THEIR MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON: MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICA, ALCOHOL, AND GERMAN-AMERICANS DURING THE GREAT WAR.

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CAMOUFLAGE

A German-American makes public display of patriotism but privately hopes for a German victory.

"Hoch Der Kaiser" proclaimed the fictional character of a political cartoon by James Montgomery Flagg during World War I.[200] While the character cheered the Kaiser, he also waved Old Glory out of his window. The drawing is intended to represent the divided sentiments among German-Americans during the Great War. The intriguing part of the

[200] Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 236.

illustration, however, is the characterization of the flag waving man as a typical German-American drunkard who smoked a German pipe, wore traditional German attire and displayed the stereotypical body of a heavy drinker. While he held the American flag with his left hand, he used the right one to lift up a tall, foaming glass of beer, toasting the German cause in the war. Flagg, an artist who is best known for the famous poster of Uncle Sam pointing to the viewer, "I Want You For the U.S. Army," established a connection between German-Americans, the war, and alcohol with this illustration.

Flagg, like many members of the American middle class, took advantage of the opportunity presented by the war to reject the cultural and political threat that German-Americans represented to mainstream America. In the process, members of the native-born middle class sought to emphasize their position of dominance in the hierarchy of the American social system. To achieve this purpose, they employed a *modus operandi* that reaffirmed their values and rejected what they conceived as intolerable. This article analyzes the increase in anti-German rhetoric of the prohibition movement and World War I from a social class perspective. It examines the stigmatization of German-Americans as drinkers, and the subsequent campaign of the prohibition movement to denounce them as a threat. The prohibition movement demonstrates that the sobriety preached by middle-class America reflected a system of values that the majority group created for itself, and exposes that, although the Great War propelled the emergence of anti-German sentiment, it was the cultural intolerance of most Americans towards individuals of foreign origin that stood behind this hostility. The public shaming of all German-Americans as drinkers, and the subsequent campaign of the prohibition movement that denounced them as a menace, was part of an attempt to absorb other groups into the mainstream culture.

Most historians who have studied the construction of the United States class system agree that middle-class criteria have dominated the process. Scholars, however, are divided about the methods employed by the middle class that influenced class construction. While some historians emphasize the rules that the middle class constructed to define what *is* and what *is not* "acceptable" within its own circle, others focus on the middle class' role in the structure of other social groups. [201] Still others study how

[201] Stephen P Rice, "Human Machine: Steam Boiler Explosions and the Making of the Engineer," in *Minding the Machine: Languages of Class in Early Industrial America,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Paul Michel Taillon, "What We Want Is Good, Sober Men:" Masculinity, Respectability, and Temperance in the Railroad

the middle class created the working class through their conception of those elements that do not belong to the "respectable" members of society.[202] Unlike the other scholars, they contend that class categories are flexible, and that members of the working class can move up the social ladder by acquiring the values promoted by the middle class.[203] Often scholarship exploring social class in the U.S. does not analyze how middle-class Americans came to differentiate between themselves and alien groups in order to try to defend its own identity. It is in their effort to reaffirm their own values and to repress the elements that it felt threatened them as a group, that we find the origins of middle class America's campaign against German-Americans' alcohol consumption. This analysis of American hostility towards German-Americans during the Great War broadens the scope of interaction between classes, and incorporates cultural elements into traditional class definitions.

Cultural repression perpetrated against German-Americans during World War I had its origins in the nineteenth century. The economic boom of the Gilded Age propelled U.S. industrialization and allowed individuals greater mobility in the socioeconomic structure. This mobility encouraged workers from rural areas and abroad to gravitate toward centers of production; Germans were among the largest immigrant groups to come to the U.S. from abroad. Historians estimate that between 1881 and 1892 about 1,700,000 Germans immigrated to the United States. Although these numbers decreased in subsequent years, Germans continued to be an important part of the immigrant wave at the turn of the century, averaging 30,000 newcomers per year from 1890 to 1914.[204] Cities saw a rapidly growing population and, consequently, an increase in cultural diversity, which provoked resentment among the more established local communities.

Alcohol had become a basis for the resentment that old-stock Americans began to harbor against newly arrived immigrants. In a study

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Brotherhoods, 1870-1910," *Journal of Social History* 36 (Winter 2002): 319-338.

202 See Robert Fitts, "The Rhetoric of Reform: The Five Points Mission and the Cult of Domesticity, *Historical Archaeology 35* (3) (2001): 115-132. Edward Slavishak in "Working Class Muscle: Homestead and Bodily Disorder in the Gilded Age," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 3:4 (October, 2004): 339-368.

203 Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 85-157. Daniel E. Bender, "The Great Jewish Metier: Factory Inspectors, Jewish Workers and Defining the Sweatshop, 1880-1910," in *Sweated Work, Weak Bodies: Anti-Sweatshop Campaigns and Languages of Labor* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 52-60.

204 Luebke. *Bonds of Loyalty*, 28-30.

examining the origins of the saloon during the nineteenth century, historian Roy Rosenzweig states that "in the culture of the Irish and the Germans, the use of whiskey was customary and often a staple part of the diet."[205] This cultural practice, however, contrasted the temperance discourse that emerged from the religious movement known as the Second Great Awakening. With their origins in the first half of the nineteenth century, temperance societies targeted immigrants' drinking customs and accused them of spreading vice among the American population.[206] Both, the religious revival and the temperance movement, aimed to temper drinking practices throughout the country. Eventually, many of these societies joined to form stronger organizations that envisioned the total prohibition of alcohol.

Organizations such as the Anti-Saloon League of America, the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the so-called Prohibition Party made battling the problem of nation-wide alcohol consumption their sole objective, ultimately giving birth to the prohibition movement.[207] Newly arrived immigrants from Europe became one of their favorite targets because they considered the immigrant relationship with alcohol to be a particularly dangerous import. Indeed, one member of the prohibition movement declared that German-American immigrants brought what he called "additional problems to our civilization, the most important of which was alcohol."[208] Despite their protests, temperance leaders were frustrated that the immigrant population refused to give up traditional customs involving alcohol consumption. Christian minister Daniel Dorchester wrote that the new waves of immigration "brought another class of inhabitants, few of whom had been touched by the temperance reformation, and the most of whom were grossly addicted to intemperance."[209] As a result, the temperance movement increased its

[205] Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 51. See also *New York Times*, August 27, 1867.

[206] Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 191.

[207] Larry Engelmann, *Intemperance: The Lost War Against Liquor,* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 10-19. John J. Rumbarger, *Profits, Power and Prohibition: Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 58-59. Sharon Anne Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

[208] Samuel Dow Grove, *Society and its Problems: An Introduction to the Principles of Sociology* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1922), 83.

[209] Daniel Dorchester, *The Liquor Problem at all Ages* (New York: Philips and Hunt, 1884), 399.

rhetoric that tied members of the immigrant community to the problem of alcohol. Moreover, they began to argue against the formation of ethnic enclaves that alienated immigrants from modern American culture.

The cultural conflict between modern American identity that centered on temperance and newly arrived immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was exacerbated by the outbreak of the Great War in Europe. Germany's involvement in the war provoked a sense of unity among German-Americans, who pressured American officials to remain neutral in the conflict. German-American voters achieved greater unity than ever before or after. Such solidarity prompted the more conservative elements of American society to increase their attack on the aspects of immigrant culture they considered unassimilated and therefore, "un-American." The editors of *Scribner's Magazine*, for example, described how the events of the war aroused American awareness of "the fact that even unto the third and fourth generation the fatherland still exercised its spell upon those who [Americans] had accepted unquestioningly as fellow citizens and neighbors."[210] In this sense, the temperance leader Imogen Oakley was more specific when he stated that, with the outbreak of the war, prohibitionists "found five million of foreign birth who can neither read, write nor speak the English language."[211] Furthermore, the entrance of the United States into the war and the national opposition of German expansion in Europe prompted natives' discourse regarding the elimination of differences that existed in the United States between modern, assimilated Americans and German-Americans. The use of liquor was, in this sense, the axis of the natives' offensive against members of German-Americans.

The promotion of anti-Germanism by the American prohibition movement emerged in association with feelings that historically emerge during times of war. Indeed, it was during the war that nationalist Americans began to fuse their discourse with the temperance issue. Liquor, conservatives began to claim, hindered the American war effort and undermined the productivity of its citizens. In addition, the prohibition movement began to associate the liquor industry with what they considered to be a waste of food and resources during wartime. The Anti-Saloon League of America's newspaper, *The American Issue*, [employed omit?] tried to persuade the American public to link the "war" at home and the war abroad with its headlines: "Save millions of tons of

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[210] "The Spirit of the West," In *Scribner's Magazine*, Vol. 63 (1918). 657.

[211] Imogen B. Oakley, "The Prohibition Law and the Political Machine," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 109, No. 1. 165-174 (1923), 170.

coal now wasted to make beer; furnish men for field factory and industries."[212] German-Americans saw this correlation as an attack upon their customs and responded to prohibition advocates by promoting moderation instead.[213] However, German-American opposition to prohibition was interpreted by nativists as proof their unwillingness to support the nation at war. Consequently, the conflict escalated to an unprecedented level and nativists took the opportunity to express their antipathy for foreign cultures in general and German-Americans in particular.

Liquor and the association with German-Americans did not emerge *ex nihilo*; the campaign had roots in middle-class efforts to acculturate immigrant groups into mainstream American culture. Armed with the concept of sobriety, the middle class began to critique immigrant culture, comparing it to their own, and, in the process, revealed a set of values that the American middle class had constructed in order to define the parameters of modern American identity. This contrast in values not only urged members of the middle class to try to acculturate newly arrived immigrants, but also made them see the process as a patriotic obligation.

One rationale indicative of this classist character is the bias many middle class prohibitionists maintained towards German customs in the United States. Nativists believed that Germans who migrated to the United States retained cultural characteristics that put them at odds with the dominant culture. Reinhold Niebuhr, a popular theologian at the time, explained that the problem stemmed from the immigrants' origins. The German immigrant, he stated, was "largely drawn from the peasant class of Germany, which is ignorant of, and unaffected by, the influences of the modern German university which has had such a large part in the molding of the contemporary German civilization."[214] For some prohibition advocates the problem also extended to the children, who continued to practice the customs of their immigrant parents.[215] Thus immigrant groups

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[212] *The American Issue*, as quoted in Margot Opdycke Lamme, "Tapping into War: Leveraging World War I in the Drive for a Dry Nation," *American Journalism, 21* (4), 80-81.

[213] "National German-American Alliance: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Judiciary, United States Senate, Sixty Fifth Congress, Second Session on 3529, a Bill to Repeal the Act Entitled "An Act to Incorporate the National German-American Alliance." United States Congress, Committee on the Judiciary." Published by Government Press Office, 1918, 21-23. http://books.google.com/books?id=FUUTAAAAYAAJ&output=html (Accessed January 21, 2009).

[214] Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Failure of German Americanism," *The Atlantic Monthly* (July, 1916) (Boston and New York: The Atlantic Monthly Company, 1916), 13-18.

maintaining foreign traditions in America undermined modern American culture and identity.

Middle-class Americans particularly resented that German-Americans continued to use the German language, turning Germans into the target of what Frederick C. Luebke calls superpatriotism.[216] German-Americans made no secret about the importance of maintaining their language. In 1909 German-American professor Albert Bernhardt Faust emphasized "the preservation of the German language in the next generation has always been a fond aim of the German immigrant."[217] A letter to the journal *The Mixer and the Server* accused German-Americans of refusing to learn the English language, and at the same time, described what made nativist Americans resentful of German-American neighborhoods:

> The Germans live in segregated districts, where they speak the tongue of their fatherland. Their shop as a rule, handle only German goods, the shopkeepers speaking only German. Parochial schools have their German classes. And hundreds of school transacts all their businesses in their tongue. THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IS ONLY A SECONDARY CONSIDERATION![218]

This attack campaign on the use of the German language had irreparable consequences for the continued use of German in the United States. Don Heinrich Tolzmann points out that by the end of the war, "twenty-six states had passed laws against the use of German" and "some of these [states] forbade the use of German on the street, in public meetings, or on the telephone."[219] Thus the German language became an impediment for German-Americans in their acculturation process toward modern American identity.[220]

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215 Harry Sheldon Warner, *Social Welfare and the Liquor Problem and How They Relate to its Solution* (Chicago: Intercollegiate Prohibition Association, 1916), 162-163.

216 Frederick C. Luebke, *Germans in the New World*: *Essays in the History of Immigration* (Urbana and Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1990), 35-41. Luebke uses the term *superpatriotism* to describe an intense national sentiment among reformers.

217 Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), 151.

218 National Labor Publicity Organization. "Teuton Authorities Show How Junkerdom Planned to Germanize America," *The Mixer and the Server,* XXVII no. 1. (January, 15, 1918), 28-29.

219 Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience* (New York: Humanity Books, 2000), 284.

220 Grove, 82-83.

America's middle class also resented German-Americans' indifference towards American institutions, such as voting.[221] Nativists perceived the newcomers' lack of interest as a disregard for the American ideals making German-Americans unfit for what they considered genuine "American" society.[222] Middle class voters often accused German-Americans of utilizing their voting rights only when it served their self interests, thus abusing their suffrage rights and their citizenship. This perception was popular among politicians, particularly when they analyzed the requirements for the American naturalization process. A 'true' American had to understand and participate in this country's politics at all times, not just when it served personal interests.[223] German-American immigrants were expected to adapt to the American political system. But this process that was intended to assimilate them to middle class ideals, had obviously failed. Americans had made a mistake in conceiving "the naïve idea that the mere process of taking out papers" would transform "an ignorant alien into an intelligent citizen."[224]

Perhaps what irritated members of the American middle class most about immigrant culture was their relationship with drinking. Many Americans complained that newly arrived Europeans had a peculiar relationship with liquor inculcated into their culture and they continued to explore this relationship even as they settled in America.[225] Consequently, a stereotype that characterized immigrants (and Germans in particular) as drinkers emerged among middle class American circles. Period journals portrayed German-Americans as "insoluble lumps," who were "wet by nature."[226] German-American customs made some members of the middle class conclude that German-born Americans and their opposition to the prohibition movement represented "a lower civilization against the Anglo-American element."[227] In conjunction with the dislike for the immigrant drinking customs, resentment for failing to learn the English language as well as American political values, reflected the antithesis of the modern American middle class construct, and made reformers even

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221 "The Spirit of the West," 658.

222 Niebuhr, 14.

223 Deets Picket, Clarence True Wilson and Ernest Dailey Smith, *The Cyclopedia of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals* (New York and Boston: The Methodist Book Concern, 1917), 216.

224 Oakley, 170.

225 Rosenzweig, 51.

226 Oakley, 171.

227 Picket, et. al., 168.

more vigilant in the quest to assimilate German-Americans to mainstream American society.

The self-serving nature of the middle class prohibition movement is obvious in their description of the hazards that liquor consumption represented. "Liquor," one of the newspapers of the Anti-Saloon League observed, "rendered thousands of men inefficient."[228] The newspaper connected liquor and social problems such as looting and poverty; both of which were in clear opposition to modern middle class standards. Linking the vice of drinking and crime came to be especially important in the propaganda campaign launched by the Anti-Saloon League of America. During their crusade to achieve a prohibition amendment in Ohio, the Anti-Saloon league produced an advertisement depicting men coming through a brewery's drainage system slapped with the labels of disease, vice, crime and poverty. The argument appealed even to some of the most progressive elements in American society, including union leaders who emphasized the importance of being sober and of "bourgeois standards of living."[229] Subsequently, John B. Lennon, treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, proclaimed that the union "must show the working men how this [liquor] business stands… against the shorter working day, how it jeopardizes the continuity of their employment…and how it attacks…industrially all things that are essential to his well being."[230]

American patriotism was a middle class value that American leaders and intellectuals sought to emphasize among German-Americans during the war. Conservative journalist Oswald Garrison Villard proclaimed, "[j]ust as the Germans, we believe in the supremacy of our ideals and of our form of civilization as above any other."[231] In order to ensure this vision of middle class patriotism, American leaders issued an ultimatum to the foreign born population: choose between supporting American ideals or remain outside the American cultural mainstream. Theodore Roosevelt emphasized that it was imperative for new immigrants to leave their culture behind and become American. He explained that there was no room for those who retained their old culture

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228 *The American Issue*, Ohio Edition, August 3, 1917, quoted in Peter H. Odegard, *Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928). 70.

229 Taillon, 326.

230 Rumbarger, 163-164.

231 Oswald Garrison Villard, *The United States and Its Foreign Born Citizens: Address Before the Laurel Hill Association* (New York: Nation Press, 1915), 16. http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/4907754?n=1&s=4 (Accessed February 24, 2009).

in the new political life of the country.[232] Villard also took direct aim at German-Americans who defended their drinking customs on the grounds of personal liberty, and urged them to accept the "absolute equality of Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence."[233] Purley Baker, one of the leaders of the Anti-Saloon League of America, contrasted the effects of liquor with everything that he conceived as "ideal" for American society. Their opposition to drinking, he said was "buttressed in the fundamental truth that alcohol is against religion, morality, integrity, efficiency, and everything what is good."[234] Sobriety, like patriotism, became essential for the improvement of American society.

Members of the prohibition movement argued that the question of temperance was also a question of national stability; an issue that they presented to the public as another front in the war. William Jennings Bryan suggested that temperance was important because the country needed "young men with clear and quick thinking brains, men with steady nerves and muscles."[235] Likewise, Eugene N. Foss, Governor of Massachusetts, remarked that the social stability of the nation and its economic prosperity depended in very large part on "intelligence and sobriety."[236] While promoting prohibition in Ohio, the Anti-Saloon League emphasized that other states had already passed prohibition, associating temperance with "more and larger bank accounts; more sales of luxuries and necessities, more homebuilding."[237] The benefits of sobriety had moved the prohibition movement to envision a total social transformation that would spread middle-class values and redeem the country in the process.

The American middle class saw the existence of a segment of the population with alien cultural practices as a threat to the *status quo* that prevailed in American society. Indeed, the liquor question represented only the start of the offense against of [omit 'of'] German-American

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232 Theodore Roosevelt quoted in Joseph Bucklin Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Time Shown in His Own Letters* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1920), 410.

233 Villard, 23.

234 Purley Baker, "The General Superintendent Address," quoted in Jerry Lien, *The Speechmaking of the Anti-Saloon League of America* PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1969, 279.

235 William Jennings Bryan quoted in *The Literary Digest*, May 26, 1916.

236 The Anti-Saloon League of America, *Proceedings, Sixteenth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America,* Atlantic City, New Jersey, July 6-9, 1915 (Richmond, IN: S. E. Nicholson for the League, 1915), quoted in Rumbarger, 175.

237 The Anti-Saloon League of America, "Why America Went Dry: Prohibition Brought Prosperity," http://www.wpl.lib.oh.us/AntiSaloon/pmaterial/fliers/ (Accessed on January 21, 2009).

cultural practices. Middle class America claimed that alien cultural practices damaged the social fabric of the United States. Moreover, as the German-American electorate continued to grow, middle class America feared a potential challenge to the control of national politics. But perhaps the growth of the German-American community and their association with the crisis in Europe represented the greatest threat to the American establishment.

With the demographic increase of German-Americans in the United States, the American middle class panicked over what it perceived as a potential shift in cultural hegemony. Middle class Americans believed that the spread of German *Kultur* (culture) had the underlying purpose of acquiring social and political power. German-Americans, not only continued the use of their language but they actually organized amongst themselves to promote German culture and enhance their solidarity. As a result, German-Americans were described in popular discourse as being "clannish" and were criticized for forming clubs, social organizations, and reading classes that were conducted in German. Middle-class America saw a potential cultural threat everywhere. In a letter sent to *The Journal and the Mixer*, a subscriber accused those practicing German culture of being a part of a "carefully thought out plan to Germanize this nation and cement the hold which the Fatherland keeps on its loyal subjects in this country."[238] The *Scribner's Magazine* was alarmed when it learned that "the Star-Spangled Banner was sung in German in at least one public school" and asked the public if the singing of "Die Wacht am Rhein" (a patriotic song en vogue in Germany at the time) in a foreign language would be tolerated in Germany.[239]

The American middle class increasingly connected the spread of German *Kultur* in America with international developments, particularly with the emergence of Germany as a world power. They believed that German-Americans could be part of a fifth-column in the United States that was undermining the local social and political system in favor of the fatherland. One conservative newspaper suggested that seeing "the German-American crowds" satisfied the Kaiser who recognized "the grip that Germany had on America."[240] "Grip" translated into the control of more specific things. The teaching of the German language, for example,

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238 "Teuton Authorities Show How Junkerdom Planned to Germanize America," in *The Mixer and the Server,* 28.

239 *Scribner's Magazine,* 659.

240 Chaplain H. E. Eountree, "Booze is Anti-American and Pro-German," in *The Herald of Gospel Liberty*, (New York: Christian Publishers Association, 1918), 610.

was seen by many members of the mainstream culture as an effort to enhance control over the education system.[241] The spread of German *Kultur*, however, was feared in the political arena, where, as a result of the increase in their electorate, German-Americans were seeking to make their voice heard on matters that concerned them.

Middle class America feared the increasing political capital that German-Americans were acquiring. From the first phase of the war in Europe, German-Americans had become more united and pressured President Wilson to maintain a position of neutrality in the conflict.[242] Likewise, when tensions began to develop between Germany and the United States, German-Americans responded *en bloc* to the attacks by conservative sectors of society. Faust, for example, stated that in every city with a large German population, "the puritanic [sic] found themselves revoked at the polls whenever they attempted legislation restricting what the Germans believes his freedom of choice [in regard to alcohol]."[243] Prohibition, although it was probably the most significant, was only one of the many cultural attacks that prompted German-Americans to go to the polls in increasing numbers. In 1909 the evangelical pastor Howard B. Grose expressed his frustration as he described how German-Americans increasingly shaped the political agenda in many American cities.[244] Expressing similar fears regarding German-American acquisition of political capital, prohibitionist Charles Stelzle, lamented that "that somehow this country has been overrun by foreigners."[245]

Middle-class America construed the new unity of German-Americans as evidence of their disloyalty to basic American values. President Woodrow Wilson set the tone, when his 1915 State of the Union address alluded indirectly to German-Americans by proclaiming that there were "citizens of the United States, born under other flags" who "have poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of the national life."[246] Wayne Wheeler, leader of the Anti-Saloon League of America,

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241 United States Senate, Sixty-Fifth Congress. Second Session on 3529, a Bill to Repeal the Act Entitled, "An Act to Incorporate the National German-American Alliance," United States Congress, Committee on the Judiciary," 22.

242 Luebke, 126-129.

243 Faust, 146.

244 Howard Benjamin Grose, *Aliens or Americans* (New York: Young People's Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada, 1909), 248-249.

245 Charles Stelzle, *Why Prohibition!* (New York: George H. Dorian Publishing, 1918), 175.

246 Woodrow Wilson, "Third Annual Address Delivered at Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress, December, 7, 1915," in President Wilson's Foreign Policy: Messages, Addresses and Papers, ed. James Brown Scott (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 147.

expressed in 1918 that the "disloyalty" of the German brewers and the saloon men was "a challenge to the patriotism of every good citizen in America."[247] Similarly, Villard worried that the affection German-Americans felt toward their native land "seduced them … to use their power in American politics for foreign ends."[248] Perhaps the more radical statement came directly from President Wilson himself who emphasized the danger that an unassimilated foreign community represented in times of war:

> I want to say—I cannot say too often—any man who carries a hyphen about him carries a dagger, which he is ready to plunge into the vitals of the republic. If I can catch a man with a hyphen in this great contest, I know I will have got an enemy of the republic.[249]

In addition, the Anti-Saloon League of America began to speculate about links between German-American organizations and potential German spies. The fact that these associations had exerted political pressure on the American government to remain neutral in the European conflict made them suspect. When prosecutors from the government found evidence to support the assertion that German-American clubs supported political candidates financially, *The New York Times* labeled it "an astounding chapter in the continual story of German conspiracy against the United States."[250]

The ratification of the Prohibition Amendment in 1919 signified the triumph of the American middle class over what it considered alien and dangerous. Mainstream America had ratified its hegemony over American values. As Joseph R. Gusfield argues, the ratification of Prohibition symbolized "the superior power and prestige of the old middle class in American society."[251] Some of its members hoped to continue the efforts to "educate" those who needed it; *The American Issue*, for example, asked the supporters of American prohibition to think of the "foreign born" population groups who "must be educated and Americanized." Likewise, it appealed to prohibitionists to think of the "twelve million negroes [sic] …[who must be] brought up in good American ideals," and many "native

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247 *The New York Times*, February 4, 1918.

248 Villard, 4.

249 Woodrow Wilson, *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, ed. Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925-1927), 6.

250 *The New York Times*, March 8, 1916, quoted in Alfred Emmanuel Smith, *The New Outlook*, 117 (September-December, 1917), 369.

251 Gusfield, 122-123.

white persons who must be either persuaded or restrained into being law-abiding citizens."[252] The recent successes had invigorated prohibitionists and they were ready to take the campaign abroad. William Jennings Bryan, urged his fellow prohibitionists to turn their energies "to other countries until the whole world is brought to understand that alcohol is man's greatest enemy."[253]

The campaign of cultural repression against German-Americans worked for the American middle class in the short run but ultimately it harmed American diversity. Not only did the prohibition amendment to the Constitution pass in 1919 and go into effect the following January, the movement succeeded in eradicating many ethnic traditions among German Americans. Because of the war, many German-Americans forcibly assimilated to the mainstream culture. They began hiding their identities, changing their names, speaking German only in the privacy of their own homes and celebrated holidays out of the public view.[254] When the necessary thirty-six states ratified the constitutional Amendment, the repression of German-American drinking customs saw a new apex. "Gone were the family beer gardens, sitting rooms, and nickel beer, which had brought people together in community. No longer did they serve as the centers of social, civic, and business life."[255]

The anti-German rhetoric that emerged from the prohibition movement during World War I had roots that went much deeper than just the geopolitical situation of 1914. While the war generated patriotism among Americans, the correlation between patriotism and issues such as prohibition emerged from the intolerance of mainstream America. [256] Members of the movement sought to expand modern American middle class values by imposing them on the new members of American society and German-American identity was trampled in this process. Assimilation into modern middle class cultural standards became the *sine qua non* in defining a true American.

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[252] *The American Issue*, January 17, 1920, quoted in Margot Opdycke Lamme, "Tapping into War: Leveraging World War I in the Drive for a Dry Nation," *American Journalism*, 21, No. 4, 82.

[253] William Jennings Bryan, quoted in Edward Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years that Changed America* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996), 73-74.

[254] Gary Gerstle, "The Immigrant as a Threat to American Security: A Historical Perspective," in *From Arrival to Incorporation: Migrants to the U.S. in a Global Era*, ed. Elliot R. Barkan, Hasia Diner, and Alan M. Kraut (New York and London: New York University Press, 2008), 227.

[255] Tolzmann, 300.

[256] For statistics on middle-class income levels of organizations such as the Women Christian's Temperance Union see, Gusfield, 80-81.