# Esther

Esther is a short story about how the Jewish girl Esther (possibly Damasphia) became the wife of the Persian Emperor (called ArtaXerxes in the Greek text), and of how she saved the Jews from a plot to destroy them, which led to the creation of the Jewish Feast of Purim.

This ArtaXerxes appears to be ArtaXerxes I of Persia, and the account tells us that these events happened in the 3rd year of his reign (by our calculations, around 472 BCE).

**Additional material**

Although this version is from the Greek Septuagint, we don’t include the six pieces of additional material that were added to the Septuagint’s version (the ‘Old Greek’ version) several centuries after the original writing. These six pieces of extra material are not fake texts pretending to be original, no, they seem to have always been understood as additional, unoriginal, and uninspired material – added to help readers by giving them background information and extra context.

Our translation of Esther only includes the original material; these happen to be the same passages that appear in the Hebrew manuscripts.

However, the additions are probably (more or less) accurate in what they say. For example, some claim to be copies of the king’s letters that are mentioned in the main text. The last addition even tells us when it was added (the 1st century BCE) and who translated it (someone called Lysimachus)!

So while these additions are not part of the original text, they were commonly attached to Esther in ancient times and were likely familiar to Greek-speaking Early Christians and the Apostles.

In the future, we’ll add the additional material to this translation of Esther, but make it clear that the six additions are uninspired.

### Esther

## Chapter 1

1This all happened in the days of ArtaXerxes (the ArtaXerxes that ruled an area of 127 regions all the way to India).

2Back in those days, after ArtaXerxes had been enthroned as king in the City of Susa and 3during the 3rd year of his reign, he held a great [wedding] banquet to which he invited his friends, foreign dignitaries, the most honorable Medes and Persians, and those who were in charge of the governors of the various regions.

4Then, over the next 180 days, he took them and showed them all the wealth of his kingdom and the glory of the things that he’d accomplished.

5Well, after the days for celebrating his wedding were completed, the king held another banquet inside the courtyard of the king’s palace for the foreigners who lived in his city, which lasted 7 more days.

6The [banquet] area was decorated with fine linen and cotton cloth that was stretched over lines of fine linen and purple cloth, which were fastened with gold and silver cubes to Parian-marble columns.

7[There were also] beds of gold and silver on a Parian-marble floor [that was set with] emerald stones and mother of pearl, and this was strewn with transparent beds that were variously decorated with cups of gold and silver.

In addition, they had an abundance of the finest wines (the type that was reserved for the king).

8The banquet wasn’t handled as it was specified in their laws, but because that’s the way the king wanted it, he gave instructions to those who were in charge of the workers to handle things his way.

9Meanwhile, Astin (the queen) was holding a banquet for the women of the kingdom in the same place where ArtaXerxes was holding his.

10Then on the 7th day, because the king was in a particularly happy mood, he gave orders to HaMan, BizTha, Harbona, BigTha, AbagTha, Zethar, and Carcas (the king’s 7 [most trusted] eunuchs) to bring the queen to him, 11so she could receive her coronation and be given a royal turban, and so that he could display her beauty before all the princes and the foreigners (because she was very beautiful).

12But Queen Astin refused to go along with the eunuchs, which made the king very angry.

13So he said to his friends:

 ‘If this is how Astin has chosen to answer, then you deal with this matter according to the law and judge her!’

14Well, Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, TarShish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan (the 7 sub-rulers of the Persians and Medes who were closest to the king and who sat by him) came forward 15and told the king what the laws required them to do to Queen Astin for not following the orders that the king had given to his eunuchs.

16Memucan spoke and said this to him and to the other rulers:

 ‘Not only has Queen Astin dishonored the king, but she has dishonored all of the king’s rulers and leaders.’

17Then after describing to them all the things that the queen had said and how she had disobeyed the king, he proclaimed:

 ‘Because she has disobeyed King ArtaXerxes, 18and because all the wives of the sub-rulers and leaders of the Persians and Medes have heard what the queen said, they might also dare to dishonor their husbands!

 19‘Therefore, if it seems good to the king, let him write out and sign a royal decree passing a law among the Medes and Persians that she should not be treated as the queen and that she may no longer sleep with the king.

 ‘Then may the king find a woman better than her!

 20‘This law should be announced throughout the entire kingdom, so that all the women will learn to respect their men, both the rich and the poor!’

21Well, because what he said pleased the king and his rulers, the king did as Memucan had proposed... 22He sent a proclamation everywhere throughout his entire realm in each of their languages, requiring women to show respect for the men in their households.

### Esther

## Chapter 2

1This ended the king’s rage, and he never mentioned Astin again, or the things that she said, or his condemnation of her.

2So then the king’s servants said to him:

 ‘Have them search for a young woman for the king who is both pure and beautiful to look at.

 3‘Send judges throughout your kingdom and have them choose young women who are virgins and pretty, then have them taken to your harem in the City of Susa where they’ll be handed over to the king’s eunuch that’s in charge of the women, to take care of them and give them beauty treatments.

 4‘And after that, the woman who best pleases the king will reign instead of Astin.’

Well, because this pleased the king, it was done.

5Now, there was a man (a Judean) in the City of Susa whose name was MordecAi. He was the son of JaiRus, the grandson of SemeYas, and the great-grandson of KisaYus from the tribe of BenJamin, 6who had been carried off as a captive from JeruSalem by NebuChadnezzar, the king of Babylon.

7MordecAi had a child whom he’d raised who was the daughter of his uncle (his father’s brother), and her name was Esther. For after her parents died, he [agreed to] take [care of] the young woman, who was very pretty.

8Well, after the king’s proclamation [was read], many young women were gathered to the City of Susa [to be seen by] Gai (the harem keeper), and then Esther was led before him... 9He found the young woman very pleasing and he liked her, so he hurried to give her the beauty treatments and her share [of good things], and 7 young women from the royal palace were brought there [to serve] her.

Thereafter, he treated [Esther] and her handmaidens very well in the harem chamber. 10However, Esther didn’t discuss her race or her fatherland with him, because MordecAi had told her not to mention it.

11Then, every day, MordecAi would walk by the women’s courtyard to see what was happening to Esther.

12Well, at the end of 12 months, the time finally came for the young women to go in to the king (for that’s how long the beauty treatments were to last). They also underwent 6 months of treatments with fragrant oils.

13It was then, after 6 months of being bathed in myrrh oil, that she was taken in to the king, along with any others that the king told them to bring from the harem chamber to the royal palace.

14She was brought in to him that evening, and the next morning, she returned to the secondary harem where the Eunuch Gai (the king’s harem keeper) stayed, and she couldn’t go before the king after that, unless she had been called.

15Well eventually, Esther (the daughter of AbiHail, MordecAi’s uncle) was brought before the king again, and she carefully followed all the eunuch’s instructions, so that everyone who saw her came to like her.

16Esther had been taken to King ArtaXerxes in the 10th month (TeBeth) of the 7th year of his reign, 17and he fell passionately in love with her, preferring her to all the other virgins! He then placed the royal turban of the queen on her head, 18and he held a banquet for all of his friends and the governors that lasted 7 days.

He also made the wedding feast of Esther greater by [releasing all the prisoners] in his kingdom.

19Meanwhile, MordecAi had been put in charge of matters having to do with [the king’s] courtyard. 20And he reminded Esther not to mention her fatherland. Rather, he told her to just fear God and obey His orders, the same as she did when she lived in his home…

And Esther never deviated from doing this.

21Well, MordecAi kept growing more important, 22and when two of the king’s eunuchs (the chiefs of his bodyguards) became worried about ArtaXerxes and decided to assassinate him, MordecAi heard about this and sent a warning to the king through Esther about their plot.

23So after the king interrogated the eunuchs, he had them hung, and he had a record written in the royal library about the goodwill that MordecAi had shown, saying that he was to be commended for this.

### Esther

## Chapter 3

1However, after that, King ArtaXerxes honored HaMan (son of AmaDathes the AgAgite). He promoted him over all his friends and seated him in [the most prominent position].

2So thereafter, everyone in the courtyard had to bow before HaMan, because the king said that they had to do so… However, MordecAi refused to do this. 3As a result, the people in the king’s courtyard started asking MordecAi why he was disobeying the order of the king.

4And although they spoke to him about this every day, MordecAi just didn’t pay any attention to them... So someone thereafter pointed out to HaMan that MordecAi had been disobeying the king’s orders, and he also mentioned that MordecAi was a Judean.

5Well, when HaMan found out that MordecAi wasn’t bowing before him, this made him very angry! 6So, that’s when he started making plans to remove *all* the Judeans from the kingdom of ArtaXerxes.

7Then, during the 12th year of the reign of ArtaXerxes, he drafted a law, and he threw lots for each day and month to determine when the best time would be to destroy the race of MordecAi…

And it fell on the 14th day of the month of Adar.

8So he went and spoke to King ArtaXerxes and said this:

 ‘There’s a nation that’s mixed among all the nations of your kingdom whose laws are different from those of the other nations, and they disregard the laws of the king!

 ‘Therefore, it isn’t to the king’s advantage to keep them... 9So if it seems good to the king; may he approve this decree [that I’ve written], which says that they must be destroyed!

 ‘Then I’ll appropriate 10,000 gold coins from the king’s treasury to get it done.’

10Well, the king removed his ring and handed it to HaMan to seal the judgment that he had written against the Judeans.

11And the king said to HaMan:

 ‘As for the [money]; you have it.

 ‘And as for that nation; treat them in any way that you wish!’

12So then the king called in his scribes (on the 13th day of the 1st month) and they copied HaMan’s orders [and sent them to] all the military commanders and governors from India to Ethiopia… To 127 districts.

[HaMan also] sent letters to all the rulers of the nations in their own languages in the name of King ArtaXerxes.

13He sent them by couriers throughout ArtaXerxes’s kingdom, [telling the people] to wipe out the race of the Judeans on the [13th] day of the 12th month (Adar), and he told them that they could plunder all their possessions.

14So, copies of the letters were put on display everywhere... And then the day was set and everything was being prepared and made ready… 15Even in Susa.

And after that, the king and HaMan toasted each other, as the whole city was in an uproar.

### Esther

## Chapter 4

1Well when MordecAi realized that this was the end, he ripped his clothes, put on sackcloth, [covered himself with] ashes, and he rushed to the city square, where he yelled as loudly as he could:

 ‘A nation is being removed that has wronged no one!’

2Then after that, he went and stood outside the palace gate (because he wasn’t allowed to enter the courtyard in sackcloth and ashes). 3And everywhere that the letters were on display there was crying, beating on chests, and great mourning among the Judeans, as they put on sackcloth and made beds for themselves in ashes.

4Well, the queen soon learned about this plot through her handmaids and eunuchs, who came to her and told her about it… And she was very upset when she heard what had happened.

Meanwhile, she sent a robe to MordecAi and told him to stop wearing his sackcloth; but he refused to do it.

5Then Esther called Hatach (her personal eunuch) and sent him to MordecAi, 6so she could learn the details of the situation. 7And MordecAi explained to him how it all came about… Of how HaMan had gotten the king’s promise to receive 10,000 gold coins from his treasury so he could destroy the Judeans... 8And then he gave a copy of the decree that was on public display in Susa (which said that they were to be destroyed) to Hatach, who carried it to Esther.

He also told the eunuch to ask her to [go before] the king [to beg for his mercy] and for her to prove worthy by speaking on behalf of her people.

He said:

 ‘Tell her to explain to him about how lowly she was once considered and of how I took her in and raised her, because HaMan (the king’s second in command) is talking about killing all of us.

 ‘Tell her to call upon the Lord [our God], and then go speak to the king about us and rescue us from death!’

9So Hatach returned and told Esther everything that [Modecai] had said.

10And then Esther told Hatach to go to MordecAi and say:

 ‘Everyone in the kingdom knows that there’s no hope for any man or woman who goes into the king’s inner courtyard without being called [first]. 11Only those to whom the king stretches out his scepter is safe… And I haven’t been called to see the king for some 30 days now!’

12Therefore, Hatach went and told MordecAi everything that Esther said, and MordecAi told him:

 13‘Go and tell Esther not to think that she’s the only Judean who’ll be saved. 14And if she wants to ignore us this time, the Judeans will get help from somewhere else… Then she and the house of her father will be destroyed!

 ‘But... Perhaps she was made queen for this very purpose?’

15Then Esther sent a reply to MordecAi, saying:

 16‘Gather all the Judeans in the City of Susa and ask everyone to fast for me… Don’t eat or drink anything for three days and three nights!

 ‘Also, my handmaids and I will go without food before I go in before the king, because I’ll be breaking the law.

 ‘Yet, even if it’s necessary for me to die, I’ll do it!’

17And thereafter, MordecAi did everything that Esther told him to do.

### Esther

## Chapter 5

1Well on the 3rd day, Esther dressed in her royal clothes, then she went and stood in the palace courtyard, inside the inner courtyard, which is right outside of the king’s residence.

And when the king went and sat down on his royal throne (which was inside his palace but it faced the front entryway) 2and he saw Esther the queen standing in his courtyard, he was pleased.

So he stretched out the gold scepter towards her that he held in his hand, and Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3Then the king asked:

 ‘What do you want Esther… What’s your request?

 ‘Ask for half of my kingdom and it’s yours.’

4And Esther said:

 ‘This is a special day for me... So if it seems good to the king, may both the king and HaMan attend a banquet that I will hold for them today!’

5So the king said to HaMan:

 ‘Hurry, let’s go and do what Esther has asked!’

And they both went to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6Well, when they arrived, the king said to Esther:

 ‘Tell me what it is that’s so important to you, Queen Esther, and I’ll do whatever is worthwhile.’

7Then she said:

 ‘My only request and petition is this:

 8‘If I’ve found the favor of the king, may you and HaMan come again tomorrow for [another] banquet that I’ll hold for you, the same as today.’

9Well after HaMan left the king that day, he was very cheerful and happy. But when he noticed the Judean MordecAi standing in the courtyard, he was furious.

10Then when he got home, he called his wife ZoSara and his friends, 11and he showed them all the wealth he’d gained. He also told them of the glory that the king had vested upon him, and of how the king had appointed him to be the most important and how he had given him the lead position in his kingdom.

12Then HaMan said:

 ‘Today, the queen didn’t invite anyone to a banquet that she held other than just me and the king, and she has invited me again tomorrow!

 13‘However, the thing that really bothered me was seeing that Jew – MordecAi – standing there in the courtyard!’

14Then his wife ZoSara said to him and his friends:

 ‘You should cut down a very tall tree, then at dawn tomorrow morning, you should go and speak to the king about hanging MordecAi on it, so that when you attend the banquet with the king, you can do it joyfully!’

Well, because this seemed to be a good idea, HaMan went and prepared the tree.

### Esther

## Chapter 6

1However, because the Lord [God] had removed sleep from the king that night, he gave orders to his servant to bring in the memorandum letters and to read them to him. 2And that’s when he found the letter concerning MordecAi, which told of how he’d reported that two of the king’s eunuchs were looking to get their hands on ArtaXerxes.

3So the king asked:

 ‘What glory or favor was shown to MordecAi for doing this?’

And the king’s servants replied:

 ‘Nothing has been done for him.’

4Well, it so happened that, just as the king was asking about doing good things for MordecAi, {Look!} HaMan arrived in the courtyard... For he’d come to speak to the king about hanging MordecAi on the pole that he had prepared!

So the king asked:

 ‘Who is in the courtyard?’

5And the king’s servants replied:

 ‘Look, its HaMan standing in the courtyard.’

And the king said:

 ‘Call him in!’

6Then the king asked HaMan:

 ‘Tell me... What [would you suggest that] I do for a man whom I wish to honor?’

Well, HaMan thought to himself:

 *‘Whom would the king wish to honor other than me?’*

7So he said to the king:

 ‘As for the man whom the king wishes to honor...

 8‘The king’s servants should bring him the same fine linen that the king wears, as well as the king’s horse.

 9‘Then one of the king’s most honored friends should dress the man who’s loved by the king in royal robes, mount him on the horse, and then lead him around the city square proclaiming:

 *‘This is how any man who’s honored by the king must be treated!’*

10And at that, the king said to HaMan:

 ‘Well spoken!

 ‘That’s what I want you to do for my courtyard attendant, the Jew MordecAi…

 ‘Be sure that you do everything that you said!’

11Well thereafter, HaMan went and got the robes and the horse, then he dressed MordecAi and mounted him on the [king’s] horse, and he led him around the city square proclaiming:

 ‘This is how any man who’s honored by the king must be treated!’

12And after he brought MordecAi back to the courtyard, he went home extremely upset and with a worried mind.

13So when he got back home, he told his wife ZoSara and his friends everything that had happened.

Then his wife and friends said:

 ‘Since MordecAi is of the Judean race and you’ve started being humbled before him, this means that you’re going to fall…

 ‘There’s no way to defend yourself against that man, because the Living God is with him!’

14Well, it was while they were still speaking to him that the eunuchs arrived to hurry HaMan along to the banquet that had been prepared by Esther.

### Esther

## Chapter 7

1So then, the king and HaMan went in to [eat and] drink with the queen on the 2nd day of the banquet, 2and the king asked Esther:

 ‘What would you like, Queen Esther?

 ‘What’s your request or petition?

 ‘Whatever you may ask is yours… Up to half of my kingdom!’

3And she replied:

 ‘If I’ve found favor before the king, my request and petition is for him to grant life to my people...

 4‘For my people and I have been sold for destruction, ravaging, and as male and female slaves… Including our children!

 ‘I haven’t mentioned this to you before, but the one who slandered us is no longer worthy to sit in the courtyard of the king.’

5Well at that, the king asked:

 ‘Who would have dared to do such a thing?’

6And Esther said:

 ‘A man… An enemy… HaMan… This wicked man!’

Well, HaMan became very upset before the king and queen, 7and the king just got up and walked out into the garden.

So then HaMan appealed to the queen, because he saw that he was in a bad situation.

8Then when the king returned from the garden, he found that HaMan had fallen on the queen’s bed as he was begging her.

And the king asked:

 ‘Are you attacking my wife here in my own home?’

Well when HaMan heard that, he didn’t know what to say. 9Then Harbonah (one of the king’s eunuchs) said to the king:

 ‘{Look!} HaMan has prepared a very tall pole [on which he’s planned to hang] MordecAi, the man who protected the king…

 ‘He had it erected next to his home.’

And the king said:

 ‘Then let him be hung on it!’

10So HaMan was hung on the pole that he’d prepared for MordecAi that day, and this ended the king’s rage.

### Esther

## Chapter 8

1Then on that same day, King ArtaXerxes offered everything that had once belonged to the slanderer HaMan, to Esther.

And after Esther explained how MordecAi was related to her, the king called him in 2and gave him the ring that he’d removed from the hand of HaMan! Esther also put MordecAi in charge of all the possessions of HaMan.

3Then, later that day, [Esther] went in and spoke to the king.

She fell to his feet and begged him to undo all the evil things that HaMan had [planned] to do against the Judeans. 4So the king held out his gold scepter to Esther, and she got up on her feet and stood next to the king and said:

 5‘If it seems good to you, and if I’ve found your favor; have those letters that HaMan wrote and sent out about destroying all the Judeans in your kingdom, recalled.

 6‘For, how could I watch my people being so mistreated, and how could I personally be saved when everyone else in my fatherland is being destroyed?’

7But the king said to Esther:

 ‘Since I’ve already granted you everything that HaMan owned, and I had him hung on a pole for raising his hands against the Judeans, what more are you asking?

 8‘You may write whatever seems good to you in my name and then seal it with my ring. However, once the king has given an order and has sealed it with his ring, it may never be changed!’

9Well, it was the 23rd day of the 1st month (Nisan) of the same year that the scribes were called in, and [an edict] was written concerning the Judeans that was thereafter sent to all those in authority... To those who were in charge and to all the governors from India to Ethiopia, 127 governors by districts, in each of their own languages.

10It was written in the name of the king, sealed with his ring, and sent out by couriers. 11It gave instructions on how his laws were to be executed in each city, and explained that [the Judeans] should be helped in dealing with their opponents and enemies in any way they wanted, 12all on a single day, throughout the entire kingdom of ArtaXerxes, on the 13th day of the 12th month (Adar)... 13 And [how] copies should be displayed for everyone in the kingdom to see, and how all Judeans should prepare themselves for war against their enemies!

14So, the king’s edict was carried on horseback to be quickly delivered throughout the whole realm, and it was also put on display in Susa.

15Well after that, MordecAi was dressed in royal robes, and a gold crown was placed on his head over a purple turban.

And when the people of Susa saw this, they all rejoiced…

16And the Judeans were also very relieved and happy. 17Then in every place and city where the edict had been displayed, there was rejoicing and feasting among the Judeans!

And as a result (because of their fear of the Judeans), many people of the nations got circumcised and became converts to Judaism.

### Esther

## Chapter 9

1Well, by the 13th day of the 12th month (Adar), all the letters from the king had been distributed. 2So on that day, all the enemies of the Jews were destroyed, because everyone was afraid to oppose them!

3And everyone (including the heads over the governors, the vassal kings, and the royal scribes) treated the Judeans with respect, because they were afraid of MordecAi, 4since the king had ordered his name 5to be proclaimed throughout the kingdom.

6In the city of Susa alone, the Judeans killed about 500 people, 7including:

 • PharShandatha,
 • Daiphon,
 • Aspatha,
 • 8Pharadatha,
 • Barea,
 • Sarbaka,
 • 9MarMasima,
 • Ruphaeus,
 • Arseus,
 • ZabuThaeus,
 • 10The 10 sons of HaMan, and
 • The son of AmaDathes the Bougean (who were all enemies of the Judeans).

However, they didn’t do any plundering that day.

11Well when the king heard how many had been destroyed in Susa, he said to Esther:

 12‘Since the Judeans have destroyed 500 men in the city, how do you suppose they were treated in other areas?

 ‘You can ask for whatever you wish and it’ll be yours!’

13And Esther said to the king:

 ‘Allow the Judeans to do the same thing tomorrow [here in Susa], and let them hang [up the bodies of] the 10 sons of HaMan.’

14So he agreed to let it happen, and the Judeans in the city hung up the bodies of the sons of HaMan. 15Then they all gathered in Susa on the 14th day of Adar and killed 300 more men… But again, they didn’t plunder them.

16Meanwhile, the rest of the Judeans throughout the kingdom had also gathered to protect themselves, which finally gave them some rest from those warlike men. Altogether, they destroyed 70,000 of them on the 13th of Adar… But they didn’t do any plundering either.

17Then they rested on the 14th day of the month, proclaiming it a day of rest, joy, and gladness. 18The Judeans in the city of Susa also gathered for rest on the 14th day, then they celebrated on the 15th day with joy and gladness.

19And because of this, all the Judeans who were scattered outside [of Judea] still celebrate the 14th day of Adar as a happy day, during which they each send food to their neighbors.

20For MordecAi wrote that they should write this in a scroll that he would then send to the all Judeans throughout the kingdom of ArtaXerxes, both near and far, 21establishing the 14th and 15th days of Adar as good days of celebration, 22because those were the days when the Judeans were gained rest from their enemies…

It was the month when their mourning was turned into joy and their grief was turned into happy days. As a result, they were to celebrate those days happily with wedding feasts and by sending food to their friends and to the poor.

23The Judeans were also happy when MordecAi wrote of 24how HaMan (son of HamaDathes the Macedonian) had waged war against them by authoring a referendum to wipe them out, 25and of how he’d gone before the king to hang MordecAi [on a pole].

Then he told of how [HaMan’s] attempt to do bad things to the Judeans resulted in his own hanging, along with his children.

26So they call those days Purim (Lots), because these were the days [that HaMan] had chosen by throwing lots (which in their dialect was called Purim).

Well, because of the words in that letter, all the things that [the Jews] had suffered and that had been done to them, came to an end.

27And the Judeans adopted [Purim as a holiday] for them and their offspring, and they agreed to observe it exactly as [MordecAi] suggested. It was to be a memorial from generation to generation in every city, family, and place. 28These days were to be celebrated for all time, and were never to be forgotten throughout the generations!

29Then Queen Esther (the daughter of AbiHail) and MordecAi (the Judean) wrote about all that they’d done, in confirmation of what was written in the letter about Purim.

30MordecAi and Esther attested to all that they’d done, of how they had fasted, and to the things that they had each said. 31And thereafter, Esther established the matter throughout the ages by [having it written] as a memorial.

### Esther

## Chapter 10

1Well after that, the king also wrote about this matter to everyone in his kingdom, both on land and at sea; 2however, he also wrote about his strength, valor, riches, and the glory of his kingdom.

Look! It’s all written as a memorial in the scrolls of the Persians and Medes.

3From then on, MordecAi provided great relief to King ArtaXerxes, and he became great in his kingdom. He was also highly praised by the Judeans, because he fondly [watched out for] the welfare of their nation.