.S. income inequality. Whereas the narrative of postwar international economic cooperation and integration is often overshadowed by the dramatic bipolarity of the Cold War, historian David Kennedy challenges readers to think in the reverse: “And who could deny that globalization—the explosion in world trade, investment, and cultural mingling—was the signature and lasting international achievement of the postwar era, one likely to overshadow the Cold War in its long-term historical consequences?”
Literature Review

Researchers interested in the politics and economics of the era tend to privilege an instrumentalist perspective that, while useful in contributing to the historical record, can be somewhat limiting; instead, a rhetorical approach allows us to think about globalism in the era as a discourse whose effects were both instrumental and constitutive. Further, it is also worthwhile for researchers in rhetorical studies, especially those interested in our current era of globalization, to consider this overlooked historical moment for its own sake.

Political and Economic Accounts of the Postwar Planning Era

Even though Congress passed the Bretton Woods agreements, the institutions largely failed, or at least failed to support the vision of long-term peace through economic cooperation that Willkie trumpeted, Roosevelt facilitated, and their architects performed. A Russian delegation was present at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, but it was there only effectively to pay lip service to the process; Russia did not actually join the IMF until 1992, after the end of the Cold War.23 After the end of World War II, it soon became clear that the Bank was not equipped to handle reconstruction of Europe and its economy, and instead the Marshall Plan began to take shape around the same time as the Truman Doctrine in 1947. Keynes died by sudden heart attack in April 1946, disillusioned and regretful of the entire Bretton Woods project.24 White suffered a similar fate in August 1948, two days after his appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee in which he defended himself against accusations that he was a Soviet spy. The third pillar of Bretton Woods, an International Trade Organization (ITO), was never brought into being; a watered down version of it—the Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—was ratified in 1947.
From there, the Bretton Woods institutions took on lives of their own. In 1994, GATT became what is now known as the World Trade Organization (WTO); in the interim, the IMF and World Bank, for better or worse—usually the latter—became major influences in the economies of the developing world. For example, in a damning critique of the World Bank and IMF’s policies of lending money with strings attached, formally called Structural Adjustment, Catherine Caufield informs readers that by the mid-1970s, when the Bretton Woods system officially collapsed and the gold standard was abandoned, most of the money being lent to Latin America was going to prevent defaults on previous loans.25 Joseph Stiglitz’s *Globalization and its Discontents* likewise offers a famously scathing appraisal of the IMF’s “one size fits all” austerity measures that actually hindered the growth of the same economies that they purported to help.26 Thus, by the end of the Cold War and turn of the millennium, the World Bank, IMF, and WTO even more so came to symbolize for many observers an outdated, antidemocratic face of bureaucratic evil in a new age of globalization, giving way to some of the largest protests seen since the Vietnam war.27 For this set of activists and globalization scholars, the stakes of the Bretton Woods institutions are extremely high and remain an abiding problem.28

For other scholars of globalization and political economy, however, the original Bretton Woods institutions were not all that important. John Lewis Gaddis observes that Roosevelt simply “failed to build the popular consensus behind his program which would ensure its implementation,” and as a result the politics of the Cold War—rather than the economics of international cooperation—became the ordering logic of the day.29 John Gerard Ruggie argues that American hegemony encoded in international institutions as “embedded liberalism” was the underlying grammar of international relations in the decades after WWII even if the institutions were flawed.30 Specifically on the failure of the ITO, which would have been the capstone
institution of the Bretton Woods triad once currency was stabilized (IMF) and postwar national economies were beginning to rebuild (IBRD), Douglas Irwin’s suggestion is simply that although free trade sounds good in theory, it does not work in practice.\textsuperscript{31} Drawing on Ruggie and offering more explanation than Irwin, Dennis Patterson and Ari Afilalo locate a tension between trade liberalization and protecting the modern liberal democratic welfare state, citing it as the reason why the ITO was never viable.\textsuperscript{32} Alternatively, Jeffry A. Frieden argues that trade liberalization flourished despite the lack of an ITO,\textsuperscript{33} while Eichengreen argues that liberalization did not happen quickly enough and that for all their good intentions, the Bretton Woods institutions could not stand up to the political challenges of the postwar world.

In sum, there is agreement that the Bretton Woods institutions failed to perform both the ideological and practical work of globalism and global economic integration in the way that Roosevelt imagined and Willkie popularized. There is also agreement that this historical moment was epochal, that the world was poised to go in one direction but went instead in another. While many researchers offer various political and economic explanations that account for this directional change, by suggesting for example that the policies themselves were too weak to handle the economy or too grandiose to implement, my project offers an additional dimension. By looking systematically at rhetorical and cultural factors that these other explanations tend not to account for, I show how in the face of uncertainty and indeterminacy, globalism—and particularly the rhetoric of free trade—provided a palpable way to understand the postwar world.

\textit{Historical Accounts of the Postwar Planning Era}

Historians of the era have offered several rich archival studies that take into consideration intersecting cultural, intellectual, and political forces at play during the transformative moment in
which global power became the new American identity. In a history of the 1940 election, Susan Dunn provides an account of the isolationist/internationalist political divide before the war, explaining that Roosevelt and Willkie were in close agreement on a postwar vision of global human rights through free trade—yet Willkie, unlike Roosevelt, was “free to speak out as a moral leader.” Charles Peters has likewise written a journalistic account of how Willkie’s idealism triumphed even if it did not win him the presidency. Liberal internationalism only gained more traction among the public as the war unfolded, and for Robert Dallek the 1944 election hinged on Roosevelt’s ability to court these voters. Likewise, H.W. Brands details how Roosevelt crafted the politics of the 1944 election such that it became a “referendum on his internationalist vision.” Indeed, much ink has been spilled over Roosevelt in the war era and the legacy that he wanted to leave.

Less has been said, however, about how Roosevelt’s internationalist economic vision was or was not translated into policy at the time, or how it continues to resonate in our own time. Histories of the early Cold War indicate that although he was chiefly responsible for establishing careful diplomatic relationships, particularly with Stalin, and that he was committed to the principles of the postwar planners, Roosevelt himself was not involved in the details. Secretary of State Cordell Hull long championed lowering trade barriers as a foreign policy approach, and Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau was hopeful that a peacetime economic agreement could be reached even with Russia, whose cooperation with the United States during the war was carefully managed via Lend-Lease. Ultimately, a turf battle between the State and Treasury departments was won by Morgenthau, who had the president’s ear, and Morgenthau appointed technocrat Harry Dexter White to spearhead what would become the Bretton Woods negotiations. In a comprehensive book about Bretton Woods, Benn Steil places the debates
between White and Keynes as central to our understanding of the era, one he also sees of epic upheaval, and argues that White’s imagination and savvy would determine the fate of the postwar world economy.  

Although Steil and the other historians of the era spin readable tales, filled with espionage, sex secrets, tense diplomacy, and requisite political squabbling, they tend not to address the underlying questions about how and why the globalist vision would so quickly evaporate. Elizabeth Borgwardt gets closer to this question in her examination of the 1941-1945 period by looking at how what she calls “transitional regimes,” including the Bretton Woods institutions, that were embodied in Roosevelt’s (and White’s) vision of a “New Deal for the world.” Borgwardt sees a productive tension in how “these multilateral institutions bridged the gap between facts and norms, that is, between the horrifying realities of wartime devastation and such aspirational abstractions as ‘justice’ and ‘security.’” Borgwardt explicitly wants to reveal a mismatch between what she calls rhetoric versus reality, but this approach tends to reduce rhetoric to the sweeping, “aspirational abstractions” put forth by Roosevelt that were, in her rendering, divorced from reality.

While researchers of this historical moment ask similar questions as I do about the nature of American identity in an interdependent postwar world, then, and while they make perceptive claims about Roosevelt’s rhetoric, I extend the scope of their inquiry. By detailing the rhetorical features of landmark texts from the era, the dissertation offers an understanding of globalism as both constitutive of American identity and performed through the international economic architecture of the IMF and IBRD.
Rhetorical Studies and the Postwar Planning Era

For researchers in the field of rhetoric, the dissertation contributes an examination of an era that was radically contingent and thus ripe for what we call invention, or the discovery of argumentative resources, during a generative moment in which collective identity is threatened. During a time of crisis, a rhetoric of globalism emerged as a compelling way for Americans to imagine long-term peace, national security, and household prosperity. Perhaps because such rhetoric was instrumentally realized only provisionally or failingly via the Bretton Woods institutions, it tends to be neglected by scholars of political economy and historians of the era. A rhetorical approach, however, moves beyond instrumentalist questions by paying attention instead to alternative narratives—“roads not taken”—and reveals globalism’s broader constitutive effects. By examining the discourse of globalism in the postwar planning era through a series of landmarks along those proverbial roads, the dissertation shows how appeals for peace and prosperity through free trade and economic rhetoric have historically been, and still remain, an important aspect of American self-understanding—especially in times of global crisis.

Rhetoric scholars have written about American rhetoric and public discourse in wartime by considering, for example, public debate about Japan as well as Truman’s decision to drop the bomb, genres of writing that women scientists used in the development of war technology, and how Kenneth Burke’s major contributions were informed by the war. These studies are useful because they present important aspects of American discourse about the war while it was ongoing, and they understand war as a significant exigence; I share their purposes to the extent that I am examining globalism as yet another aspect of that discourse. Moreover, the idea of radical contingency and the roles of rhetoric and public discourse in the shift away from globalism, at the war’s end, into an age of nuclear domination very much motivate rhetorical
scholarship about the early Cold War, and one of my aims in this project is to bring questions about free trade and global economic interdependency into that discussion.

A sense of liminality—or deep uncertainty about the future and about how people, and nations for that matter, shall go about the business of living their day-to-day lives—underlies much of the scholarship and thinking in and about the era. Robert Skidelsky argues that John Maynard Keynes was obsessed not only with mathematical uncertainty and probability, but also with how the whole of economic discourse animates human life: “Taking uncertainty seriously… has profound implications not just for how one does economics and how one applies it, but for one’s understanding of practically all aspects of human activity. It helps explain the rules and conventions by which people live.” As a significant part of public discourse in the war and postwar planning era, globalism offered Americans a measure of rationality and predictability.

In examining the role of Wendell Willkie as a popular centrist who promoted a sense of postwar global optimism among the American public, as well as how the Bretton Woods agreements were debated in Congress, this project also enriches scholarship in the field of rhetorical studies of the presidency. As David Zarefsky has argued, presidents are uniquely positioned to shape public understanding of proposals and worldviews, and, as he states unequivocally, “presidential rhetoric defines political reality.” Indeed, Zarefsky notes, Roosevelt’s rhetoric completely re-defined liberalism. By extending the scope of the analysis to Willkie as a presidential surrogate, and Congress as a site of deliberation, I illustrate how others contribute to and institutionalize presidential goals and aims.

Zarefsky responds to a vein of social and political science whose impulse it is to measure rhetorical effects quantitatively. Other scholars—as a reply to the poststructuralist turn in the humanities, which invites us to think about how language shapes culture and challenges the
notion that the intended message of a single author, or rhetor, can be deemed successful or unsuccessful—have similarly offered an expansive rendering of what a rhetorical transaction might include. Maurice Charland’s important 1987 *Quarterly Journal of Speech* article provides a case study in constitutive rhetoric’s capacity to shape and perform collective understandings of identity. Charland brought Louis Althusser’s notion of interpellation to bear on the field of rhetorical studies by putting it into conversation with Kenneth Burke’s theory of identification, in which the audience participates in the creation of rhetorical discourse, arguing that subjects are brought into being, or constituted, discursively.47 Using the example of *Québécois* separatism in the late 1960’s, Charland argues that even though an attempt by French-speaking residents of Quebec to establish a national sovereignty instrumentally failed, it had the powerful constitutive effect of facilitating a collective self-understanding among this population as *Québécois*.

James Jasinski extends Charland’s notion of the constitutive by identifying four “dimensions of discursive practice” that often interact with one another, emphasizing not only subjectivity and individual and collective identity but also the experience of time and space, political and communal culture, and the linguistic resources that inform conceptual change as observed in historically situated discourse.48 By focusing on the concept of globalism through preserving what Jasinski calls “attention to textual dynamics”49 across three historical landmarks, my project uses a similar understanding of rhetorical inquiry as a method to consider the instrumental and constitutive implications of economic discourse in the constitution of American identity at a time of grave uncertainty, arguing that it offered a set of values, norms, and argumentative strategies for audiences to consider—and with which to understand themselves—in a time of radical liminality.
Another useful example of scholarship in our field that uses constitutive rhetoric to understand culture and identity is Vanessa Beasley’s *You, the People*, which studies longitudinally Americans’ shared beliefs about civic life and how they have been leveraged and constructed through presidential speeches. Beasley also anticipates the criticism of ascribing too much agency/intent to the institution of the presidency or to individual presidents themselves; she acknowledges that language is ephemeral and meaning is created not only by structures and individuals, but also by symbolic forces and previous rhetorical patterns and resources, what she calls an “ancient map.” Like Charland, Beasley encourages rhetorical scholars to widen the scope of the texts, artifacts, time frames, and discourses that we choose as objects of study so as to accommodate more theoretical complexity.\(^{50}\)

Jasinski, although not explicitly conceptualizing constitutive rhetoric vis-à-vis poststructuralism in the same way as Charland and Beasley do, elsewhere puts forward the idea of performative traditions in order to move away from the instrumentalist paradigm characteristic of scholarship in the field that assumes a fixed situation in which the rhetor’s message is delivered to its intended audience. Much like Beasley’s ancient map, Jasinski defines invention as “a social process in that the words employed by any author are always already part of a performative tradition in which the author is situated and from which the author draws.”\(^{51}\) Jasinski and Jennifer Merceica also take on the question of instrumentalist and constitutive effects by noting that the relationship need not be binary; instead, they use a process of distinguishing between textual “interiors” and “exteriors” to make interpretive claims about, for example, the narrative inner workings of a given text and at the same time emphasize how that text, situated within a set of intersecting discourses, might work over time and space to shape social reality and communal values.\(^{52}\) Performative traditions such as free trade doctrine and
Wilsonianism provide rhetorical openings for a discussion about not whether globalism failed or succeeded but where it came from, why it was persuasive, and how it worked on the American imagination.

Scholars interested in rhetoric’s constitutive qualities have accounted specifically for the Roosevelt presidency as well as the Cold War. In a study that takes as its focus Roosevelt’s first inaugural, Davis W. Houck suggests that Roosevelt invited the public to remake its identity and communal attitude, and that it did so. In fact, Thomas Farrell claims that Roosevelt was “perhaps the most proficient constitutive rhetorician in America in the last century,” for he brought audiences in as co-participants and co-creators of a collective narrative. John M. Murphy uses Roosevelt’s foreign policy speeches to show how Roosevelt’s rhetoric moved the prevailing attitude of Americans from isolationism toward internationalism in order to garner support for what would inevitably become a world war. Looking at Roosevelt’s presidency in its entirety, Mary E. Stuckey concludes that Roosevelt’s postwar vision of global peace, led by “American example,” and “characterized by [Roosevelt] as a global neighborhood, was one of equality among states, noninterference in domestic matters, free and open trade, and peace through democratic capitalism.” Of course, as Denise M. Bostdorff suggests in her analysis of the Truman Doctrine, the international institutions that Roosevelt wanted to establish as his postwar legacy became overshadowed as the Cold War began to take shape under Truman. My project converses with these scholars by looking closely at the final years of the Roosevelt presidency, extending Stuckey’s apt metaphor of the “global neighborhood” by considering the narrative of globalism as a rhetorical alternative to the Cold War.

Finally, this project answers a call in the field for scholars to pay more attention to rhetorics of economics, including free trade and globalization, and it does so by including
economics in the rhetorical construction of American identity during a contingent moment in which, as Jayson Harsin argues, “a major cultural shift was in fact underway.” Part of the reason why the Bretton Woods institutions failed, or at any rate failed to perform the function of ensuring world peace through the spirit of liberal international economic cooperation that Willkie so breathlessly advocated on Roosevelt’s behalf, might simply be because of the vast gulf of misunderstanding between the American public and the economists tasked with inventing the Bretton Woods institutions. As John Kenneth Galbraith notes, “so far from seeking communication with the world at large, the tendency of economics is to divorce itself therefrom and construct an unreal universe of its own.” In the 1980s as part of the rhetoric of inquiry movement, D. N. McCloskey, a trained economist, was the first to use rhetorical analysis to address this infamous incomprehensibility of economic discourse by looking, for example, at how economists use rhetorical devices such as metaphors. Many other scholars have since built upon McCloskey’s work; in our field, for instance, Houck has examined Keynes’s public letters to FDR during the Depression, demonstrating how Keynes built his argument for economic recovery through a scientism that cloaked a more progressive agenda, combined with a shrewd political sense of the steps Roosevelt would need to take so that the American public would support this agenda.

Closer to this project’s purposes in elucidating how globalism influenced the American imagination of the postwar economic world, James Kimble’s *Mobilizing the Home Front* looks at how war propaganda offered a constitutive vision of postwar citizenship. While a Keynesian approach to war funding would have included forced savings and involuntary taxes, Kimble argues that the Roosevelt administration, and particularly Morgenthau as head of the U.S. Treasury, embarked instead on a massive war bond campaign that served as propaganda for the
U.S. public, encouraging them to both literally and figuratively buy into the war effort. Whereas Kimble’s methods differ from mine in that he uses artifacts such as posters to show how rhetoric worked to constitute and reconstitute the American public during the war and at its end, both projects understand the era as a time of liminal crisis in which rhetoric influenced Americans would understand themselves during and after the war.\textsuperscript{62}

However, rhetorics of economics during the post-WWII planning era, of which Keynes and Keynesiansim are part and parcel, still remain under-studied. Aune argued in his \textit{Selling the Free Market} that McCloskey-style scholarship “has reached a conceptual dead end,” and that rhetorical scholars should attend to the broader ways in which economics are debated in public discourse.\textsuperscript{63} One example of such scholarship from which I am taking a cue is Robert Asen’s \textit{Invoking the Invisible Hand}, which uses Congressional debates about Social Security to show how what he calls “market talk” has constitutive power.\textsuperscript{64} Indeed, a longstanding relationship between rhetoric and economics, especially as it is embodied in and influenced by Adam Smith’s work, has not gone unnoticed in the field.\textsuperscript{65} Questions surrounding rhetorics of economics have also sparked a complex philosophical debate about the hermeneutic value of Marxism.\textsuperscript{66} Ron Greene is interested in using rhetoric to build social movements that oppose existing power structures; Dana Cloud, meanwhile, beckons rhetoricians to see foremost through the lens of social class.\textsuperscript{67} Each of these scholars is fundamentally invested in rhetoric’s democratic potential, as well as its implications for public policy and, in turn, material consequences.\textsuperscript{68} Situated thusly, the dissertation as a rhetorical study of the postwar planning era will allow us to look differently at the same questions about American identity and economic security against the backdrops of globalization and war that continue to bewilder us to this day.\textsuperscript{69}
Chapters and Methods

This project asks how a constitutive rhetoric of globalism was invented during a historical era of contingency, deliberated in public and presidential discourse, and instrumentally realized via a performative government act. In order to examine globalism in American public discourse during the postwar planning era, I turn to three principal texts: Wendell Willkie’s *One World* (1943), Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “Economic Bill of Rights,” the conclusion to a State of the Union speech (1944), and the debates in the U.S. Congress about the Bretton Woods agreements (1945). Together these case studies comprise a set of significant landmarks in the history of globalism during the era, landmarks that are overlooked and overshadowed in much of the scholarship about rhetoric during and immediately after the war. Analysis of the textual interiors and argumentative features of a book, a presidential speech, and a set of policy arguments reveals an alternative and lesser-known historical route to postwar life, one in which Americans imagined themselves not as capitalist warriors but as participants in an interdependent global economy.

As noted above, Willkie’s popularization of globalism was unique; from his position as a private citizen and political centrist, he was able challenge existing notions of liberalism and garner widespread interest in, and support for, what amounts to a global peace and human rights agenda based on free trade. In 1942, Willkie made a trip around the globe, which resulted in the aforementioned bestselling book, a series of articles serialized in newspapers and popular magazines including *Reader’s Digest*, the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and *LOOK*, and numerous radio addresses and dramatizations. Willkie’s optimism about lasting world peace through economic cooperation challenged how the American public thought about the war and, more importantly, how peace would be secured and maintained when the
fighting was over. It used *ethos*, presence, and the compression of time and space to challenge the predominant vocabulary of isolationism in American public discourse and provide an understanding of the globe in terms of rhetorical magnitude.

In Chapter Two, I use an April 1943 Simon & Schuster first edition (second printing) of Willkie’s *One World* as a central text to illustrate how the argument for postwar globalism was made in popular public discourse. Willkie’s optimism took form in the metaphors, quips, and character sketches found throughout the book’s pages. He opens with the statement that the world is small, and he explains how *they are just like us*, that “our thinking in the future must be world-wide.” This landmark text has echoes in later popular liberal-centrist notions of globalism and neoliberal globalization, particularly as related to free trade rhetoric. Reading the story of Willkie’s global tour in *One World*, Americans were brought into a sense of optimism about a future that, at the time, was otherwise bleak.

Accessing materials from the Willkie archive housed at the Lilly Library at Indiana University, Bloomington, I also examine the book’s production by looking at Willkie’s trip files and correspondence, demonstrating some of the complexities behind the happy veneer of global optimism. Willkie’s trip was both formally and informally supported by the Roosevelt administration, for example; I also thus examine the relationship between the President—and presidency—and Willkie—private citizen, failed Republican presidential candidate—in terms of their political and rhetorical opportunities and constraints in arguing for a vision of global peace through international economic cooperation.

Willkie was not authorized to articulate a collective national identity, and nor was he in a position to make or influence policy decisions in substantive ways. For that Americans would need to look to their president, and to the genre of the State of the Union address in particular.
The Economic Bill of Rights part of the speech is a prime example of how economic discourse was used by President Roosevelt both to quell fear and uncertainty about the future and to shape the course of twentieth century liberalism. Chapter Three thus analyzes Roosevelt’s “Economic Bill of Rights,” which served as the conclusion to his 1944 State of the Union address. Because the President was too ill to make the speech to Congress in person, he recorded a shortened radio version that was broadcast to the nation in the evening. I use drafts of the speech electronically available from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, including the reading and stenographer’s copy of the radio address, to analyze the speech.

Borrowing and extending the language of the nation’s founding documents, Roosevelt attempted to inscribe economic security as a fundamental human right, thus sealing his long presidential legacy and setting into motion a vision of American identity in the postwar world. He appropriated economic security as a “self-evident” truth, deserving of constitutional protection, for example. Building on his “Four Freedoms” speech, which was the peroration to the 1941 State of the Union address, and also on the language of the Atlantic Charter, Roosevelt enumerated two of those freedoms—freedom from want, freedom from fear—and argued that they should be legal rights, both in the United States and throughout the world via what would become the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

As another landmark in the history of globalization as it intersects with American identity, the Economic Bill of Rights offers a distinct view of globalism as constitutive rhetoric in an era of contingency. I argue that it tempers Willkie’s global optimism by acknowledging and managing public fear and scapegoating critics; Roosevelt effectively details what American daily life in a postwar interdependent global economy would feel like, emphasizing household financial security and the lived experience of Freedom from Want. This is an important historical
moment in which economic discourse was used to reassure Americans and to encourage them to imagine life in a peaceful postwar world.

Yet the Economic Bill of Rights falls short of engaging the institutional details of what postwar economic security and international cooperation should look like. Chapter Four, then, turns to the Congressional debates about the Bretton Woods institutions in the summer of 1945 as a site of rhetorical contestation and instance in which the discourse of globalism was institutionalized. There were two days of debate in the U.S. House on June 5-6, 1945, and three and a half days of debate about the Bretton Woods proposals in the U.S. Senate on July 16-19, 1945, the full text of which are available via the University of Illinois’ subscription to the HeinOnline legal database. Selecting this set of texts from the Congressional Record, rather than, for example, transcripts of the Bretton Woods conference, provides an opportunity to explore how a discourse of globalism was cultivated as an aspect of the American postwar imagination as well as made into concrete policy—in other words, to consider the instrumental and constitutive effects of another significant landmark in the history of globalism. Using the concepts of kairos and arguments from history, I show how both supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods agreements positioned the moment as liminal, drawing on discourses of economics and expertise.

The dissertation’s final chapter addresses how this study of an American rhetoric of globalism in World War II, thoroughly motivated by kairos in a time of radical uncertainty and economic anxiety, drew on historical arguments to invent a postwar path toward prosperity, equality, and peace. In turn, by considering the major landmarks along this rhetorical “road not taken,” the project contributes both to our historical understanding of the war era and to
contemporary issues of poverty, inequality and violence in the current era of neoliberal globalization.


4 Press Release, April 24, 1943, in Box 115, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.


6 Letter from Roosevelt to Willkie, July 13, 1944, in Box 68, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

7 Letter from Willkie to Roosevelt, July 20, 1944, in Box 68, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.


See, for example, the Citizens Conference on Economic Union, Wanted—An Economic Union of Nations (February 1943); First Steps Toward World Economic Peace (December 1943); and The Bretton Woods Agreement—And Why It Is Necessary (November 1944). These pamphlets were produced by an eclectic group including artists, policymakers, clergy, professors, lawyers, and actors.


Farrell, Norms, 77.


29 John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States*, 31. Others have even argued that had Roosevelt lived for a few more years, the Cold War would not have happened. See, for example, Frank Costigliola, *Roosevelt’s Lost Alliances: How Personal Politics Helped Start the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).


31 Irwin, *Against the Tide*.


36 Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 482-84.


38 Jon Meacham, for example, in a book that details the relationship between Roosevelt and Churchill, states that Roosevelt and Churchill were united in their hope for long-lasting world peace through economic cooperation. Jon Meacham, *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship* (New York: Random House, 2003), 321.


53 Davis W. Houck, FDR and Fear Itself: The First Inaugural Address (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002).


57 Denise M. Bostdorff, Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: The Cold War Call to Arms (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 112.


61 James J. Kimble, Mobilizing the Home Front (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006).


63 Aune, Selling the Free Market, 182.


Lilly Library and Cecil K. Byrd, “Wendell Lewis Willkie,”

CHAPTER TWO: WENDELL WILLKIE’S *ONE WORLD*

“However important the role of bayonets and guns may have been in the development of mankind, the role of ideas has been vastly more important—and, in the long run, more conclusive.” – Wendell Willkie

On August 26, 1942, amid the deadliest war in history, while the battles in Europe, Russia, North Africa and the Pacific raged, Wendell Willkie embarked on a 49-day, 31,000-mile flight around the world in a former U.S. bomber converted for civilian transport, nicknamed *The Gulliver*. At that point in the war, the outcome was entirely uncertain: Stalingrad was under German siege, the British were suffering defeat in the Pacific and the Allies were losing control of the Middle East, Guadalcanal was in Japanese hands, and the systematic slaughter of Europe’s Jews had only just begun. But Willkie, ever cheerful, toured about Cairo, sipped coffee in Ankara, attended a lavish dinner in Baghdad, joked with Stalin, visited Soviet factories and collective farms, ate ice cream in China, breakfasted with the Generalissimo and fell in love with Madame Chiang. He came home to the U.S. to proclaim that the world is small, that the Russian soil is loamy, that the Turkish tobacco is excellent, that there is general good will toward Americans, and that only unfettered exchange of goods and ideas—not bayonets and guns—will ensure lasting postwar peace.

The central question of this dissertation chapter is how the rhetoric of globalism became part of the American postwar imagination in an era of radical contingency. I argue that Wendell Willkie’s *One World*, a travelogue and campaign book, called into coherent and sustained presence a popular vocabulary of globalism. Printed under guidelines of the War Production Board (on light-weight paper with small margins in order to reduce paper, metal, and labor costs), the book used Willkie’s tremendous *ethos* to make the world—its people, ideas, and
goods—seem close and tangible. It prioritized humanity over otherness, friendship over war, and values over politics. In this way, the book might illustrate what Thomas Farrell described as rhetorical magnitude, a reordering and reconceptualizing of shared cultural ideas that serves to unsettle and perhaps redefine notions of national identity. Wrote Farrell, “a rhetorical culture is an encounter setting where magnitude is open to dispute, where the question ‘Why should I care?’ is… an invitation to demonstrate interdependence of significance.”

Through *One World*, Americans could encounter a world at war through the eyes and ears of a well-liked public figure; they could be made to care differently about the economic prospects of a postwar world and their place within it.

As Willkie states in the book, “If I ever had any doubts that the world has become small and completely interdependent, this trip would have dispelled them altogether.” Although he repeated this same essential message in countless speeches, radio addresses, syndicated news articles, and dramatized accounts, I have chosen the book as the site for analysis in this chapter because it serves as a container for Willkie’s ideas, the title *One World* a condensation symbol that summarizes his persuasive strategies. The book appeals to the reader’s imagination by developing its argument largely through sensory descriptions, and it also serves the pedagogical function of improving literacy, which was an important aspect of Willkie’s overarching global human rights agenda. Indeed, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a note of thank-you to Willkie for autographing a copy of the book for her, stating, “I envy the experience you have had in visiting so much of the world and hope your book will be widely read as a contribution toward educating the people of the United States a world point of view.” While Willkie’s relationship with Franklin Roosevelt and the Roosevelt presidential administration will be further detailed in this and the following chapter, the comment from the First Lady is notable because it demonstrates a
shared interest in globalism across political lines, a cause that Eleanor Roosevelt would go on to champion and that would become her own legacy. It shows that globalism was a powerful idea at a time when the future was uncertain.

The book was widely distributed and discussed. Snippets and newspaper clippings from the *New Yorker* and other publications found in the Willkie archive at Indiana University celebrate the book’s popular success: “After selling 197,130 copies the first week, the book has settled down to a nice, steady 25,000 a day, and this may well go on until everybody has a copy.” Within weeks it was translated and published in German, French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Turkish, and several Hindu languages. One account concluded that “all in all, The Willkie looks like the biggest thing since the Dionne Quintuplets.”

Much of the book’s popularity might be attributed to the close relationships that Willkie maintained with Republican internationalists Henry Luce, publisher of *Life* magazine and owner of Time Life, Inc., and Gardner “Mike” Cowles, publisher of *LOOK* magazine as well as several Midwestern newspapers. Cowles accompanied Willkie on the world trip, along with fellow newspaperman Joseph Barnes, both of whom wrote about and promoted the trip. Luce was a major financial and political supporter as well as confidant to Willkie; his *The American Century*, published in 1941 as an editorial in *Life*, argued for American moral leadership in a postwar international economy. In an undated private letter, Willkie wrote to Luce, the “readers of Life show by mere subscription to the magazine, that they are among the most astute in the world.” Willkie respected his readers and wanted to reach the widest possible audience with *One World*, educating Americans for, as he wrote in the book, “it is plain that to win this war we must make it our war, the war of all of us. In order to do this we must all know as much about it as possible.”

Holding democratic debate and public discourse in high esteem, he argued, “the
whiplash of public opinion, developed from honest, free discussion” constitutes “democracy’s
greatest driving power.”

Offering globalism as a rhetorical counter to isolationism in American public discourse, 
*One World* reaches its audience by making the world seem familiar and tangible to everyday 
Americans. It creates what Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca call “presence” by 
choosing vivid and memorable examples to bring the world into perspective. For example, 
recounting his visit to the war front in Russia, Willkie quips, “in the bottom of a trench, I saw a 
can, unopened but half buried in the mud, marked LUNCHEON HAM in English, and I 
wondered on which other front in this global war the Germans had picked it up.” Similarly 
striking details can be found throughout the book, with Willkie approaching new, unfamiliar 
territory with a tone of clear-eyed curiosity; rather than fixating on scenes one would expect in a 
description of an ongoing war, he chooses to highlight how a can of lunch meat somehow found 
its way halfway around the globe. An important landmark in the rhetorical history of globalism, 
*One World* consistently uses strategies of ethos, presence, and the compression of geographical 
space to manipulate the perceived size of the globe, compelling Americans to see themselves as 
economic participants in an optimistic postwar global future.

The following chapter proceeds in three parts: first, I contextualize Willkie’s trip and *One 
World* within the political climate of the war era, focusing on the relationship between Willkie 
and Roosevelt as well as Willkie’s post-election efforts to support the Lend-Lease Act. Second, I 
show how the book uses the strategies of ethos, presence, and compression of space to influence 
globalism’s rhetorical magnitude in war-era discourse. Ultimately, for Willkie, globalism in the 
postwar planning era was an optimistic rhetoric of international cooperation.
Political Context

The 1940 Election

Willkie’s candidacy and popularity was important in shaping presidential and public discourse during the war, yet it usually appears as a side-note in rhetorical scholarship; attending to Willkie’s influence thus offers the field of rhetorical studies a more complex understanding of the era. A well-known figure in American business and politics, Willkie was a young attorney from Indiana who became president of Commonwealth & Southern, a utility holding company, in the early 1930s. Throughout the 1930s he fought publically against Roosevelt’s efforts to nationalize utilities via the Tennessee Valley Authority, and in 1939 Willkie switched his political party affiliation from lifelong Democrat to Republican. Roosevelt’s court packing efforts, ideas about establishing several regional authorities like the TVA, and decision to run for a third term in office fueled criticisms that the President was grasping for too much power, thereby setting the stage for the Willkie presidential candidacy in 1940. While Willkie supported many of the President’s policies and respected the office itself, he also allowed himself during the campaign to feed into the circulating rumors that accused Roosevelt of dictatorial tendencies.

As Susan Dunn explains in her history of the 1940 election, though Willkie had embraced the New Deal policies generally, and particularly federal regulations of securities markets, he indicated that by 1940 the New Deal had run its course. He argued that it was no longer promoting economic growth and production, and also that the federal bureaucracy had become bloated with regulations to the extent that it was stifling free enterprise. Willkie won the 1940 Republican presidential nomination as a dark horse candidate, and he ran what was considered to
be a tight race against Roosevelt. Local “Willkie Clubs” popped up in cities and towns throughout the country to support a beloved candidate with strong home-spun, populist appeal.

Willkie spoke to the concerns of a wide range of Americans. Dunn notes, “In Midwestern centers like Omaha and Minneapolis, [Willkie] focused on the interdependence of agriculture and industry. The problems of the farmer, laborer, businessman, investor and consumer were all one.” At the same time, Willkie was seen as an “articulate spokesman for business interests and as a reasoned critic of what he saw as excessive regulation,” writes Richard Moe. He “came across as a reasonable, thoughtful, and sometimes self-critical Midwesterner who spoke the language of common sense,” affectionately nicknamed “Wall Street’s barefoot boy.”

Although—or perhaps because—Willkie’s policy positions were actually quite close to Roosevelt’s, he was the Republicans’ best hope for president. He, of course, lost to Roosevelt in the end but managed to gain more popular votes than any Republican before him.

The Lend-Lease Trip

Soon after the 1940 election, Roosevelt capitalized on Willkie’s popularity, asking him to go to London in a widely-publicized trip to advocate for Lend-Lease and to meet with officials on the President’s behalf. Michael Fullilove writes, “by entrusting Willkie with a foreign mission—the delivery of a personal message of support to the British prime minister—Roosevelt turned his former opponent into an instrument of his diplomacy.” Over the next three years, Roosevelt would court Willkie for similar errands and political favors that attempted to unify the American public and persuade Republicans in Congress, first around support for the war effort and then postwar internationalism.

What Fullilove calls the “Willkie effect” was certainly a powerful phenomenon. One letter, found among the dozens of penny postcards collected in Willkie’s files related to the trip
to England, expresses his widespread, non-partisan appeal: “Dear Mr. Willkie, I am a staunch Democrat and used all my influence to fight against you in the campaign. I think that you have now proved yourself a true American statesman, and I wish to inform you that I, as all true Americans must, stand in full support of your policy. Hoping to see you become President of the United States of America.”

Another gleams, “God bless you and speed you – America’s beloved son. Ambassador of good-will to Great Britain. Spread your cheer – your happy smile – and God’s love – where the wounded don’t cry – let this message leap high into the breeze…and bring you safely back.”

Encouraged by his mistress Irita van Doren, who was the book review editor for the *New York Herald Tribune*, Willkie enjoyed the attention that his trip received. He spoke on the radio, published articles, and testified in front of Congress in support of Lend-Lease. He was also conflicted, however, about his reputation as the president’s proxy and envoy, asserting that his role and opinions were his own, that they were those of a private citizen. Uniquely positioned in this way, he could, for example, be critical of the British colonial system when Roosevelt could not. Willkie would later write about the British military officials that he conversed with in Egypt, “These men, executing the policies made in London, had no idea that the world was changing.” While his trip in 1941 helped Americans to understand that England needed their help, his later statements about colonialism would be a point of tension between Willkie and the Roosevelt administration.

*President vs. Public Citizen*

With the 1942 trip around the globe and subsequent publication of *One World*, the complex political and personal dynamic between Willkie and Roosevelt deepened. Some
scholars of the era explain Willkie and One World in terms of political strategy, suggesting, as Robert Dallek does, that the book was a threat to the President because it meant that he would need to gain the support of Willkie internationalists in the 1944 election. While that might be true, I am more interested in how the Willkie and Roosevelt relationship functioned rhetorically to create an audience for globalism, bringing the American public around from an isolationist to globalist mindset, for, as Henry Luce wrote to Willkie in 1942, “the American people are neither to be wangled or hijacked into internationalism.”

The relationship between Roosevelt and Willkie was not smooth. In the book, Willkie navigates his positions as a Republican politician, private citizen, and informal representative for the President. He writes about his trip to Russia and Siberia, “Besides my concrete assignments for the President, I had gone [to Russia] determined to find an answer for myself to the actual problems posed for our generation of Americans…” Despite explicit instructions from the Roosevelt administration not to meddle in the war effort or make military recommendations, however, Willkie overstepped his role by calling for a second war front to help Russia stave off the German offensive. He had not been briefed on the imminent Allied invasion of North Africa requiring military resources and war materials.

The 1944 election would see more tension between Roosevelt and Willkie. President Roosevelt still needed the support of internationalists, but he also needed to appease Southern Democrats. His Vice President and longtime Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace, was seen as too radical to hold the highest office; Willkie, who ran in the Republican primary against isolationist Thomas Dewey, was slaughtered in Wisconsin and bowed out of the race. During the summer of 1944, with the public release of the letter from Roosevelt summoning Willkie to the White House, rumors flew about a third Liberal party or a Willkie vice presidency.
Ultimately, however, in the choice of Truman for Vice President, Roosevelt moved away from a “one world” internationalism to a liberal postwar vision based on great powers and spheres of influence.\textsuperscript{104}

Willkie was tired of partisanship, politics, and the President’s attempts to co-opt him.\textsuperscript{105} In August of 1944 he confided to his friend Mike Cowles, “My dear Mike: You need have no fears about my accepting any position from either Franklin Roosevelt or Thomas Dewey. I am so fed up on pragmatic politicians that there is no inducement that would prompt me to serve under either of them in any capacity.”\textsuperscript{106} Willkie suffered a heart attack while traveling by train to Indiana, was ill and hospitalized for several weeks in New York, and eventually succumbed to a series of chronic attacks and infections by early October, 1944, at the age of 52.

\textit{One World}

\textit{One World} carries a tone of urgency. Willkie’s purpose in the book is to turn American public sentiment away from isolationism and toward a global perspective, a shift in thinking that he argues must occur before war’s end—otherwise, as he and others feared, an opportunity may be lost in the same way that hope for a peaceful world order was lost when President Wilson’s League of Nations failed to be supported by the U.S. Congress, a theme that will be further explored in Chapter Four, on the 1945 arguments surrounding the Bretton Woods agreements. Willkie writes, “For I live in constant dread that this war may end before the people of the world have come to a common understanding of what they fight for and what they hope for after the war is over.”\textsuperscript{107} Using his widespread popularity, Willkie’s trip around the globe and subsequent book attempted to educate Americans about the world and bring globalism into mainstream public discourse.
One World begins with Willkie’s tours of North Africa and the Middle East. Here and throughout the book, he uses sensory details to familiarize his audience with parts of the world that they likely know little about, repeating the phrases, “…things I saw and learned at first hand…”, “…I saw with my own eyes…”; “…I had also seen with my own eyes;” “I was convinced from all I had seen and heard…;” “I saw with my own eyes…;” and “Judging by what I saw myself…” The first scenes of the book detail Willkie’s travels to Cairo and to the front at El Alamein, where he meets with American troops. He states, “On the way back to General Montgomery’s headquarters, he summed up what I had seen and heard.” While Willkie’s use of ethos as a rhetorical strategy will be discussed below, here in the opening pages of the book Willkie sets himself up as a trustworthy travel guide and narrator, describing Cairo, Tehran, Beirut, Jerusalem, Baghdad, and Ankara in vivid terms and unflagging optimism for the future.

The next chapter, “Our Ally, Russia,” remains hopeful but takes on a somewhat more serious tone. Willkie states that “the Soviet Union, whether we like it or not, exists.” His attempts to find commonalities and ways to co-exist are sometimes met with resistance. When Willkie encourages Russia to send composer Dmitiri Shostakovich to visit the United States, he is told that the suggestion is insulting, for example. When he enters “ten minutes of hot colloquy” with a belligerent aviation factory worker, debating the notion of freedom in a communist system, Willkie’s pilot Richard Kight intervenes and smooths over the argument by speaking about his own patriotism and military service to the United States. Willkie concludes the chapter by stating that “we need to learn to work with [Russia]….We need to learn to work with her in the world after the war.” Venturing further into the Soviet Republic of Yakutsk,
Willkie again comes to the conclusion that the U.S. and Russia “must work together for the economic welfare and the peace of the world.”

In China, too, Willkie seeks postwar cooperation and seeks to confront “our conventional prejudices about the world” by educating Americans about the people of China. He states, “It is unfortunate that so many Americans still think of China in terms of great inert masses and not in terms of people, still think of the death of five million Chinese as something different and less costly than the death of five million Westerners.” This leg of Willkie’s trip had in fact been in the making as early as the spring of 1941, when Willkie began working with Henry and Clare Luce, Eleanor Roosevelt, and other high-level figures on United China Relief efforts. In a handwritten note to Willkie, Luce remarked, “All I can say is that 450,000,000 Chinese plus Clare would be tremendously happy if you would visit Chungking. Since you would have to do all the talking I would like to insist on taking care of all the arrangements and expenses. Yours, Henry.” Whether and the extent to which Luce eventually provided financial support for Willkie’s world tour is unclear; however, Luce’s letter illustrates an interest, at least among elites, in adopting and promoting a rhetoric of globalism during the war, and especially in opening up China’s cultural and economic resources.

One World worked to promote a rhetoric of globalism among the American public using three related elements: ethos, presence, and the compression of space and time. Willkie’s book brought the world to the American public imagination through sensory description, offering an optimistic vision of postwar peace through international economic cooperation. Farrell writes that “Aristotle defined the locus of the rhetorical as that which has not been decided, that which still appeared to speakers and audiences as unsettled.” For readers of Willkie’s book, in a time of contingency, the world was made more friendly, present, vivid, and intimately connected.
Debra Hawhee draws a connection between *ethos* and perception, stating that a speaker’s reputation serves to heighten the impression left in an audience’s imagination. In the case of Willkie’s *One World*, readers can imagine vividly the people and places Willkie visits because of his remarkable *ethos*. In the Aristotelian sense of which Eugene Garver writes, Willkie possessed the characteristics of friendship and goodwill, *philia* and *eunoia*, that constitute *ethos*. He explicitly wanted to introduce a moral—and global—outlook toward social and economic life.

*Ethos*, however, includes not just a set of individual traits but is rather a social act that occurs between the rhetor and the audience. Craig R. Smith explains that Aristotle’s understanding of ethos “presupposes *ethos* as a dwelling place.” Nedra Reynolds describes *ethos* as “a complex set of characteristics” that are “constructed” and provisionally “sanctioned” by a group. The interaction between rhetor and audience can thus serve as a site to clarify shared values and, as Judy Holiday explains, as a powerful source of invention and reinvention. Through Willkie’s use of *ethos*, readers of *One World* could locate themselves, and their values, in an optimistic narrative that countered the concurrent, prevailing, and fear-riddled public discourse about the ongoing war.

In the summer of 1942 in Egypt, British forces (with the help of Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, South African, and American troops) were attempting to force German troops out of the desert. In one of the book’s first scenes, Willkie describes talking with approximately thirty Americans, discovering that they together represent eighteen different states. Willkie writes, “They seemed well and were frank about their desire to get back to the
United States and they plied me with eager questions about the Dodgers and the Cardinals, who were then in the final race for the pennant….there were no heroics, no big talk. They were just a group of physically hard, alert American boys who were wondering when they’d next see Texas, Broadway, and the Iowa farm.”

With a visit to American troops among the first stops in Willkie’s world tour, readers are met early in the book with the familiar faces of their American sons, fathers and husbands. Willkie establishes honesty and humility as universal qualities of character that he will continue to observe as he meets other people during his trip.

In Cairo, he states, “There were good men there…..Nahas Pasha, who has so much gusto and good humor….” Throughout the Middle East he equates facial and physical characteristics with *ethos*, echoing a discourse of physisognomy, that, though scientifically disproven, remained a strategy used to assess character through physical appearance: “…a curiously charming and impressive soldier, with a soft, quiet face and voice…;” “I liked the men I met in Iraq,” “…Turkey looked good to me….It looked good because I saw a great many tough and honest faces…;” and “You see this in the faces of people you talk with; you hear it in their speech.”

Meeting with Henrietta Szold, Jewish American Zionist leader in Jerusalem, Willkie is hopeful that Palestine question “can be solved by good will and simple honesty,” for “…as I sat there that late afternoon with the sun shining through the windows, lighting up that intelligent, sensitive face, I, at least for a moment, wondered if she in her mature, selfless wisdom might not know more than all the ambitious politicians.” In each of these remarks, Willkie uses his and others’ *ethos* as a means for establishing globalism as the basis of postwar peace.

Willkie’s character descriptions continue throughout his travels in Russia. One Lieutenant General, “a man so colorful and engaging,” Willkie describes, “is a man of medium
height, powerfully built, a born horseman with bowed legs betraying his Cossack origin, ruddy, vital, alert, full of animal spirits.”\textsuperscript{138} Another, the worker in the aviation factory with whom Willkie argued at length about Soviet Communism, “was dressed in worker’s clothes….with an alert, almost jaunty manner, energetic, intelligent, and with a thorough knowledge of his job; the kind of young man that in American industrial life would make rapid advancement…”\textsuperscript{139} A hotel in Yakutsk “was filled with tough-looking men in leather coats and boots made of reindeer fur. The girls were red-cheeked, with handkerchiefs tied around their heads.”\textsuperscript{140} Willkie states of one high official that “many of his characteristics and much of his career were curiously like those of many Americans I have known. He is a short, stocky man, with a round, smiling, clean-shaven face.”\textsuperscript{141} At every turn, Willkie emphasizes what American readers might have in common with those people he meets halfway around the world.

The same approach is used even to describe Joseph Stalin, with whom Willkie met at length on President Roosevelt’s behalf. Because this part of Willkie’s tour was more like official diplomacy and less like a private citizen touring the globe, Willkie deflects conversations about war and postwar strategy by turning to Stalin’s character. He states, “much of what was said I am not at liberty to report. But about the man himself there is no reason to be cautious.”\textsuperscript{142} Willkie goes on to detail Stalin’s physical appearance: “about five feet four or five, and gives the appearance of slight stockiness…but his head, his mustache, and his eyes are big. His face, in repose, is a hard face….He talks quietly, readily, and at times with a simple, moving eloquence….He has…a hard, tenacious, driving mind.”\textsuperscript{143} A few pages later, by way of summary, he writes, “Stalin is a simple man, with no affectations or poses. He does not seek to impress by any artificial mannerisms. His sense of humor is a robust one, and he laughs readily at unsubtle jokes and repartee”\textsuperscript{144} For Willkie, the same qualities of character—humility,
honesty, humor—are thus universalized across all national, political, economic, racial, linguistic, and religious differences. His use of *ethos* has a levelling effect that presents even a communist dictator as an average person, not to be feared.

In China, Willkie continues to use *ethos*—his own and that of those he meets—as a rhetorical strategy. He positions himself as an outsider, stating, “even our fellow diners… looked at me with curiosity which suggested that many of them were seeing an American for the first time in their lives. Yet there was a warmth and a friendliness in their reception of me…”¹⁴⁵ In Lanchow, he is given a parade that he knows is merely a show of state propaganda. He describes Chinese children and adults, “barefoot or dressed in rags,” with no “clear idea of who I was or why I was there,” yet, he writes, “this scene moved me profoundly. There was nothing synthetic or fake about the faces I looked at.”¹⁴⁶ Again, *ethos*, as reflected in the faces of common people throughout the globe, becomes a means by which Willkie’s readers can see themselves and their own character values. It also invites readers to see Willkie himself—although rich and politically well-connected—as someone with whom they can identify.

In addition to using ethos to connect everyday Americans to everyday people worldwide, Willkie uses character and physical descriptions to demystify leaders and high government figures who may seem unable to relate to those with whom they have little in common. Of Chiang Kai-shek, or “The Generalissimo,” in fact, Willkie claims that “possibly no other country on our side in this war is so dominated by the personality of one man as China.”¹⁴⁷ He then goes on in detail: “…the Generalissimo, both as a man and as a leader, is bigger even than his legendary reputation. He is a strangely quiet, soft-spoken man….he wears Chinese dress… almost a clerical scholar—rather than a political leader. He is obviously a trained listener… a reflective manner, a quiet poise, and an occasional appearance of thinking out loud.”¹⁴⁸ About
Communist leader General Chou, Willkie writes, “he has an open face, with wide-spaced, serious eyes.” Further on, “another man who impressed me deeply was Dr. Chang Po-ling. He is an enormous man, with the grave, deliberative manner of a scholar but a fine, warm sense of humor.” Finally, “the other was General J. L. Huang, Secretary General of the Officers’ Moral Endeavor Association. The general is as big and robust as his laugh, which is very big.”

Willkie’s own larger-than-life personality finds its match in Madame Chiang Kai-shek. The wealthy, Wellesley-educated Madame Chiang spoke fluent English and was active in Chinese politics, taking up as her personal cause orphans (“warphans”) of Chinese soldiers lost in the war with Japan. She was named *TIME* person of the year in 1937, along with her husband, and appeared on the cover on two other occasions. In *One World*, Willkie hopes to use Madame Chiang’s popularity in the United States, writing, “someone from this section with brains and persuasiveness and moral force must educate us about China and India and their peoples. Madame would be the perfect ambassador.” Within a year of Willkie’s trip, Madame Chiang did make one of many visits to the United States, addressing Congress in February, 1943. The two visited together at the Waldorf in New York throughout her stay in the U.S. Willkie on one occasion writing a note to “My dear May” and thanking her for the time “the delightful chats we had together… and also your little lectures.”

Another letter from Willkie to Mme. Chiang introduces William Sloane, Vice President of Henry Holt Publishing Co., who was traveling to China in 1943 in order to facilitate the exchange of books and to work on translating Chinese books into English and American books into Chinese. Willkie states, “I know of no better way to cement friendly relations between our two countries than to bind them together culturally.” *Ethos*, in this case in the form of a cultural exchange and mutual appreciation, was globalism’s insurance against war.
Presence

Willkie provides for readers a sense of identification with people and places with which they would otherwise be unfamiliar, creating presence. His descriptions and examples are striking and memorable to the reader. “By the very fact of selecting certain elements and presenting them to the audience, their importance and pertinency to the discussion are implied,” write Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca: “Indeed, such a choice endows these elements with a presence…”\textsuperscript{156} Willkie’s use of the rhetorical strategies of presence, along with \textit{ethos} and the compression of time and space, all serve to shape an optimistic understanding of the postwar world as economically interconnected.

Reviewing Perelman’s work, Alan Gross and Ray Dearin explain, “…to be persuaded is to live in a world made different by the persuader.”\textsuperscript{157} Throughout the book, Willkie draws comparisons that are tangible and familiar to Americans in order make a different world: to introduce regions and people from around the world who would otherwise seem foreign and unfamiliar. Echoing President Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor rhetoric, he invites readers to think of themselves as neighbors to the world, concluding that “All around the world, there are some ideas which millions and millions of men hold in common, almost as much as if they lived in the same town.”\textsuperscript{158} The economics of Willkie’s world are uncomplicated: “They would like to deal with us. They are prepared to trade goods. They produce, in Turkey, nearly one-quarter of the world’s supply of chrome. Their tobacco and their cotton are badly needed by other countries….They need foodstuffs—wheat especially—and they need manufactures and machinery…”\textsuperscript{159} Globalism’s tenor is neighborly and familiar, with Willkie describing the mundane details of his trip in terms with which readers might identify. He talks about wearing
uncomfortable clothing in the North African desert, for example: “I had bought, at a French department store in Cairo, a khaki shirt and trousers, both several sizes too small for me…”

About what he ate there: “The lunch was sandwiches—and flies.”

Willkie makes reference to sites that would be recognizable to Americans. Along the Volga River in Russia, for example, he sees large country homes that “reminded me of the great houses one sees from a Hudson River boat.” About a library in Yaktusk, he writes, “this was a library any town of its size might well be proud of.” He notes a power development project that, “if completed, would produce twice as much power as all the TVA, Grand Coulee, and the Bonneville developments combined.” Everywhere in the world, for Willkie, there is economic potential and cultural progress. By comparing houses, government buildings, and infrastructure to specific and generic sites in the American landscape, he makes globalism familiar, present, and forward-looking.

The book is especially filled with comparisons to Willkie’s home state of Indiana, keeping with the populist appeal that won him the 1940 nomination. He visits an 8,000-acre farming collective that houses 55 families, “a ratio of about 140 acres per family, which is about the size of the average farm in Rush County, Indiana.” Examining the crops, he writes, “The soil was good—a dark, rich loam, but the rainfall was slight, only some thirteen inches per year. In Indiana we have about forty.” When, because of currency instability, Willkie and the farmer cannot figure out the acreage yield of wheat, rye and other small grains, “we gave up trying to arrive at a comparable price per bushel in American money. For all quotations were given us in rubles, and we found that the value of the ruble is subject to rapid fluctuation and varies in different markets. We could, however, judge the quality of the grain, and it seemed to us good.” Although Willkie does not have a background in farming, he speaks in these examples
as a businessman with enough knowledge about the land and yields to be able to argue for equitable trade and currency parity. Appealing to everyday American readers, he distills a complex global economic problem into simple and tangible terms.

Willkie also presents the people he meets and homes he visits with an air of nostalgia about his Indiana childhood. He describes the farm manager’s “small stone house, simple, and in atmosphere not very different from a prosperous farmhouse in the United States….the wife of the manager, who had cooked the meal, urged me to eat as I have been urged many times in Indiana farmhouses…”[168] Neighborhoods are easy for readers to picture: “The pavements along the bigger streets were boardwalks, like those I remember in Elwood when I was a boy. The houses had the neat, buttoned up look of homes in any northern town, with light from the windows and soft smoke coming from the chimneys.”[169] After a bumpy and uncomfortable ride in an American Jeep in Russia, Willkie states, “I really understood the stories my father used to tell me of conditions in pioneer Indiana.”[170]

The theme of economic development and westward expansion carries throughout the book. Willkie draws comparisons to the American West, stating for example that Yakutsk “seemed… like a western town in this country a generation ago. In fact, much of this life reminded me of our own early and expanding days…”[171] Connecting again to the ethos and character of the region, he writes, “These people have developed an enthusiasm and a self-confidence which reminded me repeatedly of the romance of our own Western development.”[172]

When Willkie presses a Soviet leader “for details about the economic development of Yakutsk, he talked like a California real-estate salesman.”[173] In China, the same strategy continues: “I felt in Tihwa and in Lanchow and in the country between those cities a curious resemblance to our own American West in the days when it was being opened up. The people seemed tall and
resourceful…” On the next page of the book, Willkie reiterates, “the opening up of this new China compares only, in modern history, with the opening up of our own West.” By drawing comparisons to goods and ideas that would be familiar to American readers—ill-fitting trousers, rich soil, farm houses, westward expansion—Willkie offers a forward-looking view of global economic development.

If Willkie’s use of comparisons serves to offer readers an understanding of the world as optimistic and present, so does his strategy of juxtaposition and contrast. This can be seen in a rhetor’s use of the stylistic form of antithesis at the sentence level, as Jeanne Fahnestock has pointed out. Willkie writes, for example, “Russia is neither going to eat us nor seduce us. That is…unless our democratic institutions and our free economy become so frail through abuse and failure in practice as to make us soft and vulnerable. The best answer to Communism is a living, vibrant, fearless democracy—economic, social, and political.” Here, Willkie uses a parallel construction of *neither... nor*, a conditional *if... then*, and dashed punctuation to emphasize his overall argument that shared American values are strong enough to sustain a system of postwar global peace. As an argumentative strategy per Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, the comparison of opposites—“several objects are considered in order to evaluate them through their relations to each other”—informs and encourages rhetorical presence.

Alan Gross explains that presence, however, is not a purely rational form of persuasion; rather, it includes an element of creativity and imagination. In her work on how Civil War photographs worked on the imaginations of viewers, Cara Finnegan similarly describes presence’s affective dimensions. John Murphy has likewise explained how Al Gore’s use of analogies shaped audiences’ rational and felt understanding of environmental crisis through presence. Both of these scholars observe presence as a rhetorical strategy in the face of
catastrophe, almost otherworldly and beyond rational vocabulary. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca describe “showing the ambiguity of the situation and the various ways of understanding it” in order to behold a certain “conception of the world.”

Almost at a loss for words, Willkie defaults to an embrace of juxtaposition and ambiguity in the portrayals of the world that serve in the book to establish presence. He describes, for example, “Underfed and scrawny children playing in the dirty streets of the old city at Jerusalem, young French cadets on the airfield at Beirut, Arab boys and girls of ten working in a blanket factory in Bagdad, Polish refugees camped in great barracks outside Teheran,” concluding that “the first picture I had of this region we call the Middle East was one of contrasts, sharp colors, and confusion.” Especially in the Middle East, he approaches such contrasts and juxtapositions as “amusing manifestations of an international society.”

Often the juxtaposition is between old and new, ancient and modern, allowing Willkie to eventually make an argument in favor of modernity’s economic progress while embracing the wisdom of the past. In Egypt, he writes,

All along the way we passed through a strange medley of the ancient and the modern. Long camel trains with their native riders streamed by loaded with products of the Nile Valley, and rows of modern trucks haled back to Cairo high-powered modern fighting planes to be repaired in modern machine shops—and always in the distance we could see those reminders of ancient Egyptian glory, the Sphinx and the pyramids.

From Beirut to Jerusalem, he exclaims, “Never was the contrast between old and new more dramatic.” He describes Ankara as “modern, with part of an ancient village left on a hill as if to remind the Turks how far they have already gone….The streets are full of cars; the people are well dressed and busy; the buildings are new and good-looking.” Implying that economic progress means social progress, he describes veiled women in Turkey as an “anachronism,” and in sum, claims that “Turks have literally and figuratively abolished the veils
of the ancient East.” Willkie asks readers to step back and look at the world from his wide perspective, to see an overall trajectory of global social progress.

When his descriptions veer into the territory of the unfamiliar, Willkie uses a strategy of contrast to find connection with readers through the mundane. For example, about a small town in Sinkiang province in China, he writes, “It is small, sleepy-looking, and incredibly muddy. The street signs are in Russian, the government is Chinese, the people are Turkis, part of the 20,000,000 Moslems who live inside the frontiers of China.” In the next sentence, he concludes, “It boasts the finest melons in Asia and some small, seedless grapes as good as any I have ever eaten.” By establishing his account of the world within realm of the familiar—muddy streets, seedless grapes—Willkie maintains his ethos and identification with readers. In yet another vignette among several that center around the tour’s many extravagant meals, he explains, “Mike Cowles had been ill the day before, after eating as an experiment some creamed shark’s lip. So he was particularly pleased when the dessert at the banquet was good old-fashioned vanilla ice cream.” Whereas Cowles tells the story differently, Willkie uses it to emphasize an attitude of hearty curiosity and embrace of that which is foreign.

Willkie’s uses of contradiction and ambiguity demonstrate his understanding of American readers, whose fear and uncertainty about the future was likely to have been informed by their experiences in the recent past. His commentary on the global transition into twentieth-century modernity would have rung true for Americans still reeling from the struggles of daily life during the Depression. About the Middle East, he acknowledges, for example, that technology, industry, and infrastructure are but “a thin veneer on the surface of a life… simple and hard.” Rural Americans would have been able to identify with his description of Siberia, where “Reindeer are still the chief motive power of the republic, but there are now some
hundreds of tractors….The republic even has 160 combines…“ The immediacy and proximity of past and future create a visceral sense of presence.

Compression of geographic space

Understanding the war and postwar society as worldwide required a shift in perspective among everyday Americans about their position on the globe, and the uncertainty produced by this shift can be seen in the sometimes skewed understandings of place and proximity reflected in public and private discourse. For example, a self-described “very anxious mother” from Kansas City wrote a handwritten note to Willkie in search of her son, who “was recently sent to China on [sic] foreign news-paper assignment and I’m sure you must have met him, if not on your journey, in China. We had letters from him in Brazil and Egypt and then a cable which told us he was o.k. so we feel that it must have been from China. Would you be kind enough to tell us whether or not you saw him and if he was O.K.? Another mother, from New York City, desperately underlined her words, “won’t you please, Mr. Willkie tell me how they are – and if they are ever coming home? Three years is a long time – just waiting And I love them so….Won’t you let me know how my son looked – if he is well and are they very unhappy over there?” These are among dozens of similar letters requesting information about loved ones abroad. From Peoria, Illinois, a woman seeks news of her brother, who “is a big fellow with a big smile and pleasing personality.” Another, “my only brother and only son of his widowed mother is stationed [in Chunking]. He is a tall red-headed officer…”

Often Willkie replied to these letters that, unfortunately, he did not remember seeing the young man in question; to a mother in Berkeley he says that he inquired but could get no more information about her son “other than he was away resting.” Others he did answer in the
affirmative: “He was in excellent health, feeling well and seemed to be in the very best of spirits.” These exchanges illustrate, on the one hand, an overwhelming fear of the geographical distance separating Americans from the wars in Europe and the Pacific; on the other hand, they show a certain intimacy—that Willkie could receive and individually reply to handwritten notes from mothers and siblings across the country, and that in some cases he had actually seen and spoken with their loved ones, suggests that the world is not so large, after all. Indeed, news traveled faster with Wendell Willkie than it did with the U.S. Military Postal Service.

*One World* used the compression of geographic space as a rhetorical strategy to advance globalism in the WWII era, making the world small and imaginable. With the rise of air travel in the era came a renewed interest in cartography and mapping, both in public discourse and as part of official military strategy. As Amy Spellacy writes in an article about cartography in the era of “air-age globalism,” maps were used explicitly to educate Americans about the world; as aerospace technologies allowed for earth to be seen from higher up in the air, new perspectives changed perceptions about distance and proximity. With the attack on Pearl Harbor, in particular, she writes, “it became eminently clear to the United States that it was not out of the range of the reach of its enemies. This catastrophic event illustrated that the word need to be imagined as an interconnected system.” Understanding cartography in the WWII era as rhetorical, Timothy Barney similarly considers how Americans and military strategists re-imagined the world and their role in it by way of maps that shifted from a hemispheric to global perspective, often centering around the Arctic Circle so that the U.S. was seen in proximity to northern Europe, Russia, and China. He writes, “Air-age maps displaced our sense of expected direction in viewing the world, and changed notions of distance and proximity: the world seemed more
The book *One World* has on its front and back covers such a map, showing Willkie’s route around the globe in a roughly circular shape with the Arctic route from Russia to Alaska at the top. Willkie writes, “When you fly around the world in forty-nine days, you learn that the world has become small not only on the map, but also in the minds of men.” The rhetorical strategies of *ethos*, comparison, and contradiction perhaps culminate in Willkie’s use of the compression of time and space in order to constitute globalism. Distance is presented in terms of time rather than miles: “we were in the air a total of only 160 hours.” Air travel is made easy: “…no more arduous than the trips an American businessman may make any day of his life to carry on his business.” Strangers are made familiar: “…the myriad millions of human beings of the Far East are as close to us as Los Angeles is to New York by the fastest trains.” In all, *One World* serves to educate American readers, asking them to contemplate, ponder, imagine an interdependent postwar world, for “…an airplane gives a modern traveler a chance to map in his mind the land he is flying over.”

For Willkie, postwar peace depended upon the free exchange of goods and ideas in a world made suddenly small by war and technological advancement. About a Soviet leader in Siberia, he writes, “He had obviously been planning in terms of international trade. ‘When this war is over, you in America are going to need wood and wood pulp. And we’re going to need machines, all kinds of machines. We’re not so far away from you, as soon as we get the Arctic sea route open. Come and get it; we’ll be glad to swap.’” About the mountains in Western China, he writes, “These red hills are unbelievably lovely to look at from the air, but I could not see them without thinking what wealth they represented to a nation determined to open up its
By way of summarizing the trip, he states, “Good will has also been stored up for us, like credit in a bank account, by those Americans who have pioneered in the opening of new roads, new airways, new shipping lines.” Readers thus understand globalism as the ever more efficient exchange of goods and culture and as the modern future.

While *One World* is generally less about the ongoing war and more about the future peace, Willkie also uses the compression of time and space as an argumentative strategy in calling for the U.S. military support for Russia and China. He states, “At the end of the last war, not a single plane had flown across the Atlantic. Today that ocean is a mere ribbon, with airplanes making regular scheduled flights. The Pacific is only a slightly wider ribbon in the ocean of the air, and Europe and Asia are at our very doorstep.” If Japanese imperial efforts are not halted, he writes, “it would not matter in the least how wide or narrow the Pacific Ocean is.” Here Willkie explicitly confronts the isolationist sentiment that the U.S. was protected by its oceans. The book that began with cheery optimism and banter moves toward a serious critique of U.S. isolationism and provincialism. He writes, “When I say that peace must be planned on a world basis, I mean quite literally that it must embrace the earth. Continents and oceans are plainly only parts of a whole, seen, as I have seen them, from the air.” Having established his credibility as a narrator, Willkie invites readers to see and understand the world—and their position in it—from an altitude only recently elevated by modern air travel.

This shift in perspective also requires readers to examine their own prejudices. *One World* makes the world seem less monolithic and more accessible. Willkie writes, for example, about the Soviet Union, that it “covers an enormous territory, bigger than the United States, Canada, and Central America combined. The people are of many different races and nationalities, speaking many languages.” As shown above, Willkie embraces and celebrates
contrast and contradiction—“...we drank English whisky and ate Russian caviar and danced to American music in the curious internationalism of the diplomatic world.”—and challenges readers to address what he calls ‘imperialisms at home,’ namely systemic racism. For Willkie, postwar peace cannot be sustained if Americans do not adopt an all-encompassing world outlook that includes all of their own fellow citizens. What Willkie calls the “mocking paradoxes” of racism and inequality, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters, worked as significant political and social barriers to the discourse of globalism.

**Conclusion**

In his work on rhetorical magnitude, Farrell suggests that questions about how a culture emphasizes and prioritizes its attachments and ideas, especially about identity, are questions for the realm of rhetorical inquiry, for “there is an unavoidable element of contingency, partisanship, and ‘interestedness’ in the very nexus of word and world.” In this chapter and throughout the project, I demonstrate how globalism worked rhetorically to replace isolationism as the predominant America worldview in the WWII era by providing an alternative vocabulary with which to describe the postwar peace. Willkie’s book, in particular, as one important landmark in the rhetorical history of globalization, detailed an optimistic vision of postwar cooperation in concrete and sensory terms that Americans could easily imagine—a can of lunch meat, the crow’s feet around the eyes of a kind elderly woman, the friendly faces and strong bodies of their own sons, a sheath of golden wheat. By making the world small and familiar, using the strategies of *ethos*, presence, and the compression of geographical space, *One World* introduced globalism into mainstream American public discourse about the postwar world. In a time of epic uncertainty, Americans could literally hold the world in their hands.
Willkie’s globalist vision of postwar peace depended on trade and international economic cooperation, offering an alternative to a discourse of isolationism and national economic self-sufficiency. It also depended on the support of a domestic and global middle class, for, he wrote, “the history of civilization shows that the creation of economic conditions under which those who have little or nothing can improve their lot is not a dividing process but a multiplying one, by which the well-being of all society is advanced.”\textsuperscript{215} The following chapter turns to President Roosevelt’s Economic Bill of Rights speech, which directly addresses the economic fears and concerns of everyday Americans in imagining a global future.

\textsuperscript{72} Willkie, \textit{One World}, 163.
\textsuperscript{74} Wendell Willkie, \textit{One World}, 1.
\textsuperscript{75} Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Willkie, July 13, 1944, in Correspondence, Box 68, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
\textsuperscript{76} Trip Files, Box 114, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
\textsuperscript{78} Henry R. Luce, \textit{The American Century} (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1941), 25.
\textsuperscript{79} Correspondence, Box 48, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
\textsuperscript{80} Willkie, \textit{One World}, 168.
\textsuperscript{81} Willkie, \textit{One World}, 169.
\textsuperscript{83} Wendell Willkie, \textit{One World} (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1943), 56.
\textsuperscript{86} Dunn, \textit{1940}, 157.
\textsuperscript{87} Dunn, \textit{1940}, 198.
\textsuperscript{89} Richard Moe, \textit{Roosevelt’s Second Act}, 154.
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Michael Fullilove, Rendezvous with Destiny: How Franklin D. Roosevelt and Five Extraordinary Men Took America into the War and into the World (New York: Penguin, 2013), 165. The message that Willkie delivered to Churchill was the now-famous ‘Ship of State’ letter, Roosevelt’s handwritten rendition of a verse from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It read: “Dear Churchill: Wendell Willkie will give you this—He is truly helping to keep politics out over here. I think this verse applies to you people as it does to us: ‘Sail on, Oh Ship of State! Sail on, Oh Union strong and great. Humanity with all its fears / With all the hope of future years / Is hanging breathless on thy fate.’ As ever yours, Franklin D. Roosevelt.” Trip Files, Box 114, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Michael Fullilove, Rendezvous with Destiny, 195.

Trip Files, Box 114, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.


Willkie, One World, 15.

Robert Dallek, Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 419.

Correspondence, Box 48, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Willkie, One World, 53.


So virulent was Dewey’s isolationist rhetoric that he warned that the United Nations would amount to a world government, complete with its own air force. See Irwin F. Gellman, Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Summer Welles (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995).

Denise M. Bostdorff, Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: The Cold War Call to Arms (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 32-37.

Fullilove, Rendezvous with Destiny, 349.

Correspondence, Box 18, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Willkie, One World, 171.

Willkie, One World, ix.

Willkie, One World, 8.

Willkie, One World, 11.

Willkie, One World, 11.

Willkie, One World, 99.

Willkie, One World, 153.

Willkie, One World, 10.

Willkie, One World, 53.

Willkie, One World, 79.

Willkie, One World, 68.

Willkie, One World, 87.

Willkie, One World, 102.

Willkie, One World, 103.

Willkie, One World, 111.

Trip Files, Box 114, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Timothy Barney explains that Luce, born to missionaries in China and married to author, politician, and socialite Clare Luce, hired cartographers to advance globalism as a moral choice and set of shared values. Timothy Barney, Mapping the Cold War: Cartography and the Faming of America’s International Power (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 34.


Willkie, *One World*, 3.


Willkie, *One World*, 32.


Willkie, *One World*, 42.


Willkie, *One World*, 56.

Willkie, *One World*, 64.


Willkie, *One World*, 80.

Willkie, *One World*, 81.

Willkie, *One World*, 83.


Willkie, *One World*, 130.

Willkie, *One World*, 133-34.

Willkie, *One World*, 137.


Willkie, *One World*, 139.

October 1931 and March 1943.

Willkie, *One World*, 141.

Box 115, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. There is a longstanding rumor on both sides of the Pacific that Willkie and Chiang’s relations were more than friendly. See Gardner Cowles, *Mike Looks Back* (New York, 1985), 65-96.

Box 115, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.


Willkie, *One World*, 44.

162 Willkie, *One World*, 70.
164 Willkie, *One World*, 70.
165 Willkie, *One World*, 70.
166 Willkie, *One World*, 70-71.
168 Willkie, *One World*, 73.
170 Willkie, *One World*, 55.
172 Willkie, *One World*, 100.
173 Willkie, *One World*, 98.
174 Willkie, *One World*, 120.
175 Willkie, *One World*, 121.
177 Willkie, *One World*, 86.
183 Willkie, *One World*, 17.
188 Willkie, *One World*, 41.
189 Willkie, *One World*, 112.
191 Cowles says that they avoided the ice cream and “prayed that our anti-cholera inoculations were in good working order.” Cowles, *Mike Looks Back*, 86.
193 Willkie, *One World*, 100.
194 Box 114, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
195 Box 114, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
196 Box 114, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
204 Willkie, *One World*, 17.
205 Willkie, One World, 99.
206 Willkie, One World, 119.
207 Willkie, One World, 159.
208 Willkie, One World, 202.
209 Willkie, One World, 107.
210 Willkie, One World, 203.
211 Willkie, One World, 88.
212 Willkie, One World, 47.
213 Willkie, One World, 191.
215 Willkie, One World, 29.
March 29, 1941: Roosevelt to Willkie, via Western Union telegram: “I am grateful for what you did and said yesterday. It helps a lot.”

August 25, 1941, Roosevelt to Willkie, requesting that Willkie speak at the Mt. Rushmore dedication, using a theme of “national unity:” “I would be ingenuous if I did not also mention that, geographically, this region is really in need of the kind of speeches you have been making.”

December 5, 1941, Roosevelt to Willkie, asking that he travel to Australia in order to cement wartime relations: “There is always the Japanese matter to consider. The situation is definitely serious and there might be an armed clash at any moment….Perhaps the next four or five days will decide the matter.”

December 10, 1941, Willkie to Roosevelt: “What I am trying to say – honestly, but awkwardly I’m afraid, because it is not easy – is this…..: If such well meant suggestions about me are brought to you, I beg you to disregard them. There is on your shoulders the heaviest responsibility any man can carry and I would not add to it in the slightest way. Even to volunteer a willingness to serve seems to me now only an imposition on your attention. Every American is willing to serve.”

The above series of exchanges between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie captures this chapter’s central argument: Whereas Willkie was able to promote an optimistic rhetoric of globalism through his status as a well-connected globe-trotting private citizen, Roosevelt—constrained both by his disability and by the office of the presidency—carefully managed the American postwar imagination with appeals to national unity in the face of fear and civilizational uncertainty. By inscribing economic security as a constitutional right foundational to U.S. identity in a precarious and then-unimaginable postwar world, the “Economic Bill of Rights,” a peroration to his 1944 State of the Union address, summarizes Roosevelt’s approach to a liberal postwar order.
Willkie was reluctant to comply with Roosevelt’s multiple requests that he travel and serve the President as a surrogate and personal representative; the two were, after all, political rivals. Roosevelt’s people, including FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, monitored Willkie throughout both the 1940 and 1944 presidential campaigns as well as during the Lend-Lease and One World trips. Intelligence from the Roosevelt Presidential Library online files include a 7-page anonymous letter from someone who dined with Willkie and his New York mistress in January of 1941, concluding, “He still strikes me as an unusually honest, attractive fellow, on the right side in general, not at all an intellectual, sometimes a bit naïve, but thoroughly admirable and likeable.” Willkie’s legendary ethos was in fact so valuable that Roosevelt considered drafting him as Secretary of the Navy as late as April of 1944. One advisor wrote, “Inside the Administration of the war effort, Willkie would be out of political activity. His political activity for the President might be misinterpreted; his political activity, should he negotiate with [Republican presidential candidate] Dewey, might be harmful.” Roosevelt knew how to keep his friends close and enemies closer; rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke argued that Roosevelt’s physical illness led to “a sharpening of the administrative sense, which is decidedly that of acting by proxy.” Leaving the optimism and public cheerleading to Willkie, the President’s rhetoric of postwar globalism was rather an exercise in the careful management of American fear and economic uncertainty.

That the war and postwar planning era saw a precarious balance between horror and hopefulness is not an understatement. Burke’s A Grammar of Motives centered around the following question, for example: “To what extent can we confront the global situation with an attitude neither local nor imperialistic?” Hannah Arendt, who escaped Europe during the Holocaust, devoted her life’s work to understanding what she described at the “total terror” of
the era. In *Origins of Totalitarianism* she describes the psychological destruction of the human spirit, asking, “What meaning has the concept of murder when we are confronted with the production of mass corpses?” In *Between Past and Future*, Arendt captures the notion of liminality in the World War II era, describing “the odd in-between period which sometimes inserts itself into historical time when not only the later historians but the actors and witnesses, the living themselves, become aware of an interval in time which is altogether determined by things that are no longer and by things that are not yet.” In *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, Corey Robin, reading Arendt, notes a “genuine optimism” that emerged briefly as a response to the uncertainty of the era, only to be overshadowed by Cold War rhetoric. He argues that fear, in the case of war especially, motivates a society to find a shared identity in opposition to a perceived threat; in a second and more insidious form, however, fear works to perpetuate “inequities of wealth, status, and power.” The Economic Bill of Rights speech responded to this kind of nascent, persistent, underlying fear.

Roosevelt’s globalism was more serious, more restrained, and less optimistic than Willkie’s. Throughout the presidency, Roosevelt’s economic and foreign policy rhetoric shifted between internationalism and isolationism in careful ways, sometimes taking a hard-line, realist approach to foreign policy, influenced by President Theodore Roosevelt, and sometimes an international idealism, influenced by President Wilson. Mary Stuckey suggests that Roosevelt’s postwar vision was that of the American democratic example in a globalized world order, a good neighbor in a global neighborhood, “in which all nations would have equal rights and equal voices; in which cooperation would replace domination; and in which peace would be the rule rather than the exception.”
Before human rights could be extended to throughout the globe, however, Americans needed to be assured of their own economic status at home. Earliest drafts of the 1944 State of the Union speech included information and statistics that spoke to an American populace that would likely have found Willkie’s optimistic and cosmopolitan version of globalism incomprehensible: “More than one-fourth of all our young men examined for Selective Service were below minimum physical standards. Almost one-third had never visited a dentist,” Roosevelt and his speechwriters noted. “Our great nation… must face the fact that more than one-half of our people have not attended school after the age of thirteen, that five American citizens out of every hundred can neither read nor write, that only one out of twenty have ever attended college.”

These Americans needed somehow to imagine themselves as participants in the postwar world—assuming there would be one; the Economic Bill of Rights addressed their fears and anxieties.

Biographer H.W. Brands thus calls Roosevelt’s Economic Bill of Rights “a statement that was the most radical he ever uttered—and indeed more radical than any president before or after ever uttered.” Roosevelt understood that security—freedom from fear, freedom from want—had to be economic, and it had to be felt at the level of individuals and households. While rhetorical critics and scholars of FDR have often noted the President’s use of fear and the management of fear as a theme and argumentative strategy that worked constitutively to establish American national identity throughout the Great Depression and World War II, scarcely have we considered how the Economic Bill of Rights figured into Roosevelt’s overarching attempt to establish a liberal-democratic postwar global order. An exception is Jayson Harsin’s “The Lost Histories of American Economic Rights,” written explicitly in response to the exigence of the economic collapse of 2008. Harsin compares Roosevelt’s and
Reagan’s public proclamations of economic rights, determining that “economic rights is a historically empty signifier that marks the rewritable articulations between national economy, government and freedom,” especially in times of historical contingency. 231 While I agree with Harsin’s assessment of economic rights as a discursive resource worth seriously revisiting in light of current intersections between government, economy, and individual rights, and while I similarly suggest as much in Chapter Five, my purpose in the present chapter is to look closely at Roosevelt’s 1944 speech itself in the context of presidential rhetoric as it responded to the domestic and global economic and existential fears and criticisms of the war and postwar planning era.

After situating the speech with regard to Roosevelt’s critics and constraints, this chapter examines how the 1944 State of the Union in general, and the Economic Bill of Rights peroration in particular, used scapegoating to establish a sense of national unity that, in Roosevelt’s own words, “transcends” fear and petty politics. The speech deftly acknowledged and managed the American public’s fears about the global future and their household lives, working constitutively to define life’s basic necessities as human rights. Finally, it positioned the era as epochal, urgent, and worthy of Constitutional reform.

Political and Historical Context

By January 1944, Allied forces had won control of North Africa and the Soviets had ended the Nazi siege of Stalingrad. June of 1944 would see the Normandy landings, which would serve as a turning point in the war in Europe in favor of the Allies. Although the war dragged on in the Pacific, although horrendous casualties were yet to occur, and although the speed of the genocide of the Jews was ever grimly increasing, 232 public attention turned toward
planning for a postwar world. The treaties and sanctions following the First World War having failed, government leaders, philosophers, economists, and intellectuals attempted to weigh into the postwar planning debate before the end of present hostilities—all driven by the unresolved question of how to organize an economically viable world peace. Karl Polanyi, for example, rushed to finish *The Great Transformation* (1944), concluding that “Every move towards integration in society should thus be accompanied by an increase of freedom; moves toward planning should comprise the strengthening of the rights of the individual in society.”

Similarly, Sumner Welles, who had dropped out of public life in 1940 following a personal scandal, emerged in 1944 with a book entitled *The Time for Decision*, which laid out a postwar economic and political strategy. Welles, a long-time adviser to Roosevelt on foreign affairs, argued that foremost, “the field of foreign relations should be concerned with international economics.” Echoing Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms agenda, Welles advocated a postwar system in which the United States led the way toward democratic governance, for “the ability of peoples to obtain freedom from fear and freedom from want is contingent upon their ability to want it enough.”

In his lectures before and during the war years that resulted in *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944) Christian philosopher and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr grappled with and attempted to articulate a hopeful, yet realistic, vision for the postwar world. He wrote, “The preservation of a democratic civilization requires the wisdom of the serpent and harmlessness of the dove. The children of light must be armed with the wisdom of the children of darkness but remain free from their malice.” Although Niebuhr did not offer prescriptive suggestions for a postwar international infrastructure, he cautiously favored a movement toward economic collaboration via international institutions, if for no other reason than they symbolize
human effort, human striving, for, he states, “the task of building a world community is man’s final necessity and possibility, but also his final impossibility.”

Another prominent voice—and, like Niebuhr, a foreign policy realist—in elite discourse about the war and postwar future was that of Walter Lippmann, who had grumbled in his 1937 book The Good Society, “I cannot see how any group of officials can decide how a civilian population shall live nobly and abundantly.” In 1943 he published U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic, advocating alliances between the great powers and railing against Wilsonian idealism: “if we construct our foreign policy on some kind of abstract theory of our rights and duties, we shall build castles in the air.” A year later, in 1944, Lippmann published U.S. War Aims, reviewing again the failures of Wilsonianism and arguing that “the fundamental task of diplomats and public men is to conserve what is being accomplished by the war.”

However, neither Lippmann nor Niebuhr, and neither Welles nor Polanyi, spoke directly to Americans’ everyday lives in the way that President Roosevelt would need to in order to garner public and Congressional support for his postwar plans.

Roosevelt encouraged widespread debate because the existence of what some scholars have called a “loyal opposition” helped to unify the public and keep public discourse and democratic deliberation alive. He “sought the appearance of a full and open debate” on Lend-Lease in 1940-41, for instance, because he feared that the nation would only become further divided over foreign policy. Lend-Lease represented an economic solution to a foreign policy problem; it allowed Americans to discuss the war without what Roosevelt called “that silly, foolish old dollar sign,” and thus by logical extension without regard to personal cost. Throughout the war, Roosevelt’s speeches quelled Americans’ economic fears by educating them about the world, asking them to take out their maps and globes to follow along with his
speeches. As Stuckey has argued about Roosevelt, “In times of national uncertainty, the constitutive power of rhetoric becomes all the more evident because during those times presidents speak directly to the deeper essence of the polity they govern.” Roosevelt established an intimacy with the American public that was unlike any president before him, reaching into homes and living rooms through the radio with his strong and familiar voice.

The 1944 State of the Union speech, building on Roosevelt’s rhetorical corpus, effectively offered a liberal postwar economic vision in terms that would make sense to the American public and position them as stake-holding consumers within it.

What would evolve into the Economic Bill of Rights had been in the making throughout Roosevelt’s presidency. The success of New Deal policies informed and bolstered economic planning prior to and during World War II, motivating the administration to embark on what some have called a “‘New’ New Deal.” An evolution of the National Planning Board, established in 1933 as part of the Public Works Administration, the National Resources Planning Board (NRPB) was approved by Congress in 1939 as an agency of the Executive branch. It was charged with carrying out a Second Bill of Rights. As David M. Kennedy notes, economic planning forwarded the progressive idea of “imparting to ordinary Americans at least some measure… of predictability to their lives…” The NRPB was axed by Congress in 1943; although the likelihood of a Second Bill of Rights actually being formally implemented was slim or impossible, nothing could prevent the President from speaking it into existence.

The 1944 State of the Union was an opportune time to do so. As Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson observe, presidents use Annual Messages, or State of the Union addresses, to "reconstruct the past in order to forge the future," to “reshape reality” and in doing so redefine national identity in moments of crisis.
follow a generic pattern that Campbell and Jamieson identify, starting with a meditation on the nation’s values and then moving to assessments of information and policy recommendations, and ending with a memorable peroration. The Four Freedoms, for example, served as the conclusion of Roosevelt’s 1941 Annual Message. The Economic Bill of Rights section of the 1944 Annual Message expounded upon the Four Freedoms and similarly served as an elevating move at the conclusion of the speech, adjusting shared values to new circumstances and inscribing them as constitutional.

Because it was an election year, Roosevelt could use occasion of the Annual Message to advance his political platform as well, and he wanted to appear vigorous. By January 11, 1944, however, President Roosevelt was already gravely ill. He would not die until April of the following year at his residence in Warm Springs, GA, but 1944 and 1945 saw obvious dramatic health declines and frequent periods of rest. Archival materials related to the 1944 Annual Message from the FDR Presidential Library digital collection include numerous early drafts, leading to a final, formal copy that was released to Congress at noon that day. Too sick to deliver the speech to Congress in person, Roosevelt instead gave a live radio address to the American public at 9pm Eastern Time that evening. He also had the Economic Bill of Rights section of the speech filmed for the newsreels.

**FDR’s Critics**

President Roosevelt was so trusted and beloved that by 1944, his election into a fourth term was almost a given; those who did not support Roosevelt, though, hated him. On both the political left and political right, there remained some vocal critics, ranging from conspiracy theorists to traditional isolationists to economists and the foreign policy realists mentioned...
above. Among the isolationists was Republican Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, the son of a former president, who would become a chief opponent to the Bretton Woods agreements during the Congressional debate the following year, examined in Chapter Four. Throughout his time in office, Roosevelt was forced to make political trade-offs in order to shepherd his domestic programs through recalcitrant members of Congress including Taft and others, which as Robert Dallek argues, “ruled out bold initiatives in foreign affairs.”

Prior to the Pearl Harbor attacks and U.S. entry into the war, vast majorities of Americans supported the Neutrality Acts as both a commercial and foreign policy stance. Vigorous public debate around Lend-Lease, examined in Chapter Two, as well as the war itself, largely changed their minds; even so, a number of outspoken isolationists still argued that the U.S. could be economically self-sufficient and buffeted by its oceans in the case of military threat.

Right-wing isolationism saw perhaps its most extreme form in the popular figure of Charles Lindbergh, beloved pilot and spokesperson for the America First Committee (AFC); at its height in 1941, the AFC had nearly a million members. It was deeply anti-Semitic and racist, however, and, between Lindbergh’s increasingly public and outspoken sympathies with Hitler and the attacks on Pearl Harbor, the AFC was soon disbanded. Nevertheless, rumors that Roosevelt was becoming a dictator, and even that the Pearl Harbor attacks were a conspiracy to bring the U.S. into the war, persisted even into the 1944 campaign.

The very notion of economic planning, too, was subject to fervent criticism from the right. James Burnham offered managerialism as a third way between capitalism and socialism in response to postwar fears of mass unemployment and total social breakdown. George Orwell’s 1984 took Burnham’s apocalyptic vision to its plausible end. Freidrich Hayek’s dire warnings that planning would lead to fascism filled the pages of Readers Digest, LOOK, and the Saturday
Evening Post. A condensed, cartoon version of his Road to Serfdom was sent to approximately 1.5 million military personnel. Inspiring fear that a planned society would toll the death knell for individual freedom, Hayek wrote, “Only if we recognize the danger in time can we hope to avert it.” The idea that a postwar world could be planned at all was met with deep skepticism and sometimes total cynicism.

Others accused Roosevelt of engaging in “secret treaties” in his meetings with Stalin, Churchill, and Chang Kai-shek in November and December 1943 in Cairo and then Tehran. Dallek notes, “No part of Roosevelt’s foreign policy has been less clearly understood than his wartime diplomacy.” In the 1944 State of the Union, Roosevelt confronted these critics through the rhetorical strategy of scapegoating, which will be discussed below, and he also stated directly that there were no “secret treaties” in his summits, that “planning” was not a word that Americans should be afraid of, and that a “rightist reaction” was the real threat to national unity. He paid attention to his critics.

On the other side of the political spectrum, critics and isolationists sided with labor leader John L. Lewis, who had argued that U.S. entry into the war would “make American into an imperialist nation, strengthening the powers of the large money interests.” This vein of isolationism was deeply skeptical of what other observers call the “business internationalists,” the bankers and businessmen who advocated for the free flow of trade and capital across national boundaries and held that U.S. economic interests depended upon the global economy. Although Lewis had faded into the background after what amounted to a humiliating public temper tantrum in 1940, and although Roosevelt had a good reputation as the “people’s president” because of his efforts to address poverty during the Great Depression, there was burgeoning labor unrest throughout the war. It would erupt in a wave of strikes in 1945-46.
In December 1943, in fact, Roosevelt placed the nation’s railroads under government seizure in order to squash an imminent strike; this action infuriated labor.\textsuperscript{265} The 1943 Christmas Eve chat and 1944 Annual Message both responded to this situation by attempting to save Roosevelt’s reputation as a friend of the workingman.

Responding to these critics and to the historical and political context, Roosevelt had to find a new liberalism: global capitalism with a domestic safety net. “Liberalism,” as Alan Ryan writes, “is best understood as a theory of the good life for individuals that is linked to a theory of the social, economic, and political arrangements within which they may lead that life.”\textsuperscript{266} Roosevelt performed his liberalism as a tempered and pragmatic rhetoric of globalism that dismissed critics and appealed both to foreign policy realism and to the everyday fears of Americans.\textsuperscript{267}

**1944 Annual Message Radio Address and the “Economic Bill of Rights”**

As noted above, the Economic Bill of Rights section of the 1944 State of the Union serves as the speech’s three-page conclusion; the first ten pages of the radio version of the speech are a truncation of the 1944 Annual Message. Following the generic patterns of identifying problems and proposing solutions, as well as establishing national identity via the institution of the presidency,\textsuperscript{268} Roosevelt explains the current moment in terms of the ongoing war effort and looks to establish policies that will both end the war and establish a lasting peace. He dismisses his critics’ “faulty perspectives,” seeking, like Willkie in Chapter Two, to negotiate the public’s understanding of the magnitude of the moment: “The faulty perspective consists in over-emphasizing lesser problems and thereby under-emphasizing the first and greatest problem.” Recalling the “lessons of 1918,” the President decries “over-confidence and complacency” as the
“deadliest of all enemies.” He then proposes a set of economic policies—a simplified tax code, controls on war profiteering, food subsidies, and currency stabilization—to win the war and prevent economic chaos. He also offers a version of a national service law toned down from previous drafts, drawing on the recommendations of his advisors and promoting a sense of national unity and shared values to carry into future generations. The speech closes with a statement of rights mimicking the Bill of Rights:

- The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries, or shops or farms or mines of the nation;
- The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;
- The right of farmers to raise and sell their products at a return which will give them and their families a decent living;
- The right of every business man, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad;
- The right of every family to a decent home;
- The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;
- The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, and sickness, and accident and unemployment;
- And finally, the right to a good education.

All these rights spell security…

In the margins of the triple-spaced reading copy of Roosevelt’s January 1944 radio address, a shaky hand marks 5-minute time increments (9:05, 9:10, 9:15, etc.) presumably meant by the President to keep himself on pace during the 30-minute speech. The first page, a special insert explaining the occasion for a prime-time radio address in lieu of appearing before Congress, was subject to several drafts and suggestions by speechwriters before arriving on the following opening lines:

Today I sent my Annual Message to the Congress, as required by the Constitution. It has been my custom to deliver these Annual Messages in person, and they have been broadcast to the nation. I intended to follow this same custom this year. But, like a great many of my fellow countrymen, I have had the “flu” and, although I am practically recovered, my Doctor simply would not permit me to leave the White House and go up to the Capitol. Only a few of the newspapers of the United States can print the message in
full, and I am very anxious that the American people be given an opportunity to hear what I have recommended to the Congress for this very fateful year in our history – and the reasons for those recommendations.\textsuperscript{271}

The stenographer’s copy of the speech, which reviews the places where Roosevelt departed from or changed the script, notes that the words “other people” replace “my fellow countrymen,” suggesting that the President decided to begin the speech in an even more colloquial register.\textsuperscript{272} In standard Roosevelt fashion, though, the speech would then rise to a series of scathing and sharp-tongued crescendos, reminding Americans that their commander-in-chief—going on 12 years in office at this point in time—was neither friendly nor feeble. Davis Houck, writing about FDR’s economic rhetoric early in the presidency, notes, “Roosevelt was a chameleon in scotch plaid,” who “skillfully transformed a physical disability into a rhetorical strength. He further transformed the ‘scene’ of health and sickness into one of warfare,” building economic confidence among Americans by speaking directly—or seeming to speak directly—to their individual needs.\textsuperscript{273} By the time he gave the Economic Bill of Rights speech, Roosevelt was master of his craft.

The analysis below demonstrates how the speech managed economic fear and worked constitutively to unite Americans around a postwar national identity within a globalized world; however, as Burke wrote about Roosevelt, “a president who would strive to unify a democratic nation must not unify it too well.”\textsuperscript{274} Scapegoating leftist and rightist critics allowed for a clarification of the nation’s priorities: to remain vigilant and self-sacrificing in the midst of the ongoing war, and to trust that beyond it would be a future of global peace and individual economic security. By aligning the historical moment with the nation’s founding and arguing for an updated Bill of Rights that acknowledged the pitfalls of a modern liberal economy, the speech
allowed Roosevelt to navigate a rhetoric of globalism that was both transcendent and constrained.

**Scapegoating**

Burke describes scapegoating in rhetoric as a “ritualistic outlet” that serves to purify a society of its “own iniquities,” in order to create a new sense of unification. Several scholars have noted that President Roosevelt used scapegoating often and memorably in his speeches throughout his time in office. Of the first inaugural’s scapegoating of the infamous “money changers,” for example, writes Houck, Roosevelt and his speechwriters “had done a smart thing: They were giving the people a group to blame, but without naming any names.” In this way, the very people to whom Roosevelt was referring—bankers, industrialists, and large corporations, mainly—could be let off the hook should the President need their support later. Halford Ryan explains that Roosevelt’s scapegoating of isolationists in the Arsenal of Democracy speech of December 1940 “concomitantly reinforced why one should patriotically support him.”

Mary Stuckey also implies language similar to Burke’s concept of scapegoating to describe Roosevelt’s approach to his critics throughout the presidency, rendering them, for example, “beyond redemption” and in violation of the nation’s democratic values. Calling them “foxes and weasels,” “appeasers,” “cheerful idiots,” and “ostriches” with their heads in the sand, she notes, Roosevelt could blame isolationists for national disunity before and during the war. Stuckey characterizes such phrases as “the invective,” a politically instrumental and constitutively effective means by which Roosevelt “all but argued that anyone who opposed him was unpatriotic and un-American.”
Roosevelt’s invective, scapegoating-like phrases in the ritualistic occasion of the 1944 State of the Union speech tend to be pithy and appealing to the ear. He and his speechwriters often used alliteration and the repetition of sounds, imagining isolationists as pests scrambling around, “circulating constantly” in a “dirty darkness,” referring to “suspicious souls” who accused Roosevelt of secret treaties, “spreading suspicion,” “such selfish agitation” that “creates confusion,” and warning of a “rightist reaction,” for example. Roosevelt caricatures those “…people who burrow through our Nation like unseeing moles, and attempt to spread the suspicion that if other nations are encouraged to raise their standards of living, our own American standard of living must of necessity be depressed.” Then he goes onto explain the opposite argument, that the American standard of living will only be raised when the U.S. engages in peaceful economic relations with its neighbors.

Roosevelt uses scapegoating in the speech explicitly to establish a sense of national unity, of individual sacrifice and what Burke called a collectivistic motive. He refers to “pests who swarm through the lobbies of the Congress and the cocktail bars of Washington, representing these special groups as opposed to the basic interests of the Nation as a whole.” He argues, “Disunity at home—bickerings, self-seeking partisanship, stoppages of work, inflation, business as usual, politics as usual, luxury as usual—these…undermine the morale of brave men ready to die at the front for us here.” Disunity from any side of the political spectrum threatens democracy. Worse, he implores in an enthymematic if-then sentence construction, it risks fascism: “If history were to repeat itself…”

The President’s scapegoating, especially early in the speech, both works to reject viewpoints that undermine the nation’s war effort and allows him to move toward being able to speak directly to the postwar concerns of everyday Americans. “Luxury” and “business as usual”
are chosen for ritualistic alienation and, in Burke’s rendering, represent “the iniquities of those who would be cured by attacking [them].” Treating business and special interests as scapegoats was typical Roosevelt rhetoric; it served to strengthen his own reputation as a president who had transcended his own familial wealth and privilege and who understood the concerns of everyday Americans.

At the same time, his scapegoating of the very same people he sought to include in the nation’s postwar imagination (i.e., “stoppages of work”) was also typical Roosevelt rhetoric. Stuckey notes that Roosevelt was more measured in his response to opponents on the left, that he “tended to attack them in a sideways fashion through co-option of policy positions and conciliations on the basis of general principles.” In other words, he was careful not to alienate these critics too much. Burke wrote about the era that working-class, “wage-earners” occupied “two fabulously different roles: one as an object of great distrust, and even vilification; the other as an object of almost abject courtship.” Under a “war economy,” Burke explained, workers no longer need to be courted and are expected to make individual sacrifices for a collectivist motive, “which will be shared by all except the war profiteers and the empire-builders of big business.” After the war ended, however, as Burke wrote, “was the promise of return to an economic order which was already proving unworkable.” It was this fear and potential unrest that Roosevelt would have to acknowledge in the speech.

*Fear management*

Having established a sense of unity by scapegoating his critics, and thus establishing the public’s trust in its President, Roosevelt was then able to address the ongoing war and uncertain postwar future, leading eventually to the argument that life’s necessities should be considered a
fundamental, Constitutional right. Making a series of cause-and-effect arguments, he states: “Increased food costs…will bring new demands…which will in turn raise all prices of all things….Increased wage or prices will each in turn produce the same results. They all have a particularly disastrous result on all fixed income groups.” Here Roosevelt maintains a sense of urgency and uncertainty, offering an explanation of what could happen should the end of the war see massive inflation.

He goes on to explain who “fixed-income people” are, and why listeners might care about them: “teachers, clergy, policemen, firemen, widows and minors on fixed incomes, wives and dependents of our soldiers and sailors, and old age pensioners…. They and their families add up to one-quarter of our one hundred and thirty million people.” Not only is this a significant number of people, but it is a group, Roosevelt argues, not served by special interests in Washington and therefore needs to be protected by the federal government. This is, in effect, a system of liberal capitalism that Roosevelt imagined for the future. Economic instability and fluctuation would be kept in check by a safety net, while, as Alan Brinkley writes, “government could stimulate consumption quickly and easily by using its fiscal powers.”

Roosevelt also uses metaphors of perspective, vision, and focus to draw a line between fear and reassurance in his call for national unity. After caricaturing critics on both the left and right as myopic and self-interested, he continues in the same vein, stating that the war will not end “with half-an-eye on the battlefront abroad and the other eye-and-a-half on personal, selfish, or political interests here at home.” In other words, their vision is dangerously skewed: “It can kill American boys.” Similarly, Stuckey has noted how Roosevelt’s use of visual language throughout the presidency worked to bolster the federal government and president’s role in political, economic, and social reforms. Having introduced the element of fear into the
American psyche once again, a theme familiar throughout his presidency and one he could manipulate masterfully, Roosevelt offers economic stability as the way to regain proper perspective, to focus and “concentrate” and thereby find a sense of national unity.

Roosevelt’s recommendations to Congress call for national economic stability through continued price and wage controls that had already been in place under a two-year Emergency Price Control Act. Still holding fear and uncertainty just over the omnipresent horizon, he uses a conditional if-then sentence structure to argue that “the country might just as well expect price chaos by Summer” should such controls fail to be implemented. Countering “unreasonable profits,” “exorbitant profits,” “undue profits,” his proposals use a language of moderation: “realistic tax law,” “fair prices,” “reasonable floor,” “a ceiling,” and “necessities only.” Although this section of the speech outlines Roosevelt’s approach to the national economy for purposes of the traditional Annual Message, the turn to life’s necessities, to food and shelter—floors and ceilings—and to the “cost of living,” sets up Roosevelt’s conclusion that economic security is an individual right, for “freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want.”

Perhaps Roosevelt’s physical constraints allowed him to understand fear so exquisitely because he knew that life’s necessities could not be taken for granted. Stricken by polio in 1921, he was paralyzed from the waist down and was unable to walk or stand without assistance. His personal wealth and class status allowed him to access health care, therapeutic activities (e.g., his estate at Warm Springs) and custom mobility technologies that would not have been available to most Americans. Metaphors of sickness and illness abound in Roosevelt’s speeches about the Depression, diagnosing the nation to be in “poor health.” As Houck argues, “here was a recovering paralytic, a man many perceived to be terribly sick himself….How else but through the body would economic suffering be internalized and understood?”
The Economic Bill of Rights section of the speech thus categorizes “old age, sickness, accident and unemployment” as “economic fears,” not existential ones, against which there should be adequate social protection. Likewise, the basic need for shelter is defined as a right, “the right of every family to a decent home,” as is “adequate food and clothing.” Roosevelt is effectively introducing into public discourse Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs from the academic discipline of Psychology, which was coincidentally published in 1943: humans must have their basic needs fulfilled before they can grow or thrive. That “the right to a good education” is last on the list implies a trajectory from physical needs toward personal growth.

As the memory of the Great Depression still lingered, it was important for President Roosevelt to address those basic needs before Americans could imagine themselves as participants in a modern postwar economy, whose growth would depend on the American consumer’s desire for material goods. Fears about unemployment were high and not unjustified, as wartime production had arguably saved the economy from a second depression. Not only is “the right to a useful and remunerative job” listed first, but Roosevelt also specifies “in the industries, or shops or farms or mines of the nation” as locations for such jobs. Rather than leaving “remunerative job” as an abstract concept, the articulation of potential work sites allows listeners to imagine their daily lives in those places. Roosevelt also reassures the American farmer of the right to “raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living.” Given the recent Depression and Dust Bowl, as well as the twentieth-century migration from farms to cities, farmers and rural residents might have been among the most fearful and skeptical of Roosevelt and the possibility of a postwar globalism. Indeed, this was arguably the same population that would take Willkie out of the 1944 presidential campaign.
After addressing workers and farmers, Roosevelt slows down his tenor voice as he attends to “every business man, large and small,” explaining their right to “trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad.” This is classic free trade rhetoric, an intellectual doctrine and discursive tradition that can be traced back to the Greeks and Romans and a belief system in which the universal brotherhood of mankind will benefit from a global division of labor in which a region or nation uses its natural resources and human capabilities as efficiently as possible in order to create as much income as possible. Dallek maintains that from the beginning to the end of his presidency, “Roosevelt saw an unbreakable link between prosperity and peace.” Likewise, Stuckey writes, “aggression would be less likely, and because trade would proceed peaceably, this neighborhood would be universally prosperous.”

The Economic Bill of Rights speech is not about globalism per se, because of the constraints and critics outlined above. In order to make a case for globalism, Roosevelt first had to manage American fear—in Burke’s words, “sharpen up the pointless and blunt the too sharply pointed.” If Americans felt secure in their daily lives, if their basic needs were guaranteed rights, then that vision could be extended outward, for, as Roosevelt explains with yet another alliterative flourish, other countries too desire “peaceful progress by their own peoples – progress toward a better life.” This idea would become the basis for the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. With economic rights positioned as fundamental modern values in a postwar liberal society, “all freedom-loving nations shall join together in a just and durable system of peace,” Roosevelt states in the 1944 speech. His postwar vision was for a confident and united U.S. nation to experience “economic security, social security, moral security – in a family of nations.”
Historical Timing

In preface to speech, Roosevelt says the he is “anxious” to share with Americans his recommendations for a “very fateful year.” He states that his critics are “laboring under the delusion that the time is past when we must make prodigious sacrifices – that the war is already won and we can begin to slacken off,” that this is a “dangerous folly” and that the war persists. In the next line, he uses distance and perspective to explain the errored thinking that the war has already been won, stating that “that point of view can be measured by the distance that separates our troops from the ultimate objectives in Berlin and Tokyo – and by the sum of all the perils that lie along the way.” Here, Roosevelt uses time and space to reiterate a sense of urgency, yet, unlike Willkie’s rhetoric of globalism in which the world was made small and familiar, Roosevelt’s world remains vast, dangerous, and difficult. Several paragraphs later, he states, “we are going forward on a long, rough road – and, in all journeys, the last miles are the hardest.” Americans must remain vigilant.

Calling attention to the moment as a historical turning point, the President states, “it is our duty now to begin to lay the plans and determine the strategy for the winning of a lasting peace...” and emphasizing the point by departing from his prepared remarks, “it is time to begin plans...” For Roosevelt, raising the American standard of living by ensuring economic security for individuals would have the common sense effect of “a better standard of living in neighboring countries with whom it trades.” Furthermore, as noted above, it would prevent conditions that lead to war: “People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.” In closing the speech he characterized the moment in terms of kairos, as a “critical hour,” a theme that would guide Congressional rhetoric around the Bretton Woods the follow year, and that I examine in Chapter Four.
By drawing explicitly on the language of the nation’s founding history, Roosevelt’s exposition of an Economic Bill of Rights emphasizes the radically contingent nature of the moment. Borrowing from the 1776 Declaration of Independence, he begins, “these economic truths have become self-evident…” and “inalienable” and goes on to explain that a new Bill of Rights is necessary as a “basis of security and prosperity” in the postwar era. While the Bill of Rights formally refers to the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the political tradition of making demands and grievances by outlining a set of common rights or principles long preceded the U.S. Constitution and would continue to influence global political discourse long afterward. Early drafts of the 1944 State of the Union are more explicit about the relationships between the early Republic and the World War II era, stating that while the Bill of Rights addressed political tyranny, economic tyranny would be a barrier to the “pursuit of happiness” in the postwar era.293

Roosevelt effectively updates the Bill of Rights by introducing economic security as a “truth” that already “we have accepted.” The small grammatical shift into the present perfect verb case—not ‘we should do this’ or ‘we will do this’ but ‘we have already done this’—speaks to the constitutive nature of both the Economic Bill of Rights speech in particular and Roosevelt’s presidential rhetoric generally. Thomas Farrell noted a similar shift in Roosevelt’s declaration of war speech of December 8, 1941, stating that by “refiguring the time sequence of decision and action, the president was able to take war outside the realm of deliberation, and thereby bring “the audience more directly into the picture as a co-participant” in U.S. wartime culture and identity.294 Although Roosevelt continues on in the speech to urge Congress to formalize the rights—Eleanor Roosevelt pressed her husband to do so as well—it did not matter;
in the rhetorical act of saying that economic rights were human rights they became so, for, as Farrell writes, constitutive rhetoric enacts modes of consciousness and affiliations.295

Roosevelt then extends economic rights to “all – regardless of station, race or creed.” This inclusive language built on the Four Freedoms agenda, which Roosevelt had previously extended to “every creed and race.”296 Here, he adds “station,” a gesture that acknowledges ordinary and working-class Americans’ deep-seated economic anxiety in the face of an uncertain global future. At the same time, it indicates an ideologically shifting liberalism during the war era that, as Robert P. Saldin argues, eventually moved the Democratic party away from explicit populist and class-based rhetoric toward being the part of racial justice and inclusivity.297 This shift, however, would not come easily: courting Southern Democrats in an election year, the President could not take an activist role in the burgeoning civil rights movement, for example, and his own record of Japanese internment and failure to act early enough upon learning of the European Holocaust also suggest reasons for the speech’s restraint.

Roosevelt and the liberal Democrats “came to fully embrace capitalism,” writes Saldin;298 the Economic Bill of Rights worked constitutively to include poor and working Americans in the nation’s vision of postwar globalism. Nevertheless, it required the cooperation of the same moneyed interests subject to Roosevelt sharp-tongued scapegoating throughout the presidency. Burke wrote about the President’s Depression-era efforts to nationalize power holdings and restructure banks that “…he drew upon the government credit, not to introduce a new collectivist step (as his ideologists interpreted his moves) but to underwrite the traditional modes of private investment…”299 Similarly, as Nomi Prins writes with the benefit of hindsight, “More than FDR’s New Deal stimulus or the war requirements of hiring people to produce weaponry, it would be the propelling of the US bankers into the epicenter of global war financing that would catalyze
the US markets.” While Roosevelt’s Economic Bill of Rights might have appealed to a large swath of the American and world public, globalism left it out. Brinkley, writing about liberalism, defines the era as a “brief and admittedly deceptive moment when large numbers of Americans, at the close of the most catastrophic war in human history, found it possible to believe that they could create a new and better world.”

Conclusion

The Economic Bill of Rights speech represents a careful and constrained presidential response to criticisms and fears about postwar global capitalism. It worked constitutively as an inclusive, unifying rhetoric that guaranteed the economic security of all Americans, giving them a sense of what Stuckey calls “economic identification,” an understanding of themselves as members of a domestic and global community of good neighbors. In this way, it marks a commitment to American Keynesianism or, to use Kari Polanyi Levitt’s words, of an “implicit social contract created by the war that led to the consensus that the first objective of the postwar government must be full employment.” Institutionally, through the use of fiscal and monetary policy, the U.S. government would seek to prevent the economic conditions that lead to violence and extremism, domestically via the Fed and internationally via the International Monetary Fund. Rhetorically, the 1944 State of the Union Speech used a ritualistic strategy of scapegoating to unify Americans around an inclusive postwar national identity. The Economic Bill of Rights acknowledged and managed economic and existential fears by drawing on a constitutive discourse that links free trade with human rights, placing the historical moment as a critical turning point in which economic rights became a salient part of the nation’s foundational principles.
However, as explained next in Chapter Four, the structural economic reforms that found expression in the International Monetary Fund (and IBRD/World Bank) as taken up by the U.S. Congress in 1945 were ill-equipped to handle a global economy shattered by war. In a history of progressivism and internationalism, Alan Dawley writes that “the prevailing view at the end of the war was that the state’s role in economic management should not rest on national planning… but on rebuilding consumer markets through counter-cyclical fiscal policies aimed at maintaining consumer demand.”

The 1946 Employment Act would, for many observers, strike a final blow to both planning and Keynesianism. Amid labor unrest and growing racial tensions, President Truman would make it the federal government’s responsibility to maintain full employment, largely through measures suggested to the president by a small group of economic advisors—the president would be obligated to present an annual economic report to Congress. The Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) would assist in making policies and suggest compensatory spending in order to stave off recession, stabilize prices, and achieve full employment at the same time as promoting free enterprise; Ira Katznelson argues that Truman kept the CEA deliberately small, as he was forced to bow to southern Democrats on labor and civil rights issues. And indeed, John W. Jeffries argues, the Employment Act was not actually a commitment to employment or conditions of employment; rather, it “was ultimately more a symbolic consensus statement of general government responsibility for a stable free-enterprise economy.”

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216 Box 68, Willkie mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
217 Box 49, MR Willkie, September-October 1942 [Electronic Record], Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as President: Map Room Papers, 1941-1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.
218 Box 173, Willkie, Wendell, September 1940-September 1942 [Electronic Record], Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as President: The President’s Secretary’s File (PSF), 1933-1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.
219 Box 173, Willkie, Wendell, October 1942-October 1944 [Electronic Record], Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as President: The President’s Secretary’s File (PSF), 1933-1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.
221 Burke, A Grammar of Motives, 442-43. M. Elizabeth Weiser has written about Burke’s Grammar of Motives as a response to World War II, arguing that Burke was “uncomfortable with the implications of this new era” and that “as the call for national unity grew stronger, Burke’s program to counter its excesses also grew clearer.” M. Elizabeth Weiser, Burke, War, Words: Rhetoricizing Dramatism (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 73.
227 Stuckey, Good Neighbor, 168.
232 In 1943, people around the world were dying at a rate of one every three seconds. Disabled, sick, and elderly people and children were being gassed at a rate of 2,000 every 30 minutes. Jay Winik, 1944: FDR and the Year that Changed History (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 201.
237 Welles, Time for Decision, 413.


“FDR was not the first president to speak over the radio, but he was the first one to realize its potential for persuading the mass audience by extending his voice into the living rooms of the nation,” writes Halford Ryan. Halford R. Ryan, *Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Rhetorical Presidency* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 19; see also Amos Kiewe, *FDR’s First Fireside Chat: Public Confidence and the Banking Crisis* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007).


Campbell and Jamieson misleadingly suggest that Roosevelt gave the address first in Congress and then later on the radio, but archival and secondary sources indicate that the only oral delivery was the 9:00 PM radio version and that a written copy was delivered to Congress at noon. Campbell and Jamieson, *Deeds Done*, 68; Seymour H. Fersh, *The View from The White House: A Study of the Presidential State of the Union Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1961), 104.


Moe, *Roosevelt’s Second Act*, 14, 18, 72; see also David F. Schmitz, who states that according to a January 1937 Gallup poll, 70% of Americans supported Neutrality, and fully 94% of them thought it was more important for the U.S. to stay out of the war than participate in preventing it overseas. David F. Schmitz, *The Triumph of Internationalism: Franklin D. Roosevelt and a World in Crisis, 1933-1941* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2007), 40.

Dunn, *1940*, 66.


See, for example, “We Could ‘Plan’ Ourselves into Fascism,” *Saturday Evening Post* 217 (March 1945): 108.


Hayek, *Road to Serfdom*, 2.
Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 533. The relationship with the Soviets was precarious because the U.S. needed Russia in order to defeat Hitler, even if Stalin himself was a brutal dictator. Dallek goes on to detail how FDR, at the same time as working with Stalin, also worked to limit Russian power. In fact, Dallek argues that “had he lived, Roosevelt would probably have moved more quickly than Truman to confront the Russians,” because he had public support on his side. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 534.


Philip Dray, *There is Power*, 476; see also H.W. Brands’ biography of Roosevelt, whose central motivating question is “what traumas or epiphanies had transformed a Hudson Valley patrician into a champion of the common people of America?” Brands, *Traitor to His Class*, 12.


Campbell and Jamieson, *Deeds Done*, 54.


File No. 1501-A, Box 76, Franklin D. Roosevelt Master Speech File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum, [http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/resources/images/msf/msfb0129](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/resources/images/msf/msfb0129); hereafter, all quotations come from the stenographer’s copy so as to reflect what was actually said by the President, unless otherwise noted.


*Burke, Grammar of Motives*, 392.


*Burke, Grammar of Motives*, 406.
284 Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 397, italics in original.
293 File No. 1501-A, Box 76, FDR Library Master Speech Files Series 3, available online: http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/_resources/images/msf/msfb0129
298 Saldin, “Foreign Affairs,” 394.
305 See, for example, Davis W. Houck, “Rhetoric, Science, and Economic Prophecy,” in Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, eds. *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics* (New York: Routledge, 1999): 352-64; it might also be argued that the Employment Act was one in a series of presidential policy actions starting under Truman that, as James Aune argued, brought more and more power to the Federal Reserve in the decades following the war, the rhetorical effect of which has been to remove economic debate from public discourse. James Arnt Aune, “The Econo-Rhetorical Presidency,” in James Arnt Aune and Martin Medhurst, eds., *The Prospect of Presidential Rhetoric* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 46-68.
Mr. Tobey: The correct pronunciation is “Bretton”—with a short “e.” Will the Senator please pronounce it correctly? It jangles my nerves to hear it called “Bray-ton” Woods...

Mr. Wiley: I am sorry the Senator’s nerves are so tender. 309

By the time Bretton Woods Agreement Act, H.R. 3314, came to a vote on the Senate floor on July 19, 1945, after days and weeks of intense debating and sniping, everybody’s nerves were jangled. The House had passed the Bretton Woods agreements a month prior, after nine tedious weeks of hearings in the Committee on Banking and Currency. During those same nine weeks, President Roosevelt had died in office, Hitler had committed suicide, victory had been declared in Europe, and the U.N. Charter had been signed just as the Truman administration was preparing to use atomic weapons against Japan.

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, during a historical moment of radical contingency and war a constitutive rhetoric of peace through international economic cooperation emerged as a way for Americans to imagine the future. By using ethos and presence to encourage Americans to re-imagine the size of the globe, Willkie’s optimism about a lasting peace sustained by international trade brought globalism into mainstream public discourse. President Roosevelt tempered globalism by managing a persistent, underlying fear of economic instability among everyday Americans, introducing them to a discourse of human rights that guaranteed the necessities of food, shelter, clothing, health care and decent employment. This chapter turns to the Congressional debates about Bretton Woods in order to see how globalism was cultivated as an aspect of American national identity as well as institutionalized in the form of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.
Congressional rhetoric is a unique genre that puts public democratic deliberation into practice and also serves the function of making concrete policy. As G. Thomas Goodnight states, “public policy argument may be understood as a productive, situated communication process where advocates engage in justifying and legitimating public interests.” He and other scholars of Congressional rhetoric have examined the relationships between legislative debate and public discourse, demonstrating how legislative rhetoric serves, or fails to serve, democracy and the public good. Similarly, I draw on the *Congressional Record* as a site of debate about shared American interests and values, in the context of postwar international economic planning. Moreover, the Congressional action of passing the Bretton Woods Agreements represents a performative speech act that turned globalism from an abstract idea into an institutional reality.

Offering an explanatory analysis of the arguments used in Congress to debate and eventually implement the Bretton Woods institutions, this chapter argues that while both supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods agreements understood the pending moment as historically significant, and while both sides sought to explain a global postwar future in terms of economics generally and trade particularly, they used competing discourses of expertise to warrant their economic claims. Before elaborating the debates around the three major themes of *kairos*, historical argument, and economics, I situate the debates about Bretton Woods as political, economic, and historical problems to be solved and also offer some brief background about the agreements themselves.

**Political and Economic Context**

On February 12, 1945, President Roosevelt made an urgent speech to Congress in support of the Bretton Woods agreements, warning that “this point in history at which we stand is full of
promise and danger. The world will either move toward unity and widely shared prosperity or it will move apart into necessarily competing economic blocs.\textsuperscript{314} It was one of the deathly ill President’s last major public appearances and, along with the groundwork for United Nations, his parting wish for the postwar future. That future, as discussed below, depended on international economic stability. To that end, the previous summer, in July of 1944, delegates from forty-four nations had joined together at the Mt. Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, to shape a plan for the world economy. For three weeks they slept in hallways and linen closets, meeting day and night until finally reaching an historic agreement intended to stabilize international currencies and provide a framework for fulfilling Roosevelt’s vision of a shared global peace and prosperity.

Often overshadowed by stories about the war and tales of dramatic topmost diplomacy, the narrative of the Bretton Woods institutions and their implementation receives little historical attention. Yet, as Ed Conway argues, “the institutions these men and women created… are as important today as they were upon their creation.”\textsuperscript{315} Bretton Woods remains the first and only time that representatives from around the world came together to reshape the international economy. Delegates knew, as did Roosevelt and Congress, that global civilization stood at a precipice. Political and military decisions might bring an end to war, but economic cooperation was essential for sustaining peace.

The decisions made following the First World War and in the interwar decades were starting to be seen as mistakes in the minds of global policymakers as well as the American public. Relationships between economics and war were also becoming increasingly clear: many thinkers and policymakers agreed that the sanctions put in place by the treaty of Versailles led to trade wars and currency manipulations, which led to global depression, which led to the Second
World War. If there was to be future peace, the argument went, steps toward international
economic cooperation must immediately be made, before the war’s end.

The Bretton Woods institutions were debated within an internationalist discourse that was
informed by Wilsonianism, isolationism, and imperialism. In order to contextualize
Congressional rhetoric regarding the Bretton Woods Agreement Acts in the summer of 1945, I
first include a brief discussion of the interwar period as an immediate historical problem to be
solved. A renewed discourse of Wilsonianism informed discussions about the failures of the
Versailles Treaty and League of Nations, as well as the Great Depression and U.S. isolationism.

The World War II era saw a resurgence of Wilsonian idealism in public discourse. As
Walter Russell Mead states, Wilsonianism carried a religious fervor that appealed widely, for
“everyone, rich or poor, is welcome to the shelter of the Wilsonian revival tent.” The failure of
the U.S. Congress to ratify President Woodrow Wilson’s plans for a peaceful future following
the First World War, including the League of Nations, was cause for embarrassment and
reinvigorated motivation in supporting institutions of international political and economic
cooperation. J. Michael Hogan, examining Wilson’s 1919 Western Tour to promote the League,
argues that his rhetoric was too far ahead of popular opinion in his time but that “after World
War II Wilson’s vision of American internationalism became his greatest legacy.”

Supporting the Bretton Woods institutions meant a symbolic unity around a renewed Wilsonian
internationalism, however flawed.

Despite its popularity, the new Wilsonianism of the WWII era was critically aware of the
problems at Versailles as well as with the League of Nations. The 1919 Paris Peace conference
had been, as one critic describes, “a hissing snakepit of politicians, all with competing political
objectives.” Mired in political negotiations about sanctions and reparations, leaders failed to
address the world’s economic problems. John Maynard Keynes’ *Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), a scathing missive arguing that international relations must be viewed through an economic rather than political and military lens, written in response to the situation, launched his career. Twenty-five years later at Bretton Woods, Keynes was determined not to repeat the same mistakes. Eric Rauchway argues that Keynes and Roosevelt worked together to use monetary policy to end the war and secure the peace.319

Even more important than the symbolic failure of the League was the problem of repayment of war debts, which had drained the international economy in the 1920s and 1930s. World War II era decision makers were starting to understand the Great Depression as a global collapse of trade due to arbitrary currency valuations. Fred Block explains that via the New Deal policies, the Roosevelt administration opted for a nationalist response to global depression, both politically and rhetorically, adopting economic protectionism and foreign policy isolationism. He writes, “…it was not simply that the United States failed to lead in tariff reduction in the interwar period, but that the United States was a major obstacle to trade liberalization.”320

Mead also describes a “myth of virtuous isolation” that took hold after World War I, in which Americans increasingly believed that the nation had been dragged unnecessarily into war, that New York bankers in cahoots with Allied governments had “snookered the United States into what turned out to be simply a savage conflict between two bands of imperialist robbers.”321 As a result, effectively for the next two decades, the American public was bitterly divided between internationalism and isolationism. As Susan Dunn writes, “families and friends, churches, universities, and political parties found themselves torn apart.”322

Domestic programs designed to address the Depression in the United States had further entrenched isolationist sentiments across a broad political spectrum during the interwar years.
For Robert Dallek, President Roosevelt’s choice between domestic and foreign affairs was a political trade-off: “Since winning congressional approval for domestic programs essential to national economic and political stability ruled out bold initiatives in foreign affairs, Roosevelt acquiesced in the widespread preference for a passive foreign policy.” With the Neutrality Acts of the 1930s, isolationism became synonymous with non-intervention and at the same time replaced the causal argument that trade liberalization would lead to peace. That is, “neutrality” had previously meant neutrality in commerce—the movement of goods and currency even among belligerent nations—and now it became a foreign policy stance as war simmered on the horizon. Isolationists believed that selling arms to belligerents would bring the U.S. closer to war.

As illustrated in Chapters Two and Three, Lend-Lease was important at both the beginning and end of the war, bringing the public around to support the war effort in Europe and laying the groundwork for the Bretton Woods institutions. As the war was drawing to a close, Great Britain knew that Lend-Lease would expire, and because it could not pay the United States back for Lend Lease—its debt to GDP ratio at the end of WWII was 240%, for example—Roosevelt’s administration had to find another option, which was basically to turn postwar global economic relations over to the U.S. At the same time Keynes was negotiating the Bretton Woods agreements, then, he was attempting to secure a separate British loan, and, as his biographer Robert Skidelsky concludes, he died doing so.

Another important aspect of the discussion was the U.S. response to the Soviets. Roosevelt attempted to leave as his legacy a tenable political and economic relationship with Russia through his diplomatic actions at the “Big Three” conferences and in his Treasury and State Department staff. Cordell Hull, in particular, feared a return to isolationism after the war.
and desperately wanted to cooperate with the Soviets.\textsuperscript{326} Diplomacy with Stalin had been precarious all along, of course, but Russia was seen as an untapped market, and the hope was that it would, in John Lewis Gaddis’s words, “emerge from the war with an insatiable appetite for consumer goods.”\textsuperscript{327} This hope reflected a certain free trade idealism, to be sure, but it was also grounded in the realistic fear that the end of the war could mean a fall back into Depression: “Fully aware that the New Deal had not solved the problem of unemployment in peacetime, Roosevelt and his associates hoped that foreign markets would absorb the vast quantity of goods which would have to be produced if employment levels were to be maintained after the fighting had stopped.”\textsuperscript{328} Indeed, the Bretton Woods institutions assumed that democratic capitalism could co-exist with communism so long as currency vacillations were kept in check, the result being a peacetime cooperation of nation-states, all on a trajectory toward prosperity. According to Dallek, “In the first months of 1945, a majority of Americans shared Roosevelt’s and Eisenhower’s hopes for a benign Soviet Union and a world without war. Fifty-five percent of surveyed Americans said that Russia could be trusted to cooperate with the United States after the fighting.”\textsuperscript{329} This number would wane significantly in the spring and summer of 1945, as the U.S. relationship with Russia soured almost immediately on Truman’s ascent into presidential office.\textsuperscript{330}

In addition to U.S. domestic discourse about postwar international economic cooperation and strategic political and economic relationships with Great Britain and Russia, a final contextualizing factor cannot be understated: the war itself. With nearly half a million U.S. soldiers killed and countless wounded in the war, Americans understood its human toll if not nearly to the extent that citizens in living in areas directly affected by the fighting did. Fear of postwar industrial economic fallout for the U.S. was not unfounded. In \textit{The Economics of}
Demobilization, published in 1944, for example, economist E. Jay Howenstine laid bare the issues facing the U.S. and global economy after the war. By 1943 fully one-fifth of the country’s manufacturing capacity was subject to federal contract, and somewhere around thirty million Americans were employed in war production. The role of unions, farmers, minority groups--African-Americans, Japanese-Americans, the disabled and elderly, and women, especially—in the postwar economy was uncertain, as was the fate of approximately twelve million servicemen. Comparing the end of the First World War with the ongoing Second World War, Howenstine warned, “…there will be some who will advocate the immediate withdrawal of government from all economic activity. If such a policy is followed, we will again be thrown into a period of planless demobilization with its inevitable consequences of inflation and unemployment.” Here Howenstine echoed the growing consensus that mistakes made at Versailles and Paris led to the Depression, which led to war.

Important political and economic developments leading up to World War II thus posed major questions about global politics and economics facing Congress as it took up the Bretton Woods institutions for debate: How do we understand the present moment in light of recent national and global history? How can we ensure a system of global economic stability through international trade? What is the role of the United States in the new political order? And most importantly, how do we prevent the outbreak of World War III?

The Bretton Woods Agreements

Before examining Congressional rhetoric surrounding Bretton Woods in 1945, some additional background about the institutions themselves and the major British and American figures involved is in order. U.S. plans for an international architecture that would stabilize currency and promote postwar trade officially began in Henry Morgenthau’s Treasury
Department before Pearl Harbor, though Assistant Secretary Harry Dexter White may have been working on them earlier. White and Keynes drafted proposals that were published as the American Plan and British Plan, respectively, in April 1943. White and Keynes then began to negotiate an overarching plan that could be agreed upon by all nations. In three harried weeks of negotiations among representatives of forty-four nations at Bretton Woods in the summer of 1944, just as Allied troops landed at Normandy, that is exactly what happened.

By this time, Keynes was a household name in the United States. His major works, *Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), *Essays in Persuasion* (1931), and the *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (1936) had earned him a reputation as the world’s foremost economic theorist. A charismatic London socialite and friend of the Bloomsbury group, he became wealthy through personal investing. Although Keynes’ personal loyalties were unquestionably British, his economic ideas strongly influenced American academics and policymakers.\(^{333}\) American Keynesianism was fundamentally a shifting liberalism during the Roosevelt presidency, as demonstrated in Chapter Three. John Kenneth Galbraith cites the “almost unique unreadability of *The General Theory*” for its popularity among American economists and policy makers, stating that “as Messiahs go, Keynes was deeply dependent on his prophets.”\(^{334}\) Indeed, interpreting and debating Keynes became a pedagogical exercise, particularly among young economists, and particularly among those at Harvard in the 1930s who would soon come to have an influence in Washington.

As David Kennedy writes, the New Dealers’ embrace of deficit spending and enthusiasm about Keynesian policies, “tollled the knell for an older reform tradition” by trying to “reach an accommodation with their traditional nemesis, capitalism. In the process they abandoned the strategy of direct governmental interventions to secure equality and protect the disadvantaged,
and instead established a new political religion devoted to the god of economic growth.” Patrick Renshaw argues that the U.S. adopted Keynesianism to some extent during the New Deal, and even more so during the war, as a practice if not necessarily a principle; that is, “as it struggled to end mass unemployment, the federal government stumbled upon this policy, whereby it was forced to act as compensating agent during economic downturn, spending public money to fill troughs in the trade cycle in order to stimulate revival, then cutting back in periods of boom.” Through the use of fiscal and monetary policy in order to feed and fuel economic growth, then, U.S. postwar policy sought to prevent the economic conditions that led to violence and extremism, domestically via the Federal Reserve and internationally via the International Monetary Fund.

White is known as the mastermind behind the Bretton Woods institutions, bringing to Morgenthau and Roosevelt a “coherent vision of an internationalized New Deal.” A Harvard graduate, White took a position at the Treasury in 1934 and worked closely alongside Morgenthau as a liberal New Deal democrat within Roosevelt’s administration. Privately, however, White was intrigued by socialism and even Russian communism. Due to recent declassified information about the war and Cold War, as well as archival research conducted by economic historian Benn Steil and others, we now know about the Venona cables and other evidence indicating that White provided intelligence to Soviets during the war under the code name RICHARD. He tried to offer better loan arrangements and assistance under Lend-Lease in order to get Russia to agree to Bretton Woods. Accused of spying for the Soviets, White appeared in front of the HUAC in August 1948. His death a couple of days later was cause for conspiracy theories as well; opinions about White and the extent of his collaboration with the Soviets seem to range from blaming him for the Pearl Harbor attacks to applauding his tireless
efforts to establish a postwar peace—even with Russia, and even if it required back-channel negotiations.338

Keynes’s and White’s famously large personalities clashed at Bretton Woods, but the general outlines of their plans for a postwar global economy were relatively similar. Both wanted an international fund that would stabilize currency and ease balance-of-payments woes by offering lines of credit. The British did not like the word “stabilize,” so the name of the institution changed from the Stabilization Fund to the Monetary Fund. Both plans also included an international bank or clearinghouse that would make loans to support reconstruction and global full employment. Keynes wanted an international unit of currency tied to the gold standard—called, perhaps, a bancor, or unitas—but White wanted the dollar, pegged to gold, to work as the baseline for global currency exchange. White’s plan won. On the one hand, the Bretton Woods conference is touted as a historic example of global democratic deliberation. On the other hand, some critics argue the U.S. strong-armed weaker countries, especially those in the Western hemisphere, into signing the agreements.

The next step would be to mobilize support for the agreements in order to gain Congressional approval. Rauchway argues that the “public meaning” of Bretton Woods was more important in the minds of its architects than the institutions themselves, that “the requirements of public welfare should drive the value of money, and not the other way around.”339 The Office of War Information reported that the American public was apathetic and unaware of the conference and agreements, so it started a massive propaganda campaign in the spring of 1945 targeting women, clergy, labor, and the elite press, all urging haste. The following section considers the common arguments and rhetorical strategies used by the U.S. Congress as it
debated the Bretton Woods Agreement Acts and institutionalized the nascent discourse of
globalism in the era.

**Rhetorical Strategies in the Congressional Debates**

Although Keynes was popular and Keynesianism was already engrained in mainstream
U.S. economic theory and policy, the discourse of globalism as represented in the Bretton Woods
institutions was still not a given. Competing economic rhetoric stifled public, presidential, and
economic discourse about the postwar world. The final chapter of Friedrich Hayek’s *Road to
Serfdom*, titled “Prospects of International Order,” is explicitly critical of the attempts by Keynes
and others to establish a supranational economic authority through the Bretton Woods and UN
system, for example. He says that their ideas are half-baked, “ambitious schemes,” and that
“planning on an international scale, even more than is true on a national scale, cannot be
anything but a naked rule of force, an imposition by a small group on all the rest of that sort of
standard and employment which the planners think suitable for the rest.”

Even on the issue about raw materials and resources, which others wanted to set aside as unique commodities not
subject to the same market forces, Hayek claims that any attempt at negotiation between states
will create a competition that will only be won by the most powerful and most armed.

Indeed, opponents in Congress used Hayek’s language of “scheme,” “very slick scheme,”
“experiment,” “swindle,” “complicated,” and “uncharted” to describe the Bretton Woods
institutions. The American Bankers Association (ABA) accused the Fund and Bank of being
“novel.” John Williams, Vice President of the New York Federal Reserve, polemicized against
the IMF and proposed an alternative “Key Currency Plan,” arguing that the Fund would not
work. However, as Fred Block explains, Williams and the ABA actually feared that the Bank and
Fund would work too well: “They feared that extensive national or international governmental intervention would eliminate the role that private international bankers had historically played.” As it turned out, the Bank and Fund would mostly facilitate private lending anyway, serving as a boon for private bankers. Nevertheless, opposition to the agreements came from this small but persistent group.

In fact, the White plan was toned down and an advisory council of bankers was offered as a concession to the ABA in order to get the bill through Congress. If the Agreements did not pass, Congress would suffer the embarrassment of the League of Nations two decades prior. Given the stakes and the experience of immediate history, this was a risk it was not willing to take. Therefore, in a performative act that institutionalized the rhetoric of globalism, the Bretton Woods Agreements passed: In the House of Representatives, 345 votes in favor, 18 against; in the Senate, 61 votes in favor, 16 against.

The following analysis is organized around three major argumentative themes that were used by both supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods agreements. First, I explain that Congress understood its task in terms of kairos, a moment charged with meaning and in which war and economics were intertwined. Second, I show how both supporters and opponents of the Bank and Fund drew on the nation’s founding and recent history as sources of invention in order to accommodate a postwar rhetoric of globalism. Third, I examine how members of Congress used competing forms of economic expertise to imagine global trade in an uncertain postwar economy. Eventually, these argumentative strategies served both instrumentally and constitutively to institutionalize and authorize globalism.
In classical and contemporary rhetorical theory, kairos is concerned with time and timing of actions, decisions, and arguments, working at the level of praxis. In the legislative discourse represented by the Congressional debates surrounding Bretton Woods, the notion of time and timing was a central point of conflict as Senators and Representatives questioned whether it was the right moment to take an action that would shape an unforeseen future, and whether indeed the proposed action was the right action. James L. Kinneavy states that “kairos brings timeless ideas down into the human situations of historical time.” In the case of the Bretton Woods debates, similarly to Roosevelt’s Economic Bill of Rights speech examined in Chapter Three, kairos forced Congress to make a collective decision about national values in the face of an unknowable global future. Establishing the moment as liminal, Congress was searching for ways to establish global economic stability and at the same time maintain domestic priorities. It saw war and economics as intimately and historically entwined.

Although both supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods institutions understood the historical moment as unprecedented and epochal, opponents used the uncertainty of the era as a reason not to take action. Representative Howard Buffett of Nebraska held up an actual mousetrap as he opened his speech in the House early in the debate, using it as a metaphor to say that the Bretton Woods institutions were a “a trap baited with American dollars.” He stated: “Here is the most intricate international agreement that has ever come before the House of Representatives of the United States, and this House in 2 ½ days or 2 days is going to pass on that proposal. I declare that is not a deliberate way to pass legislation.” Buffett and others cited the complexity of the world economic situation, and of the agreements themselves, as reasons to delay a decision on the agreements.
The idea that Congress was indeed acting too quickly, that the time to act was not right, was repeated throughout the debates and especially by the Agreements’ most outspoken critic, Senator Robert Taft of Ohio. Taft argued that any investment in the Bretton Woods institutions was U.S. taxpayer money wasted; he attempted to delay voting, tried to separate the Fund from the Bank, and questioned every aspect of the bill as well as its constitutionality as a whole. Taft dominated the debate in the Senate for three days, at one point complaining that his feet were tired and he needed to yield allocated time to a colleague just to sit down for a while. He questioned every detail of the agreements, every statement made by experts and supporters. Taft, like proponents of the agreements, certainly saw the war and postwar global economic situation as a crisis, an “emergency situation,” but he argued that matters of currency should not be debated until the world economy returned to something like a normal state: “That is why I say action should be postponed. If the world were normal, if there were normal conditions in the world, the fund might carry out its purpose…” Moreover, he warned, not only will the Bretton Woods institutions not solve the present crisis, they might worsen it. Particularly about the Fund, he stated, “…the fund is entirely premature… under present conditions we cannot solve currency troubles without creating other troubles.” In Taft’s rendering, the Bretton Woods agreements embraced a vision of the postwar future that could not be contemplated until the current crisis had passed.

Taft’s opponents used an opposite kairotic logic to say that global action must be taken immediately, and that such action must be economic. Supporters of the Bretton Woods agreements understood the moment as liminal and they persuasively linked their vision of postwar peace to global economics by using a vocabulary reassuring in tone: “We are attempting to do here what has never been done before, by any body of men or any aggregation of nations:
collectively to introduce order and security into the conduct of the world’s trade and commerce.” Further, they believed that action could not be delayed, as the opportune moment would surely pass. Senator Charles Tobey, a Republican from New Hampshire and former isolationist, urged Congress to pass the Bretton Woods agreements, arguing, “We have a unique opportunity for reaching an agreement now on postwar international monetary policy.” Others agreed that “…rarely in history has this body faced a more momentous period than we are now entering.” These members of Congress urged action, recognizing that the conditions for making decisions about the institutional architecture of the postwar future were rapidly changing.

Not only did supporters of the Bretton Woods Agreement want an immediate decision about America’s postwar future, but they also wanted it to be a globalist one. They used language and metaphors of uncertainty, asking for “assurance in this changing world,” calling the present moment an “uncharted sea” and “crossroads in history,” and describing the essential question of the day as whether to “expand our thinking and broaden our horizon…” The Congressional debate about Bretton Woods thus reflects a shift in American liberalism away from traditional economic populism and toward globalism, recognizing that a lasting peace would require international economic cooperation in limiting currency disparities in order to support a system of global trade. Further, those economic foundations had to be established immediately, before the present crisis passed.

Although the Bretton Woods debates in Congress were primarily concerned with the instrumental effect of institution-building, they also operated at a personal and visceral level as decision-makers began to come to terms with the horrifying reality of the war and especially the European genocide. In the spring of 1945, several members of the House Banking and Currency Committee had traveled to London and then to Weimar, Germany, where they witnessed the
remnants of Hitler’s concentration camps. Alongside arguments about financial details of the Bank and Fund, then, were testimonials and trauma narratives. For example, after offering a gut-wrenching account of his tour of Buchenwald with General Eisenhower, Representative Albert Rains concluded, “In the light of history, in the light of our own experience and observation, think of the awful and terrifying consequences of the failure of these plans for peace.” The Bretton Woods institutions thus came to stand not only for global economic stability but also as insurance against future human atrocities, and the debate set the tone for the U.N. conference that was occurring in San Francisco around the same time.

In sum, both opponents and supporters of the Bretton Woods institutions understood the historical moment as emergent and radically contingent, but they disagreed not only about the timing of the action to establish international economic institutions but also about the relationship of the institutions to a shared vision of postwar peace. By linking the discourse of globalism both to economics and war, supporters of the Bretton Woods institutions saw time as of the essence: “We may not have again, for generations, the opportunity which will exist at the end of hostilities….We can work together on these problems now or we can wait until they have become far more difficult and until it is completely impossible to solve many of them.”

_Kairos_, then, served as a warning; even if the institutions were imperfect, failure to enact them would result in a future that repeated the irreparable mistakes of the past. In the liminal moment of the present, action must be taken.

Opponents of the agreements also used _kairos_ as a warning; they feared that the Bretton Woods agreements were a hasty and ill-considered solution to the world’s economic woes that would have negative consequences for the United States: “I think the present proposal has been prematurely presented… [by] those who are anxious to give America away on the basis of an
hysteria of good will….” Recognizing a shared interest in national security and economic stability, Taft argued that the Fund “is only another way to lend money all over the world. It is not a currency-stabilization fund at all.” For him, the crises facing the postwar world were too intractable for the proposed institutions to handle: “Currency is only the surface. It is only the froth of the actual economic problems of the world.” Taft’s House of Representatives colleague from Ohio, Fred C. Smith, similarly fueled fears that the Bretton Woods institutions would fail to provide stability to the global economy—and he made the argument personal, synecdochally portraying Keynes as personally untrustworthy and thus reaching the conclusion that the institutions themselves were similarly flawed: “Lord Keynes is in my judgment a very dangerous man….I believe the whole business rests on a false foundation and that it lacks the integrity that is required to sustain any useful and enduring monetary and financial institution.” Congress and the public were searching for stability in a time of chaos, but whether the Bretton Woods institutions would solve or worsen the problems faced by the nation and the world remained a point of controversy.

**Historical Argument**

Supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods institutions both also used arguments from history in inventing a rhetoric of globalism that served to establish a sense of national identity in response to the immediacy of the era. Using the nation’s founding and the interwar periods as sources of argument, each side envisioned varying roles for the U.S. in an interconnected postwar economy.

Understanding the present moment with regard to *kairos*, supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods institutions compared the Congressional debate to the nation’s founding history. Seeing the occasion as a momentous opportunity to renew the nation’s democratic preeminence
in a troubled world, one Representative noted, “a great deal has been said about the views of Washington and Jefferson, two of the founding fathers of the United States. When they found themselves at the crossroads of history, they did not hesitate to take a new and untried way to open to the peoples of this country the greatest and most liberal democracy of all time.” Others traced the wisdom of recently-replaced Treasury Secretary Morgenthau through a list of great Americans: “It is the philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, of Andrew Jackson, of Abraham Lincoln, of Franklin Roosevelt, of Harry Truman. These men knew the people. They trusted the reasoned, informed judgment of the people. And so does Henry Morgenthau, Jr.” Still others used historical argument as precedent for the dollar’s role in stabilizing the national and global economy: “In the early days when money was first being discussed by the Colonial Congress, the Congress under the Confederation, and the United States Congress, the dollar was the first unit of currency…”

Historical argument was also used against the Bretton Woods institutions as well. Representative Smith invoked Thomas Jefferson to say that a balanced budget should be prioritized over foreign investment, stating, “I believe in a balanced budget and the kind of government Thomas Jefferson believed in….These are the principles upon which I take my stand against this scheme.” Thus, while some used the nation’s founding to understand the Bretton Woods debate as epochal and the shift toward globalism a natural next phase, others invoked history to warn that globalism meant a threat to the nation’s economic foundations.

In addition to the nation’s early history, both supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods institutions also sought to conceptualize the recent history of the interwar years in terms of global economics. For example, Senator Robert Wagner opened a floor speech by stating, “…since the projected institutions can be fully understood only in the light of experience, it
seems appropriate at the outset to recall some of the world-wide monetary and financial problems of the 1920s and 1930s.” As Congress debated the Bretton Woods institutions, members often cited the First World War and its immediate aftermath as a cause of the current crisis and pressing reason for international economic cooperation: “If we had adopted proposals like this after the last war it is unlikely that this present war would have occurred.”

Congressional failure to ratify Wilson’s League of Nations in 1918 hung as a specter in 1945, and many were determined not to reject the latest architecture of international cooperation—in the form of Bretton Woods, and also the United Nations—on the grounds that it was a symbolic gesture and rejection of isolationism.

Nevertheless, Wilsonianism’s renewed popularity in public and Congressional discourse in the World War II era was not without criticism. Perhaps more important than the failure to support a League of Nations was a growing consensus that the Paris Peace Conference and Treaty of Versailles not only failed to prevent further war but also may have fueled it: “When President Wilson was at the peace conference, things did not turn out satisfactorily even there,” states one Congressman. Without equivocation, states another, “When the guns became silent on November 11, 1918, the world celebrated because it thought peace had come. No greater mistake was ever made.” In an emotional speech given while still reeling from the recent death of his son serving in the war, another blames economic policies following the First World War for the Depression and, eventually, the current war: “Helping Europe in a proper manner would have been well, had we not erected tariff walls so that they could not…repay the war debts and postwar debts. To think what our soldiers now dying lacked in childhood because of this blundering makes me so blinding mad I cannot see…God help us.”
Congress also talked about recent history in economic terms; however, whereas opponents fixated on how loan defaults affected the U.S. economy, supporters used interwar history as a constitutive resource in the rhetoric of globalism. As an example of the former, Representative Jessie Sumner of Illinois, after explaining her argument that loose lending after World War I caused defaults and led to domestic inflation, challenged listeners, “In that depression soldier boys sold apples. Remember?”

Senator Taft also encouraged Congress to draw its conclusions from recent economic history: “…as we learned in the 1920s. We loaned and loaned…. We could not continue to lose money. That threw the export industry out of gear, and increased unemployment in 1930 and 1931.” For Taft and Sumner, the Depression especially served as a warning to Americans; they suggested that the Bretton Woods institutions were an attempt to use the money of U.S. taxpayers for foreign loans that would likely default, causing the U.S. economy to fall back into depression again.

Supporters of the Bretton Woods used the recent history of the interwar period and Depression to explain the present crisis as economic, and to thus argue that the international economic cooperation embodied in the Bretton Woods agreements was necessary for establishing a postwar peace: “The 1920s and 1930s should have taught us that we have a choice only between economic warfare and economic international cooperation.” “One of the great lessons that we as a Nation have learned in recent years…policies colored by political and economic isolation are not only bound to fail, they are bound to end in disaster.” Similarly, underscoring his personal change of heart, Senator Tobey stated, “for two decades between the great wars we proceeded on the principle that what a country does in connection with international monetary and financial problems is its own business. We have tried that method and we have found that it leads to anarchy and disorder.” Both supporters and opponents of
the Bretton Woods institutions thus attempted to draw from lessons learned after the First World
War, and both tended to agree that defaults on loans and war debts contributed to global
economic instability. However, while opponents of the institutions used this history to explain
and warn against U.S. depression, supporters took a global perspective.

The shift toward a rhetoric of globalism became explicit as Congress debated the Bretton
Woods institutions in the context of recent history. For example, introducing the bill for
consideration in the House of Representatives, one Congressman stated, “When the depression
came in 1929, a world depression, not a depression solely confined to the United States…”375
Another paraphrased, “The chaotic financial conditions which occurred in this country after 1929
may be traced in part to the financial disorders in Europe and elsewhere.”376 Similarly, the
Report of the Committee on Banking and Currency, which was reprinted in the Record as
introductory material for the Bretton Woods Agreement Act, explained that global depression led
countries off the gold standard, which led to practices of currency devaluation and
discrimination, which led to an economic warfare that preceded military warfare, concluding that
“unless steps are taken to assure international cooperation, these same practices are likely to
reappear after this war.”377 Globalism, then, was presented as the only option; the nation’s
founding and recent history were used as constitutive resources in imagining a future peace
based on global economic cooperation. Supporters of the Bretton Woods institutions understood
war as economic and economics as global.

Still, some opponents revealed extreme viewpoints in their rejection of this vision,
fearing that economic ties to other nations would cause the domestic economy—and U.S.
founding principle of independence from colonial rule—to suffer: “This is forcing the American
people to pay tribute to foreign governments. It will make the American people, the American
taxpayers, the economic slaves of foreign governments.”

“I do not want to see anything done that will drag us down to the point where we will wreck our Nation in order to do something to try to build up other countries and which may ultimately destroy us.”

“I am not in favor of destroying the United States of America and giving away her resources.”

Embedded in these arguments is the same entrenched xenophobia that, as I indicated in Chapters Two and Three, was a major underlying factor in both Willkie’s and Roosevelt’s rhetorical approaches to postwar globalism. As Ira Katznelson and others have argued, the U.S. postwar domestic economy and, by extension, postwar global capitalism was built on segregation and systemic racism. Roosevelt was too politically restrained to confront what Willkie took as a moral imperative to address racial disparities and embrace ethnic diversities, domestically and globally. An example of the insidious slippage between race and poverty that persists in American discourse about economics can be found in a remark by Representative William Lemke of North Dakota: “We will never consent to bring our standard of living down to the level of the Latin American peon, the oriental coolie, or the untouchables in India.”

In another rant, the same Congressman revealed his anti-Semitism, stating, “The Bretton Woods Conference labored and brought forth twin octopuses—international octopuses designed to suck the lifeblood and energy out of the American people. Secretary Morgenthau and his special assistants…are sort of stooge daddies to these ugly, un-American twins.”

Although the rhetoric of globalism could allow many Americans to imagine themselves, and the nation, as participants in a peaceful postwar global economy, it could not transcend a still powerful strain of provincialism and outright racism.

Supporters of the Bretton Woods agreements thus proceeded with caution. Recognizing that “when this war is over, we shall be the greatest producing Nation in the world,” there
nevertheless remained an air of reluctance as the U.S. emerged as the world’s dominant economy. One Senator stated, “…many of our allies seem to think that our own strength is inexhaustible. It is not…” Another asked, “If we do not carefully guard our own strength, what position will we be in if plans fail and another war should occur in the course of time?”

Although the rhetoric of globalism offered an appealing vision of long-term peace through international economic cooperation in a time of radical contingency, it fell short of fulfilling a coherent and shared sense of national identity strong enough to withstand political mistrust and persistent fears of war and economic uncertainty.

**Economic Arguments**

Supporters and opponents of Bretton Woods invoked various forms of technical and practical expertise to warrant their claims about the principles and practices of a global economy based on free trade. Knowing that time was of the essence, they used historical arguments to suggest that war and economics were intertwined and that a peaceful future would depend on global trade. As shown in previous chapters, one of the elements of global optimism during the World War II era’s revival of Wilsonian internationalism was a faith or belief that trade liberalization, the loosening of barriers to the exchange of goods, services, and currency across national boundaries, would ensure a long-lasting peace.

The free trade argument, which James Aune, M. Lane Bruner and others have argued is in and of itself a rhetoric, or, as Jasinski might call it, a performative tradition, remains a particularly potent one in the post-Cold War era of globalization. It was influential in the Congressional debates about Bretton Woods as well; Barry Eichengreen argues, in fact, that the trade platform of the Bretton Woods agreements served to convince Congress of their necessity more so than the monetary aspects. The Bretton Woods agreements had much more to do with international investments and payments, and with
re-establishing something like a gold standard by pegging international currencies to the dollar, than they did with free trade. Nevertheless, the notion that more trade—assumed to be a shared universal moral or value—would mean less war provided motivation for the institutions.

Trade orthodoxy was not to be questioned, and it was a point of agreement between both supporters and opponents of Bretton Woods. In a pointed exchange in the House, Representative Charles Robertson asked Representative Brent Spence, “Does the gentleman agree with me that if we are to have postwar world prosperity then we must have international trade?” He answered in the affirmative. Senator Taft also used free trade as point of agreement in the Senate debates, stating, “I think we are entirely agreed that we desire to restore international trade everywhere.” Senator Tobey, too, argued that “…a revival of world trade is essential if political, social, and economic order is to be maintained in the world.”

Others probed the assumption that trade would lead to peace. Senator Wiley stated that too much weight was given to the notion of free trade as a means to peaceful relations between nations: “I refer to the matter of foreign trade. We have made a fetish of it.” Still others acknowledged the imperial and protectionist policies of nations that purport to advocate a system of free trade: “…although peace-loving governments have repeatedly declared themselves in favor of liberal trade relations and against discriminations, world trade today is discriminatory.” In debating the Bank and Fund, Congress was also engaged in the larger question about how postwar globalism squared with American economic ideals within the context of a shifting domestic liberalism, as examined in Chapter Three.

The Bretton Woods moment saw the fall of British Empire and the rise of what some have called twentieth century American imperialism. Liah Greenfeld argues that Smith’s Wealth
of Nations was so widely influential not because it advanced a liberal doctrine of free trade, but because it explained the curious success of the British Empire with refreshing philosophical rationality. In his Imperialism of Free Trade, similarly, Bernard Semmell delivers an impossibly detailed account of how Pax Brittanica emerged from a series of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophical and political arguments that eventually led to England gaining the status of “Workshop to the World.” Its greatest strength was industry and manufacturing, and developing beyond subsistence to emerge as “the center of cosmopolitan international economy” meant establishing markets for industrial goods. In short, free trade was historically about empire. As the British empire crumbled in the first half of the twentieth century, the world economy in shreds, a new form of empire—what Ellen Meiskins Wood calls a U.S.-led “empire of capital”—shakily emerged, and with it a wave of arguments about free trade. For Wood, there is no such thing as free trade, only “the careful control of trading conditions in the interest of imperial capital.”

Related to trade, then, the second major economic principle discussed in the Bretton Woods debates was global capital vis-à-vis the gold standard. Both supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods institutions understood that abandoning gold during the 1930s had worsened global economic and political instability, but they disagreed as to whether and how to return to something like a global standard. Historically, gold had served as a means of global economic self-readjustment—when reserves were moved out of a country, prices would fall, thus making goods cheaper and incentivizing more trade. However, the business of actually moving gold from one country to another is not efficient, and therefore central banks began to pre-emptively raise and lower interest rates to slow and speed the economy.
The proposed International Monetary Fund would stabilize the economy by establishing the U.S. dollar, pegged to gold, as world currency; it would also create institutional oversight in order to prevent dramatic currency fluctuations. For supporters of the institutions, this approach made sense: “I say we are doing away with the old gold standard. But we still have a gold standard.” For opponents, it reeked of state control. Representative Smith, for example, echoed the fears of Hayek and the American Bankers Association by maintaining that the Fund complex scheme to abandon gold. He states, “Yes; I am old fashioned enough to believe in the gold standard, which only means that I believe in liberty and am against slavery—that prices should be made in the market and not by the state.”

Both supporters and opponents of the institutions dealt with complexity and uncertainty by relying on competing discourses of expertise and by using commodities and currencies to concretize abstract theories of free trade and the gold standard. With the postwar period seeing the advance of Keynesianism and expert economic models for creating and sustaining prosperity, and with the rise of economics as an academic discipline, the very notion of what constitutes ‘expertise’ was at stake. In *The Rhetoric of Expertise*, Johanna Hartelius describes expertise as rhetorical; that is, an expert not only possesses certain technical knowledge or experience but also uses that knowledge within a persuasive transaction. In the arguments about Bretton Woods, expertise was mobilized as both sides attempted to explain and predict the implications of the institutions in the postwar economy. Expertise became part of the public discourse about globalism via the debates.

As explained above, the Bretton Woods Agreement Act underwent weeks of committee hearings in the spring of 1945 before being brought to the House and Senate floors. The proposals themselves had been debated by so-called economic experts and the public prior to the
Bretton Woods conference in July 1944, at the conference, and after the conference. They were, as one lawmaker put it, “not the brain children of long-haired, guess-work amateur diplomats.” Nonetheless, opponents of the agreements used the idea of experts and expertise to cast doubt about them. One Representative stated, “I know at least two experts in Chicago with whom I have checked this who did not appear before the committee.” Senator Taft suggested, “The truth is, there are very few experts on this subject.” Others held up their own experts to interpret and explain the Agreements as related to the matter of the gold standard: “I have quoted from two or three authorities to the effect that this Bretton Woods proposal is a trend, or a tendency, to go off gold.”

A faith in experts was also reflected in the arguments made by supporters of the institutions. Senator Fulbright, responding to Taft, identified expertise as a point of controversy: “The Senator from Ohio asks us to disregard the testimony of the experts…” Indeed, both supporters and opponents relied on experts to explain and understand the complex details of the agreements. Emphasizing kairos and the importance of the moment in establishing a postwar peace, Representative Spence stated, “While the people of America do not understand the technical details, in their hearts all of the men and women of the liberty-loving nations of the world hope that we may do something to prevent future wars, for the next war will be so indescribably horrible that no man living can envision it.” On the one hand, then, the argument was that the details should be left to the experts.

On the other hand, some supporters of the agreements argued that the American people were the experts. The economic principle of the individual profit motive is used to support the idea that free trade means peace, for example: “If [peace] is to endure, it must be…a result of sensible arrangements that take into account the individual’s urge constantly to improve his
standard of living through increased production and expanding trade.” In other words, the Bretton Woods agreements could be understood by experts and non-experts alike: “The humblest worker in the land can understand that such goals, if reached, will assure more employment for him and his fellows in the mills and factories. For the farmer, it holds out hope for the disposal of crop surpluses…” Moving toward an *ad populum* argument in which expertise lies in the wisdom of everyday Americans, Representative Helen Douglas stated, “Every woman is both an economic expert and a military expert…It is therefore natural that the women of America are for Bretton Woods.” Similarly, Representative Hugh De Lacy stated, “I heard to the same purpose from trade associations, citizens’ associations, several strong labor unions, the Washington Pension Union, and many other organizations and informed individuals.” Senator Tobey, likewise, introduced and chronicled permanently in the *Congressional Record* a list of 108 organizations and constituencies supporting the Bretton Woods institutions. For these legislators, Congressional action should reflect the will of the American people; if Americans support the institutions, then the bill should pass.

Because of the assumption that anybody—expert and non-expert alike—can understand the basics of trade, illustrating the economic complexity of globalism in terms of commodities was a rhetorical strategy often used in the Bretton Woods debates. One Congressman stated, for example, “Perhaps the term ‘world trade’ sounds a little remote. Let us narrow the field of discussion; let us see what world trade means in terms of domestic industry and agriculture….This awareness is nothing new for the cotton growers of my State [Georgia], the wheat growers of Kansas, or the tobacco growers of North Carolina.”

In another exchange, explaining the necessity for global currency stabilization, Senator Elmer Thomas held up paper money and quizzed Senator Taft: “I have here a sample of a
number of currencies with which the fund will deal—quite a handful of them. I am going to ask the Senator what these currencies are worth.” Taft, of course, could not guess the dollar value of each ruble, lira, peso, yuan, and krone; he concluded that the problems facing the world cannot be understood in terms of currency anyway, and that in buying into the Fund the U.S. “will just pour $6,000,000,000 down a rat hole.” Thomas ended the exchange by stating, “I challenge any Member of the Senate to take this pile of bills, which is worth on its face 700,000,000 in the currencies of the various countries, and go downtown in Washington and get his shoes shined with this whole bunch of bills…” His argument was that unless paper money is tied to some common global standard of value, it was meaningless.

By explaining economic complexity and abstraction in terms of commodities and currencies, there was also a shift away from isolationism and toward globalism: “All along we had assumed that the United States was self-sufficient; that, although the nations of the world needed us, we did not need them. The outbreak of war dispelled that illusion forever. We had no quinine, no rubber, no tin…” In seeing the how the U.S. economy is related to the world economy, an unresolved class tension emerges. That is, as Catherine Caufield would later write about the Bretton Woods institutions, matters of currency valuation tend to affect only those in the upper echelons, the global investment class, whereas commodities are the lifeblood of the American working class and global poor. To put commodities and currency into the same conversation is a recipe for confusion and conflict.

Proponents of the Bretton Woods institutions saw an opportunity for both the U.S. working and investment class to provide materials and goods for postwar reconstruction: “Labor they have in plenty. But locomotives, steel, rails, power generators, mining equipment, and agricultural machinery—these and many other items they will have to buy abroad.” However,
others feared that globalizing capital would displace American workers: “It will do the common people of America exactly no good at all to have American capital own plants, factories, and mines in foreign countries, thus putting itself in a position to undersell its own workers here in the United States.” Therefore, as the conversation turned from abstract economic principles such as free trade and the gold standard to the practices of producing, manufacturing, and transferring tangible commodities, there emerged a conflict and question about whose class interests were being served.

This historical irony is that both supporters and opponents were somewhat mistaken about the consequences of the Fund and the fate of the gold standard. As Block notes, the global economic idealism institutionalized in the Fund “ultimately served to strengthen the business internationalists” imposing “the deflationary discipline of the gold standard” onto weak economies that could, in turn, be exploited for their cheap labor. Even though the bankers and isolationists opposed the Bretton Woods institutions on the grounds that they would somehow restrict American freedom to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, it turned out that the institutions would end up facilitating a world-wide system of imperial capital that nicely served the interests of the U.S. business and banker class. Further, the Bretton Woods institutions did little to instrumentally advance a rhetoric of globalism that supported an internationalist vision of shared prosperity and economic security. Nomi Prins writes, “despite their ‘international’ monikers, the World Bank and IMF disproportionately served the interests of the Western European nations that were most important to the United States from the get-go. The bankers could exert their influence over both entities to expand their own enterprises.”
Conclusion

The Bretton Woods Agreements were ratified by Congress, but it was clear right away that the institutions could not handle the reconstruction of the world economy. Fred Vinson, who replaced outgoing Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, expelled New Dealers from the Treasury as diplomatic relations with Russia quickly deteriorated under Truman. Russia came close to passing the Bretton Woods agreements but Stalin wanted to keep gold and domestic economic information private. The decision not to sign onto Bretton Woods was “the first substantial diplomatic fissure between America and the Soviet Union.” Some call it the beginning of the Cold War.424

Phase III of Lend-Lease came with end of war in Europe, bankrupting an already bankrupt Britain.425 Keynes traveled to Washington in September 1945 to negotiate a British loan, and the American public was strongly against this idea. He had mild heart attack while in the U.S. on October 7, 1945. Bretton Woods hung in the balance as White and Keynes continued to negotiate, effectively about dismantling the British Empire by turning sterling area debt over to the United States. The Bretton Woods Agreements were debated in the House of Commons and House of Lords in December 1945, against a December 31 deadline. Over the next few months it became increasingly clear that the Bank and Fund were going to work primarily in the U.S. interest. After some final negotiations with White in March 1946 in Savannah, GA, Keynes collapsed on a train and soon thereafter died at his home in Sussex, England on Easter Sunday April 21.426

The Bretton Woods institutions did not fulfill White’s intentions, either. The IMF began operations on March 1, 1947. White resigned on March 31. The Fund was already running out of money, and countries that had indicated they would make their currencies convertible within five
years invoked their right not to do so. White testified before the HUAC on August 13, 1948, collapsed on the train home, and died two days later.

The Bretton Woods system ended officially in 1971, when President Nixon floated the gold standard. The World Bank and International Fund maintain operations, but the Bretton Woods system is long dead. Steil argues that White was wrong about the viability of a system in which global trade was dependent upon a gold-backed dollar: “The United States could not simultaneously keep the world adequately supplied with dollars and sustain the large gold reserves required by its gold-convertibility commitment.” In hindsight, what economists call the Triffin dilemma killed the Bretton Woods system, as the long-term global commitment of the dollar was incompatible with short-term domestic deficit requirements. As Steil notes, “the United States is ultimately damned if it meets the world’s liquidity requirements and damned if it doesn’t—as is the rest of the world.”

Nonetheless, at the time the Congressional debates about Bretton Woods marked a hopeful attempt to make the world economy work better. This chapter has demonstrated that Congress was aware of this at the time, and that timing, or kairos, was of the essence. It has also demonstrated that by linking economics and war, and by drawing on history as an argumentative strategy, Congress developed a constitutive rhetoric of globalism. For although the Bretton Woods institutions instrumentally failed, or failed to live up to their promises, they constitutively succeeded as landmark historical moment in which the rhetoric of globalism was institutionalized via a performative government act. It was also a remarkable instance of legislative discourse, of sustained and careful debate about the national past and global future. In an endearing side exchange about allocating time for debate about the Export-Import bank, Senator Barkley said to Taft, “I may be a little optimistic. The Senator from Ohio is always
pessimistic. I will compromise between his pessimism and my optimism.” The Bretton Woods debates set a precedent for how America’s role in the global economy is discussed to this day.

Still, questions about domestic and global inequality, the nature of industrial democracy, and national and collective security remain. By way of conclusion, the following final chapter turns to those questions. For we have seen in the twenty-first century what Congress anticipated in 1945: “When people are given the opportunity of earning an honest living, of exchanging the results of their toil with others, they are not going to surrender these privileges to follow false doctrines; but if they do not have a chance to earn those things which are necessary for a livelihood, they are bound to resort to anything that promises relief.”

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317 J. Michael Hogan, Woodrow Wilson’s Western Tour: Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and the League of Nations (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2006), 172; However, as Lloyd E. Ambrosius and others have argued, Wilsonian idealism had some fundamental flaws: it was not actually internationalist but thoroughly American, and not actually pluralist but thoroughly racist. It also failed to appeal to the American working class. See Lloyd E. Ambrosius, Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Robert Alexander Kraig, Woodrow Wilson and the Lost World of the Oratorical Statesman (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004);


322 Dunn, *1940*, 57.


324 Moe, *Roosevelt’s Second Act*, 14, 18, 72; see also David F. Schmitz, who states that according to a January 1937 Gallup poll, 70% of Americans supported Neutrality, and fully 94% of them thought it was more important for the U.S. to stay out of the war than participate in preventing it overseas. David F. Schmitz, *The Triumph of Internationalism: Franklin D. Roosevelt and a World in Crisis, 1933-1941* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2007), 40.


330 Truman biography; Herring, *Aid to Russia*.


340 Hayek, *Road to Serfdom*, 222.

341 Hayek, *Road to Serfdom*, 224.

342 Fred Block, *The Origins*, 53.

Representative Buffett, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5539.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7670.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 17, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7621.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7564.

Senator Downey, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7689.

Senator Tobey, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7567.

Senator Wagner, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7556.

Senator Radcliffe, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7668.

Representative Brumbaugh, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5650.

Representative Riley, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5654.

Representative Rains, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5659.

Representative Outland, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5635.

Senator Brooks, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7677.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7563.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7568.

Representative Smith, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5642.

Representative Riley, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5654.

Representative Patman, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5676.

Senator Thomas, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7681.

Representative Smith, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5640.

Senator Wagner, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7556.

Representative Patman, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5540.


Representative Lane, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5661.
Representative Murdock, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5655.

Representative Sumner, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5660.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 17, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7623.


Representative Woodhouse, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5584.

Representative Biemiller, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5672.

Senator Tobey, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 17, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7598.

Representative Allen, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess, Congressional Record 91: 5538.

Representative D’Alesandro, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess, Congressional Record 91: 5577.

Report of Committee on Banking and Currency quoted in the Congressional Record 91: 5544.

Representative Sumner, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5540.

Representative Rich, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5646.


Representative Lemke, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5656.

Representative Lemke, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5656.

Senator Fulbright, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7672.

Senator Hart, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 17, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7609.

Senator Butler, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7675.

Robert Gilpin argues that there is and has never been such a thing as “free trade,” that there are always barriers, and that “trade liberalization” is a more accurate phrase because it indicates the movement toward an ideal. Robert Gilpin, The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2000), 89.


Representative Robertson, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5544.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7575.

Senator Tobey, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 17, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7598.


Senator Radcliffe, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7667.


Senator Wagner, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7682.

Representative Smith, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5640.


Representative Flood, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5590.

Representative Sumner, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5661.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7576.

Senator Thomas, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7683.

Senator Fulbright, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 18, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7671.

Representative Spence, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5543.

Senator Willis, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 19, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7770.

Representative Outland, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5637.

Representative Douglas, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5664.

Representative De Lacy, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5680.

Representative Brown, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 5570-71

Senator Thomas, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7572.

Senator Taft, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7572.

Senator Thomas, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 16, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 91: 7573.
Representative Lane, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5661.


Representative Voorhis, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5669.

Block, Origins of Economic Disorder, 37.

Many observers have made similar claims. See, for example, David Harvey, The New Imperialism (New York: Oxford, 2003), 73; Joseph E. Stiglitz, Globalization and Its Discontents (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002).


Conway, The Summit, 338.

Steil, The Battle, 276.

Skidelsky, Fighting for Freedom.

Steil, The Battle, 333.

Steil, The Battle, 333, emphasis in original.

Steil, The Battle, 333; see also Conway, The Summit.

Senator Barkley, speaking on H.R. 3314, on July 17, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 7622.

Representative Riley, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 6, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5654.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The World War II era saw a constitutive rhetoric of globalism emerge in response to deep uncertainty about the postwar future. Globalism offered a vocabulary for describing the historical moment, as it unfolded, as a turning point in American and world history. Linking free trade with global peace, and economic rights with human rights, it seemed a plausible and rhetorically powerful alternative, both to the isolationism in American public discourse that preceded the era and to the Cold War divisiveness that would replace it. It offered hope during an ominous time and a set of values that prioritized human social and economic interconnectedness and interdependence over war, imperialism, and profitmaking. It invented an alternative route to the future, what David Zarefsky has called a rhetorical “road not taken.”

Globalism’s constitutive effects remain relevant in our current era of soaring American domestic and global economic inequality. As Judy Holiday has written about ethos in a time of invention, “late market capitalism adheres to and relies upon the preeminence of self-interest…. To overlook the power of discourses that advocate the private pursuit and achievement of professional and material objectives at the expense of others gravely denies the material and psychic value conditioning of many of our primary and secondary discourses.” In other words, if rhetoric about economics in our current era of neoliberal globalization matters, if how we talk about ethos and shared values matters, and if how we act upon those values in our everyday decisions matters, then we need to be guided by a different set of historical landmarks.

For the post-Cold War era of economic globalization has seen the unleashing of global capital flows through neoliberal policies designed to boost corporate profits by greasing the wheels of trade, at the same time threatening public safeguards, quashing wages and worker
rights, and creating what Sherrod Brown calls “a vast gulf between those who reap the rewards and those who are left with none.” The Institute for Policy Studies notes that although abject global poverty has decreased since the turn of the millennium (to 15% of the world’s population living on under $2/day from 30%), over 70% of the world’s adults still own less than $10,000. Meanwhile, a handful of global billionaires are worth more than the annual GDP of most nations. Within the United States, the wealth gap is twice as wide as that of other industrialized nations; the top 5% of households own more than 90 times that of a median U.S. family. In 2016, a presidential election year, class—and by extension race and racism—dominates campaign rhetoric in both major parties. Statistics and stories about wealth, poverty, trade, and income inequality can be found in news headlines daily. “Market idolatry,” as Kevin Phillips argues and I would echo, has not only caused this state of economic affairs but has also served to “displace the founders’ republican arena of civic virtue and political engagement with the marketplace of economic self-interest.” Unfettered capitalism undermines democratic values and undercuts human rights.

In reviewing landmark features of the World War II era rhetoric of globalism, then, this dissertation project provides a less-traversed tour of the history of globalization as it intersects with American public discourse, offering what Farrell calls an “inventional history” that “sets out to find out why and how the spoken and transmitted version of past experience comes to us the way it does.” It offers constitutive rhetoric as a perspective from which to stop and look at a historical moment that is taken for granted in most political and historical accounts that move quickly from one disaster and war to the next. It offers rhetoric scholars, in turn, a nuanced account of the historical relationships among public, popular, political, presidential, economic,
and institutional discourses that inform our thinking about current issues of domestic and global violence and inequality. It argues, basically, that our grandfathers tried to warn us.

Wendell Willkie feared “a corrosive cynicism that will destroy every chance of world order.” One World vividly countered such cynicism with optimistic and friendly portrayals of the people Willkie met in his whirlwind wartime trip around the world. I demonstrated in Chapter Two how Willkie’s ethos and compression of space and time served to create presence; rather than interpreting the world through the grim lens of an ongoing war, the book gave readers hope by describing commonalities and beholding rich diversities seen throughout the globe. It used rhetorical magnitude to make the world seem small, familiar, and economically accessible.

Willkie’s status as a private citizen allowed him to be an outspoken critic of global imperialism and domestic racial injustice, seeing them as “completely antipathetic to all the principles for which we claim we fight.” His rhetoric of globalism was indeed principled, optimistic, and ultimately too forthright for him to realize his political aspirations. He sought to invent an inclusive version of non-partisan liberalism that responded seemingly intractable problems of injustice and inequity with economic fairness, generating a constitutive vision of a peaceful postwar world. “Somehow with a new approach and patient wisdom,” he wrote, “the question must be answered or a new leader will arise with a fierce fanaticism who will coalesce these discontents.” The unfortunate playing out of Willkie’s fears would occur time and again throughout the globe during the Cold War and into the twenty-first century, for economic discontent breeds resentment and disgust, and without a vocabulary for expression and redress, it leads to violence.

That truth was also well understood by President Roosevelt, who approached the global war and Americans’ economic insecurities with his trademark rhetorical savvy. In Chapter
Three, I examined Roosevelt’s Economic Bill of Rights as a constrained response to the public’s fears about the war and its aftermath that effectively positioned everyday Americans as stakeholders in the postwar economy. Building on his corpus of speeches throughout the presidency, Roosevelt scapegoated critics in order to unify the nation around a shared vision of economic security that would serve as a model for global human rights. By inscribing a “Second Bill of Rights” into the language of the nation’s founding, he reiterated the importance of the World War II era as epochal and liminal; the speech also marked a shifting mid-century liberalism within the Democratic party, establishing a social safety net while embracing the peacetime economic maxim that, as Stephen Holmes writes, “only a vigorous market economy, relying on individual incentives, can produce a surplus worth distributing by political means.”

President Roosevelt’s influence in equating economic instability and poverty with war and fear of war, and in developing a lexicon for globalism as it intersected with the American postwar imagination, reverberated in the Congressional debates about the Bretton Woods agreements in the summer of 1945. One legislator cautioned, “The peoples over the earth are demanding a higher standard of living, freedom from want, freedom from fear of periodic semistarvation or of periodic unemployment. There will be turmoil and fear of war unless their demand is met.” The Congressional debates, examined in Chapter Four, serve as a third major landmark in the history of World War II-era globalism, a performative act in which in which a global economic infrastructure was institutionalized despite its inadequacies. That is, although the Bretton Woods monetary system of gold-backed U.S. dollars helped to regulate international currency values for the next twenty-five years, it could neither handle the global economy nor provide for the massive reconstruction efforts needed after the war. The Bretton Woods institutions, particularly the IMF, went on to sabotage in many cases the same global human
rights agenda for which the Economic Bill of Rights had prepared a framework—contributing, then, to a perpetual experience of economic turmoils, and to global and local acts of violence and war that stem from a noxious cycle of exploitation and inequality.

Nevertheless, in 1945, Congress was looking for a peaceful way forward. Supporters and opponents of the Bretton Woods agreements, like Roosevelt and Willkie, situated the moment within the nation’s history and drew on the language of the founding documents as well as economic arguments reminiscent of the early Republic. They also drew on various forms of expertise, which was sometimes technical and sometimes populist, and thus both characteristic of the era’s embrace of technocracy and at the same time demonstrative of a genuine democratic faith in the wisdom of the American people. While opponents of the Bretton Woods agreements held that Congress was acting too quickly and should delay voting, supporters wanted to act swiftly, using the example of the First Great War’s aftermath and recognizing that postwar international economic planning must be in place before the Second Great War’s imminent end.

“War is a force that gives us meaning,” Chris Hedges has written. Indeed, the theme of *kairos*—urgency, historical timing and timeliness, an awareness of the era as radically contingent, present, and meaningful—ran throughout the public, presidential, and legislative discourses about globalism analyzed in this dissertation. In the absence of a coherent postwar vision, a moment of liminality and *kairos* of the highest order, the nation turned to economics and to an American ethic of globalism to find meaning; economic rights were made into universal human rights, discursively placed outside of the logic of capitalism and outside of what economist Karl Polanyi termed the “market society.” Polanyi feared that in the modern era, social relations had become embedded in the economy, rather than the reverse, and that the moral implications of this situation would be dire for future international and human affairs. His
effort was what economic sociologist Fred Block calls “a briefly glimpsed vision,” a moment in which “it appeared that market societies could be fundamentally reshaped by deeply democratic reforms.” That moment has passed.

Globalism’s constitutive effects, however, still linger. The current experience of late market capitalism is a veritable speedway of kairotic moments, perpetual crises, and nonstop violence; if we are to access an alternative route, an ethical economics of globalization, then it would do us well to examine the rhetorical practices and material forces of our recent past. During the World War II era, the nation drew on its history to find argumentative topoi and rhetorical resources available for profoundly democratic deliberation across public, presidential, and institutional discourses; it contemplated a national ethos and global future of peace, justice and equality in a time of radical contingency. That, too, is what this project hopes to do.

434 Brown, Myths of Free Trade, 53.
438 Willkie, One World, 173.
439 Willkie, One World, 191.
440 Willkie, One World, 35.
441 Stephen Holmes, Passions and Constraints: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), 36
Representative Woodhouse, speaking on H.R. 3314, on June 5, 1945, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 91: 5584, emphasis added.

Chris Hedges, War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning (New York: PublicAffairs, 2002).

Block, “Karl Polanyi,” 298.


Bostdorff, Denise M. *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: The Cold War Call to Arms*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008.


U. S. Congress. Congressional Record. 79th Cong, 1st sess, 1945.


