

Prohibition, American Cultural Expansion, and the New Hegemony in the 1920s: An Interpretation

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In the 1920s American prohibitionists, through the World League against Alcoholism, sought to extend their war on liquor beyond the boundaries of the United States. Prohibitionists failed in their efforts due to anti-American sentiment, complex class and cultural opposition to prohibition, and negative reporting of the experiment with prohibition in the U.S. Nevertheless, restrictive anti-alcohol laws were introduced in a number of countries. Moreover, the efforts of American prohibitionists furthered the larger process of American cultural expansion by emphasizing achievements of the U.S. in economic modernization and technical advancement. This episode in American cultural expansion occurred with the support of anti-alcohol groups in foreign countries that embraced the message equating American reform with modernity. Prohibitionists abroad colluded in the process, thereby accepting a form of American cultural hegemony.

En 1920, par l'intermédiaire de la World League against Alcoholism, les prohibitionnistes américains se sont efforcés de pousser leur lutte contre l'alcool au-delà des frontières des États-Unis. Cependant, le sentiment anti-américain, l'opposition complexe des classes et de la culture à l'endroit de la prohibition ainsi que la mauvaise presse dont l'expérience américaine a fait l'objet ont fait échouer leurs efforts. Néanmoins, plusieurs pays ont adopté des lois restrictives contre l'alcool. Qui plus est, les efforts des prohibitionnistes américains ont favorisé l'expansion de la culture américaine en mettant en valeur les réussites des É.-U. au chapitre de la modernisation économique et de l'avancement de la technologie. Cette période d'expansion culturelle des Américains a reçu l'appui des groupes de lutte contre l'alcool à l'étranger pour qui la réforme américaine était synonyme de modernité. Les prohibitionnistes à l'étranger ont concouru à ce processus, acceptant ainsi une forme d'hégémonie culturelle américaine.

IN HIS "LEGEND of Isolationism in the 1920s", the late William Appleman Williams touched off an important debate on the nature of twentieth-century

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American power. The eminent diplomatic historian and mentor to the New Left persuasively challenged the conventional wisdom in the interpretation of American foreign policy. Despite formal isolationism, the twenties were marked in Williams's view by political involvement in European affairs entailed by a policy of economic expansionism. Building on this insight, a variety of revisionists emphasized the struggle for economic supremacy in the 1920s and so touched on the challenge that America's muscle-flexing posed to the old British imperial order. By the 1970s the interpretation of the United States as an economically expansionist power in the 1920s had become standard wisdom. Joan Hoff-Wilson depicted this stance in her own interpretation of the 1920s as "independent internationalism".

This revisionism remains influential today in American historiography; yet, viewed from the other side of the Atlantic, the picture seems different. British scholars, and some North Americans trained in Britain, have followed the lead of D. Cameron Watt and emphasized continuity in international relations in the 1920s. The critics charge that the power of the United States has been exaggerated in retrospect. They point to the return of isolationism in the 1930s, continued British imperial prestige and naval power in the 1920s, and British resistance to American encroachments. According to such critics as Canadian scholar B. J. McKercher, enhanced economic power in international relations did not translate into political clout.¹

Like the supporters of American revisionism, the critics rarely look at cultural relations. The cultural impact of the United States has mostly been studied by scholars outside the foreign policy fraternity. Historians of film, for example, both in the United States and around the world, have given considerable attention to the impact of "Hollywood".² Not only did the adage that "trade follows the film" have some truth; American movies dominated the screens in many countries and constituted, some nationalists felt, a menace to the integrity of the moral character of the nation itself.³

1 William Appleman Williams, "The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920's", *Science and Society*, vol. 28 (1954), pp. 1-20; Joan Hoff-Wilson, *American Business and Foreign Policy, 1920-1933* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1971), pp. xi-xvii; B. J. C. McKercher, ed., *Anglo-American Relations in the 1920s: The Struggle for Supremacy* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

2 See Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Random House, 1975), chap. 13; Kristin Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment: America in the World Film Market, 1907-34* (London: BFI Publishing, 1985); Diane Collins, *Hollywood Down Under* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1988); and, most recently, Ian Jarvie, *Hollywood's Overseas Campaign: The North Atlantic Movie Trade, 1920-1950* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

3 Sklar, *Movie-Made America*, p. 216; David Strauss, "The Rise of Anti-Americanism in France: French Intellectuals and the American Film Industry, 1927-1932", *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 10 (1977), pp. 753-759; Roger Openshaw, " 'The Glare of Broadway': Some New Zealand Reactions to the Perceived Americanisation of Youth", *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, vol. 10 (July 1991), pp. 50-51.

The argument for a shift in the balance of power in world affairs is much stronger if material of this kind is included. One author who has made a valiant effort to take account of these changes is Emily Rosenberg. Her *Spreading the American Dream* sketched the pattern of American cultural expansion and set the stage for future research.⁴ Rosenberg's survey has its own problems, however. Rosenberg tends to concentrate on the development of American policy around the idea of "liberal internationalism" or "liberal developmentalism". She seeks to understand the origins of the top-heavy American power of the post-1945 period and the shortcomings of its liberal interventionist foreign policy. Consequently, she is concerned with the expansion rather than the reception of American influence. Most important, Rosenberg does not treat the issue of the impact of foreign reactions on U.S. cultural expansion itself. Thus we get no sense of the development of American policy as a product of reciprocal influences. America expands; the world receives. As a general survey on a much longer period from the 1890s to 1945, it is not surprising that Rosenberg fails to deal with all aspects of cultural expansion in the 1920s. The range of institutions involved in the creation of global cultural, social, and intellectual links was far wider and deeper than she could possibly suggest in so brief a span.⁵

Cultural expansion is an even more important issue in understanding the 1920s than Rosenberg's work indicates. Because she looks at the issue in terms of American expansion, she does not address the issue of hegemony. The importance of this tricky concept all depends on how hegemony is defined. International relations experts still use the term, whether they support Paul Kennedy's analysis of the "rise and fall of great powers" or not, as a virtual synonym for dominance. Power may not flow purely from the barrel of a gun, but the attributes of state power such as a world-wide territorial presence, diplomatic resources, and naval and economic power are rated very highly by the practitioners of international relations, even those who claim to be writing a "new international history".⁶

An alternative and persuasive tradition originates in the work of Antonio Gramsci and his treatment of hegemony as a relational phenomenon grounded in notions of consent to class rule. I am attracted to this formulation to

4 Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), especially chap. 6.

5 See also Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919-1933* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), for an excellent survey that weaves cultural, political, and economic influences together.

6 Representative selections include McKercher, *Anglo-American Relations*; and D. C. Watt, *Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). An excellent survey of recent American work is Charles Maier, "Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations", in Michael Kammen, ed., *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 355-387. Maier emphasizes that "Rankean exegis still forms the basis of the craft ... [of] international history" (p. 357).

elucidate the problem of cultural expansion abroad because hegemony understood in this way involves reception and reciprocal interaction. Cultural expansion is not a one-way street, but is a process conditioned by foreign reception and resistance, as well as foreign influences on the development of American culturally expansionist policies and institutions. Though applied most often to study the relations between social classes in different nation-states — slaves, workers, women — Gramsci's now much-quoted formulation in his "Americanism and Fordism" was addressed to the creation of a new kind of international cultural hegemony in the form of "Fordist" production techniques and their psychological and social concomitants.⁷ An instructive introduction to the significance of the Gramscian concept for relations between nations and peoples is the work of Giovanni Arrighi in "The Three Hegemonies of Historical Capitalism".

Working within the system of Immanuel Wallerstein, Arrighi conceptualizes in a schematic yet challenging way the changing power balance in successive international hegemonic orders within the evolving world capitalist system, from the Dutch, to the British, to the American in our time. Arrighi is particularly interested in specifying what is new in each order. In the third or American hegemony, he emphasizes the importance of two traits: U.S. ideological anti-colonialism as a theme; and the development of supranational institutions through multinational corporations and governmental bodies. To the argument that the American experience merely duplicates the British dominance, Arrighi answers that the United States has gone much further in accommodating demands of global decolonization and championing a formal self-determination contained in Wilsonian liberalism; moreover, the supranational aspect under British imperial hegemony exemplified in the gold standard was much more attenuated and lacked "an autonomous power to override the interstate system". The validity of these sweeping assertions is open to qualification, but Arrighi is more vulnerable still from another viewpoint. Reflecting the world systems approach, he does not look beyond the political and economic aspects of hegemony. Cultural and social non-governmental influences are a most important third part of the equation, which he neglects totally.⁸

7 James Joll, *Gramsci* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977), pp. 108–109; Antonio Gramsci, "Americanism and Fordism", *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quentin Hoard and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds. (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 279–318, 350. On cultural hegemony, see also T. L. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities", *American Historical Review*, vol. 90 (1985), pp. 567–593.

8 Giovanni Arrighi, "The Three Hegemonies of Historical Capitalism", *Review*, vol. 8 (Summer 1990), pp. 365–408, quote at 402. Thomas J. McCormick, "World Systems", *Journal of American History*, vol. 77 (June 1990), pp. 125–132, also treats U.S. foreign relations illuminatingly as part of a hegemonic system, in an argument indebted to the world systems tradition of Wallerstein, but does not explore the implications for culture. He also appears to neglect the reciprocal relations of consent in an international order.

Theories about the geo-political co-ordinates of the new kind of hegemony are valuable, but studies are desperately needed of the specific operation of hegemony in the social and cultural realms. Questions are also raised about the very nature of the new hegemony when cultural influences are considered. I want to focus here on the 1920s, the era in which the product of these longer-term changes became so clearly manifest, and at one neglected aspect of that era. Despite its prominence as an issue in the United States, the existing studies of American cultural expansion ignore prohibition. This may reflect the fact that the goals of the “drys” on the international level do not demonstrate a triumphant American influence, but instead severe conflict over Americanization abroad.⁹ Though World Prohibition was an ignominious failure, the patterns revealed in the drive for a dry world illustrate the contradictory nature of American cultural expansion and have important implications for any theory about hegemony.

One way for historians to approach this topic would be to investigate a local case study on the impact of American cultural expansion abroad. While I draw on material from a range of cases, particularly from the British Empire, where the shared English language made American penetration immediate and perhaps easier, working out the framework of hegemony in particular locations is not my major objective. There is a pressing and prior need to understand the larger global pattern of prohibitionist initiatives and influence. It is first necessary to sketch the outline of work done in international prohibition after 1919, because the extent and impact of this work has hardly been recognized, let alone understood, in its broader implications for the possible and highly contentious “Americanization” of the world.

The Drive for World Prohibition

The ink was scarcely dry on the signing of the wartime prohibition law in 1918 when the leaders of the pre-eminent United States temperance societies intensified their calls for world prohibition. A prominent Anti-Saloon League (ASL) official, Ernest H. Cherrington, formed, through joint action of the ASL of America and the Dominion Temperance Alliance of Canada, the World League against Alcoholism in 1919. Cherrington himself was appointed secretary. The World League held international conferences in Toronto in 1922 and in Winona Lake, Indiana, in 1927; it opened an office in London to co-ordinate European work with Henry Beach Carré, a Louisiana-born Tennessee clergyman, as manager; and it sent a variety of Anti-Saloon League officials on international missions, including the legendary William E. “Pussyfoot” Johnson. The League established a complicated structure of organizational committees and affiliated organizations that

⁹ This lacuna on prohibition stands out in the work of Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, and Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion*.

included Robert Hercod's International Bureau against Alcohol based in Lausanne, Switzerland. The latter organization concentrated on the provision and dissemination of educational and scientific information concerning the use of and opposition to alcohol in European countries.¹⁰

The initial enthusiasm for foreign action sprang from wartime euphoria and the interventionist "idealism" generated by the war. Howard Russell, one of the founders and a prominent official of the ASL, wrote of international prohibition as "the world-wide campaign to carry this blessing of freedom throughout the world". The example of wartime restrictions imposed in foreign countries on the supply of liquor also served to goad American prohibitionists into further action, lest they lose international leadership on the liquor issue. An important early architect of a constitutional prohibition amendment, Democratic Congressman Richmond P. Hobson, told Anna Gordon of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in September 1915 that "The action of the governments in Europe far more drastic than anything we are dreaming of, has prepared the public mind for being focussed in this way."¹¹ In a period characterized by a perceived crisis of Americanization, prohibitionists also became concerned with preempting problems of cultural diversity posed by large-scale immigration. Immigrants trained in principles of Americanism that included sober behaviour would pose no threat when they reached the United States.¹²

Yet prohibition was not, as is sometimes stated, an "isolationist effort to cleanse American society" of the saloon. This was only one theme in the prohibitionist repertoire. Prohibitionists had long viewed national victory as the path to global victory.¹³ Cherrington had announced the goal of world prohibition in 1913, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union had done the same in 1911. A banner headline in the WCTU's *Union Signal* for 1918 stated "World democracy demands world prohibition", but this was

10 Randall Jimerson, Francis X. Blouin, and Charles A. Isetts, eds., *Guide to the Microfilm Edition of Temperance and Prohibition Papers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977), pp. 205–207; Susan Brook, "The World League against Alcoholism: The Attempt to Export an American Experience" (M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1972), especially pp. 39–40, 60, 65; Robert Hercod, "Alcoholism as an International Problem", *British Journal of Inebriety*, vol. 23 (January 1926), pp. 107–126.

11 Library of Congress, Richmond P. Hobson Papers, box 3, Howard Russell to Richmond P. Hobson, January 17, 1919, and Hobson to Anna Gordon, September 2, 1915; also "Drink and Preparedness: An Interview with Richmond Hobson", *Christian Herald*, May 3, 1916, p. 556. See also Andrew Sinclair, *Prohibition: The Era of Excess* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1962), p. 53.

12 Ella Boole, "Americanization the Imperative Need of the Hour", *Union Signal*, June 6, 1918, p. 5; *The Baptist*, quoted in *Union Signal*, September 19, 1925, p. 9: "there will come a time when America will refuse to keep on bearing the burdens created by European insanities. And no European vice breeds greater misery than alcoholism. ... Most of the anti-prohibition sentiment in this country comes from Europe."

13 Cf. Lawrence Spinelli, *Dry Diplomacy: The United States, Great Britain, and Prohibition* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Books, 1989), p. 155.

more than the product of wartime enthusiasm. The *Union Signal* quoted the 1911 proclamation of the WCTU's late president Lillian M. N. Stevens:

In the name of the World's and National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, we hereby make this proclamation for a great crusade to carry the vital truth to the people of all lands, and through them to place prohibition in the organic law of all nations and ultimately in the organic law of the world.¹⁴

When smuggling challenged the effectiveness of national prohibition, the dries added practical to ideological reasons for imposing American-style prohibition on the world. According to Cherrington, international prohibition would "free this great international boundary line of ours from the Rum Row and the Smuggling Row" and

take the fight to the enemy ... in order that we may keep this rapidly developing international liquor traffic truly defending itself in the many countries of Europe ... instead of permitting that international battle line to concentrate its power and its money and its influence to break down prohibition right here in America.

Still, in the strategic thinking of prohibitionist ideologues, realism and idealism remained mixed throughout the campaign. Even in 1925, as smuggling seriously threatened the dry heartland of world prohibition, longer-term ideological goals and practical considerations were both emphasized. Cherrington cited the evangelical imperative of stopping the spread of liquor in Africa, which "threatened to debauch these people who have been under the influence of the missionaries". This was an important and underlying aim in American prohibitionist diplomacy dating from before World War I, when prohibitionists repeatedly tried to use American and British foreign policy to stop the export of alcohol to the underdeveloped world.¹⁵ Cherrington also stressed the inherent concept of altruism, with which prohibition was allegedly suffused. The anti-alcohol crusade was "a movement with one specific purpose, and that to help the other fellow". Global benevolence in this interpretation required American moral and material support for prohibition abroad.¹⁶

If today the goals of Lillian Stevens and Ernest Cherrington seem discredited and impractical, international conditions between 1917 and 1919 were as propitious as they would ever be for a world-wide prohibition drive. Wartime enthusiasm had had an effect on liquor and anti-liquor forces in

14 *Union Signal*, September 19, 1918, p. 1, quoting from Lillian Stevens's proclamation of September 10, 1911.

15 For examples, see Wilbur Crafts, *Intoxicating Drinks and Drugs in All Lands and Times*, 10th rev. ed. (Washington: International Reform Bureau, 1909), pp. 225-226 and *passim*; Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), chap. 7.

16 *Union Signal*, December 5, 1925, p. 6.

many parts of Europe. Even the French had banned absinth during World War I, "the sole case of prohibition of a drink in France".¹⁷ Lloyd George, in a much publicized statement, had declared drink a greater enemy of the British nation than the Kaiser's hordes, while his foe, Germany, had also restricted brewing.¹⁸ Some countries went much further. Iceland had enacted prohibition as early as 1912, and Finland would soon do so in 1921. Norway had established a partial prohibition by outlawing alcohol over 12 per cent in 1917; a pro-prohibition vote was taken by plebiscite in 1919, and permanent legislation was enacted in 1921.¹⁹ Canada had enacted wartime prohibition in 1916, and wartime liquor restrictions continued in Britain and in Australasia. Local option sentiment was growing in New Zealand, four of the six Australian states enacted six-o'clock closing during the war, and another introduced nine-o'clock closing, partly as a measure to restrict heavy drinking among the troops, but mainly as part of an opportunistic drive towards local option and then prohibition. In the key states of Victoria, South Australia, and New South Wales, the legislation was not rescinded until the 1950s and 1960s.²⁰ Concern over liquor consumption was thus not a purely American aberration: it was part of an international movement.

In large measure, the World League that emerged from these international collaborative efforts has been depicted as the brainchild of Ernest Cherrington. Other Anti-Saloon League leaders, notably General Counsel and National Legislative Superintendent Wayne B. Wheeler, saw the WLAA as "too grand a scheme" and "impractically idealistic". According to historian K. Austin Kerr, the ASL critics of Cherrington's schemes followed a narrowly political (and legalistic) approach that ignored the latter's emphasis upon education and propaganda.²¹ In Kerr's view, the World League never amounted to much "in part because it had powerful opponents within its parent organization". Faced with greater financial demands because of the problems of enforcement at home, the WLAA was reduced to "little more than an office in London with a single representative". Other historians have dismissed the League as "American dominated".²²

17 Patricia Prestwich, *Drink and the Politics of Social Reform: Antialcoholism in France since 1870* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1988), p. 128.

18 Sir Arthur Newsholme, "Some International Aspects of Alcoholism with Special Reference to Prohibition in America", *British Journal of Inebriety*, vol. 19 (January 1922), p. 99.

19 Karen Larsen, *A History of Norway* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950); Ernest H. Cherrington, *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem* (Westerville, Ohio: American Issue Publishing Co., 1924-1929), vol. 4, pp. 2026-2027 (hereafter *SEAP*).

20 In Tasmania it remained in force until 1938. Keith Dunstan, *Wowsers* (1968; Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1974), pp. 109-132; Walter Phillips, "Six O'Clock Swill: The Introduction of Early Closing of Hotel Bars in Australia", *Historical Studies*, no. 75 (October 1980), p. 250-266.

21 K. Austin Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 220. Yet Wheeler still made temperance addresses in Scotland and England during a tour of Europe in 1924. *SEAP*, vol. 6, p. 2833.

22 Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition*, pp. 281, 246. See also Brook, "The World League against Alcoholism", pp. 39-40, 60, 65, and *passim*.

The international activities of the League must not be sold short by looking at them in purely institutional terms or in isolation from sister and brother organizations, however. The export of prohibition was not dominated by any one organization, nor was the process one-way. It is necessary to examine the propaganda efforts of the various individuals who travelled abroad under the League's auspices. These efforts were both broader and more intense than has previously been recognized. There is also a need to look at the interlocking activities of other organizations, because it has been wrongly assumed that the League dominated the work for world prohibition. The most important of these bodies, because of its world-wide links, was the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. When in 1918 Gordon announced world prohibition by 1925 as a WCTU goal, the organization had already been campaigning internationally for temperance legislation through the World's WCTU, which Frances Willard had officially founded in 1883.²³ The organization peaked at more than 760,000 dues-paying members in 1927. The WCTU had an international network of organizational affiliates and bodies of loyal supporters in more than 40 countries. In the Anglo-Saxon world, its support levels were impressive, with 136,000 dues-paying members in England in 1918 and 1919 at the start of the world campaign, 348,593 in the United States, 9,385 in the relatively small country of Australia, and sizeable affiliates also in Scotland, Canada, New Zealand, and Sweden.²⁴ Now in the hour of national victory, the WCTU joined forces with Cherrington. Indeed, without the support of this and other organizations such as the Good Templars in Britain and Sweden and the U.K. Alliance in Britain, the WLAA could not have operated at all. Cherrington himself acknowledged in 1920 the role of the World's WCTU in providing a model — and the very inspiration — for his drive for world prohibition.²⁵

The independent role of foreign temperance reformers in the reception of American influences was evident in the case of Guy Hayler's World Prohibition Federation (WPF).²⁶ In the United States, the WPF was affiliated not with the World League but with the International Reform Bureau of Washington, D.C., established by Wilbur Crafts, a close ally of the WCTU in the war against narcotics before World War I. One Australian Methodist newspaper announced that "the honour of giving vitality to the idea" of "world-wide prohibition" belonged to Hayler. Closely allied also with the Independent Order of Good Templars, a much older organization than the ASL with trans-national affiliations going back to the 1860s, Hayler's World League

23 This is the year that the WCTU recognizes; actually the organization was effectively launched in 1884 with the beginning of a round-the-world missionary trip by Mary C. Leavitt.

24 Willard Memorial Library, Evanston, Ill., World's WCTU Files, Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 31st May, 1918.

25 Ernest H. Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States* (Westerville, Ohio: American Issue Publishing Co., 1920), p. 367.

26 *SEAP*, vol. 6, p. 2916.

was founded in London in 1908, more than a decade before the WLAA was formed. Hayler was a prominent English teetotaler and from 1889 to 1907 had been General Secretary of the North of England Temperance League. The WPF was represented in 25 countries and published a quarterly *International Record* of "progress" in "world temperance". Hayler worked with the American prohibitionists and supported the goal of world prohibition, but did not subordinate his efforts to those of the WLAA. The WPF had a broader agenda that included all drugs of addiction, not just alcohol. Hayler took advantage of the fact that the United States was not a member of the League of Nations to seize a leadership role in agitating the issue of narcotic trafficking and the smuggling of alcohol in Europe from non-prohibitionist to prohibitionist countries.²⁷ Hayler also organized a European committee under the leadership of French anti-alcohol reformer Dr. Paul Maurice Légrain, who had focused the French campaign on the issue of treatment of alcoholism rather than prohibition.²⁸ Nonetheless, the World Prohibition Federation believed that the ultimate solution to the alcohol problem was "Total Prohibition by the will of the people", and this tied its efforts in the 1920s to the propaganda war over the 18th Amendment. In keeping with this objective, the Federation adopted in 1921 the slogan of "a dry Europe by 1930".²⁹

Organizations not overtly devoted to world prohibition also helped. Most effective and noticeable was the Scientific Temperance Federation (STF). Affiliated in the 1920s with both the WCTU and the ASL, the Federation sponsored much international work under executive secretary Cora Stoddard. Stoddard was appointed a member of the executive committee of the WLAA in 1919, attended the International Congresses against Alcoholism in 1920, 1923, and 1928, and spread Scientific Temperance Instruction (STI) literature to schools in many foreign countries. She saw this work as laying the ground for later prohibitionist activity.³⁰

The STI literature was not ideologically neutral despite its title. By the 1920s, the STF had shifted from its pre-war emphasis on the ostensibly

27 *The Methodist*, March 8, 1919; *SEAP*, vol. 3, pp. 1341–1343; "Alcoholism and the League of Nations", *White Ribbon Signal*, July 12, 1926, p. 2; Guy Hayler, "The New Europe and Prohibition", *Grit*, December 27, 1923, p. 10. See also *International Record* reports in *Grit*, February 14, 1924, p. 10.

28 On Légrain, see *SEAP*, vol. 4, p. 1530; on the World Prohibition Federation's international conferences, see *White Ribbon Signal*, June 12, 1923, p. 4; E. L. G. Hohenthal, "My Impressions of Seventeenth International Anti-Alcohol Congress", *Grit*, February 28, 1924, p. 6.

29 *White Ribbon Signal*, February 3, 1928, p. 3; "Guy Hayler: Veteran in the Cause", *White Ribbon Signal*, May 1, 1935, p. 82; *SEAP*, vol. 3, p. 1206, and vol. 6, p. 2916.

30 For example, see Scientific Temperance Federation Series, Ohio Historical Society (hereafter STF Series, OHS), fl. 63, roll 23, Elizabeth Knox Powell (Saskatchewan WCTU) to Cora Stoddard, November 25, 1922, and January 2, 1923. See also generally STF Series, OHS, fls. 63–65 and fls. 27–36, roll 34; Jimerson, Blouin, and Isetts, *Guide*, p. 164; *Notable American Women*, vol. 3, pp. 380–381.

objective study of the physiological “effects of alcohol on the organs of the body” to stress liquor’s “effect upon work, ability and ... health”.³¹ Missionaries like Indian WCTU stalwart Joan Davis distributed STI pamphlets on “Why America Went Dry” and “Alcohol in Experience and Experiment”. It was not just “scientific” instruction in alcohol training that was conveyed but the story of American prohibition. With organized work in 18 countries together with Christian missionary support and informal work reported in many others, STI became an adjunct of the prohibition export trade.³² One Canadian STF superintendent, Elizabeth Knox Powell, revealed part of the message when she rejoiced that she held the “United States up as a great example” in STI work.³³

Just as the ASL and the WCTU had methodically prepared the way for a legislative fight in the United States between 1907 and 1917, the world prohibitionists conceived their task systematically. Maps of global expansion such as the “Wet and Dry Map of the World” were produced that depicted, sometimes very optimistically, the dry, damp, and wet areas. This approach was meant to hearten the faithful followers in the United States and also to identify the enemy abroad. Prohibitionist publications gave great space to international events, especially providing copious information on how other countries depicted and allegedly endorsed American prohibition. Judging by the quantity of material on foreign issues presented in the prohibition press, the sincerity of the dry push for world prohibition cannot be denied. International material in the years immediately after World War I was ubiquitous in prohibition papers such as the *American Issue* of the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU’s state and national organs. The WCTU even established a monthly international edition of the *Union Signal*, which highlighted in the 1920s the importance to that organization of the global drive.

The primary foreign target of American prohibitionists was Europe, because of the huge wine industry there as well as the Scotch and Irish whiskey interests.³⁴ Pussyfoot Johnson toured European countries extensively between 1919 and 1924 in his role as “Organizing Secretary” for the World League. John G. Woolley, former Prohibition party presidential candidate and celebrated orator, made a special investigative European tour in 1922, while Dr. George W. Henry went from a wartime position in Britain in the Overseas Young Men’s Christian Association to spend more than a year working for prohibition in Scotland, Ireland, and England before

31 STF Series, OHS, fl. 64, roll 23, Cora F. Stoddard to Joan Davis, August 3, 1925.

32 STF Series, OHS, fl. 64, roll 23, Joan Davis to Elizabeth Middleton, July 11, 1925, and Cora F. Stoddard to Joan Davis, August 3, 1925.

33 STF Series, OHS, fl. 63, roll 23, Elizabeth Knox Powell to Elizabeth Middleton, October 17, 1922.

34 Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Chester Harvey Rowell Correspondence, Julia Deane to Chester Rowell, December 12, 1922; WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 39, roll 19, Henry Beach Carré to ASL, Report, April 1918 to December 1919.

returning to Anti-Saloon League work in the United States.³⁵ Honorary Chairman of the ASL's National Legislative Committee and Southern Methodist Bishop James Cannon lectured in England and informed the readers of the London *Times* on "Prohibition at Work: The American Lesson to England" in 1920.³⁶ The Rev. Frederick MacMillan went from being head chaplain of the U.S. Army rest camp at Winchester, England, to "take the war path" on temperance issues among the British public.³⁷ Anna Gordon and Julia Deane of the WCTU participated along with Henry Beach Carré, Howard Russell, George Henry, and Pussyfoot Johnson in the campaign for no-licence in Scotland in 1920. Gordon and Deane took a tour of war-devastated Europe in connection with the same trip. The WLAA sent ten pastors associated with the Swedish-American temperance movement to Sweden in 1922 to fight for prohibition in the August 23rd referendum. The most prominent was the Rev. David Ostlund, who co-ordinated the activities of the Swedish temperance groups and founded the Anti-Saloon League of Sweden. Another was Severin Johnson, of New Britain, Connecticut, who represented the Scandinavian-American Good Templars in the referendum campaign. Johnson had emigrated to the United States in 1896 at the age of 21 and had been successful in business, being the secretary and treasurer of a grain and coal supply company in New Britain and a member of the Swedish-American Lutheran church. He was joined by others of Scandinavian descent from the WCTU, including Lydia Johnson of South Dakota (no relation), who was appointed "special representative of the W.C.T.U of the United States".³⁸

The Swedish campaign was of particular importance because of the presence in that country of a long tradition of regulation rather than prohibition of the liquor trade. In the 1890s, American prohibitionists had considered and rejected the ideas of public management of licensed premises established in the 1850s in Gothenburg.³⁹ This form of municipal ownership had won support from anti-prohibitionist temperance reformers in the United States in the elitist social reform group, the Committee of Fifty, formed in 1895, and American prohibitionists continued to view any variant

35 *New York Times*, November 27, 1920, p. 24; WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 39, roll 19, "Anti-Saloon League Speakers in Great Britain Enthusiastically Received", clipping, April 26, 1919.

36 See generally WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 40, roll 19; "Fact and Fiction", *The Alliance News and Temperance Reformer*, May 1920, pp. 76-77; *London Times*, April 17, 1920.

37 *New York Times*, November 27, 1920, p. 24; WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 39, roll 19, "Anti-Saloon League Speakers in Great Britain Enthusiastically Received", clipping, April 26, 1919.

38 Hartford, Conn., *Courier*, July 12, 1922, in WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 17, roll 26. On Lydia Johnson, see *Union Signal*, December 7, 1922, p. 3, and August 24-31, 1922, p. 4. Woolley died in Spain during the tour. *Union Signal*, August 24-31, 1922, p. 9.

39 Jack S. Blocker, *Retreat from Reform: The Prohibition Movement in the United States, 1890-1913* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), pp. 51, 71-72; Harry Gene Levine, "The Committee of Fifty and the Origins of Alcohol Control", *Journal of Drug Issues*, vol. 13 (Winter 1983), pp. 95-116; Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, pp. 257-263.

of the Gothenburg system as a distinct threat to the progress of prohibition in the United States and especially to its spread throughout Europe.⁴⁰ The bogey of regulated liquor motivated the focus on Sweden in 1922. As WLAA official Henry Beach Carré wrote from a trip to Norway:

Sweden is the most important of the Scandinavian Countries, its population is greater than that of Norway and Denmark combined. It is the home of the Gothenburg and Bratt systems of the control of liquor by the State, the most formidable rivals of prohibition in Scandinavia, Finland and the British Isles. The rejection of these systems in favor of prohibition would be a body blow to the liquor traffic in Europe.⁴¹

Other important audiences were sought in the British dominions, particularly New Zealand and Australia. Canada's wartime prohibition was lauded by American prohibitionists; until the backsliding of the provinces and the opposition of Quebec became clear in the early 1920s, the United States' northern neighbour was treated as a province successfully conquered.⁴² Partly for this reason, more effort went into places that had never had prohibition, such as South Africa. The South Africa Temperance Alliance tried to get a local option law passed during 1922 and 1923, and it encouraged WLAA and WCTU officials to help. To the Cape Province, for example, came Bishop Cannon, from a Christian missionary trip in the Belgian Congo. In Cape Town he addressed a public meeting in which, according to the *American Issue*, Cannon "held his audience [including the Chief Justice of the Cape Province] spellbound". Cannon's efforts supplemented those of Deborah Knox Livingston of the WCTU, who toured extensively in South Africa in 1922. At the same time, Eva C. Wheeler went to Australia and Mary Harris Armor to New Zealand, both on behalf of the WCTU.⁴³

A third area stressed was the colonial and underdeveloped world. Much missionary work to promote the temperance cause took place in India, China, and Japan, with emphasis on Scientific Temperance Instruction in missionary and government schools. Nowhere was the prohibitionist cause to receive a better welcome than in India, where it partly blended with the indigenous nationalist currents stirring against British rule. Pussyfoot John-

40 See, for example, William E. Johnson, *The Gothenberg System of Liquor Selling* (Chicago: New Voice, 1903).

41 WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 71, roll 26, Henry Beach Carré to Executive Committee of the Anti-Saloon League of America, July 12, 1919.

42 *Union Signal*, March 23, 1916, p. 3; April 16, 1916, p. 3; November 3, 1916, p. 7.

43 Richard L. Watson, Jr., *Bishop Cannon's Own Story: Life as I Have Seen It* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1955), p. 224; WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 4, roll 26, clipping, July 24, 1922m, and W. Chappell to Ernest Cherrington, July 21, 1922; Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, pp. 86, 278.

son visited India in 1921 where he generated enormous attention for the dry cause that nationalists were starting to promote.⁴⁴ Also targeted was South America. WCTU women continued earlier work done there in a variety of countries and set up bases in Argentina and Uruguay for the creation of what the WCTU missionary Hardynia Norville called "a sober South America" in a book of that title.⁴⁵ WCTU president Anna Gordon herself toured Latin America in 1921 with *Union Signal* managing editor Julia Deane, and declared optimistically that Brazil could be dry as early as 1922.⁴⁶

This was not simply a case of American imposition and cultural expansionism. The efforts of American prohibitionists were supplemented by those of supporters in all of the host countries, who frequently asked Americans to participate. Foreigners selected whom and what they wanted from American speakers, often dealing independently with the visitors apart from the WLAA and the ASL. This was a case of collaboration rather than one-sided American penetration. The Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association asked Pussyfoot Johnson to come to help in the 1920 plebiscite, against opposition from the American WLAA leaders.⁴⁷ Swedish Good Templars had invited Severin Johnson and other pastors to come to Scandinavia, and Mary Harris Armor's visit to New Zealand was at the invitation of the New Zealand WCTU president, Rachel Don.⁴⁸

The clearest example of the influence of non-Americans came after early negative reaction to the World League's campaign in Britain convinced League officials to propose closing down its British operation late in 1919. On behalf of the Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association, W. J. Allison objected "strongly" to "the proposal to withdraw Mr. Johnson and close ... the London office". This, Allison argued, would deprive the Scottish temperance forces of Johnson's "services at a time when they needed them most in challenging and in repudiating the vile assertions of the liquor press". Allison claimed that the Americans were "taking far too gloomy a view of the situation here, so far as your American speakers are concerned, and far too pessimistic a view of the noble stand taken by the Anti Saloon League in support of our Scottish campaign".⁴⁹ The Scottish prohibitionists were successful in their objections; the WLAA left the London office open

44 Tarini Prasad Sinha, *"Pussyfoot" Johnson and His Campaign in Hindustan* (Madras, India: Ganesh and Co., 1922), copiously documents the visit and demonstrates its nationalist implications.

45 Hardynia Norville, *A Sober South America: Prohibition for Our Twin Continent* (Evanston, Ill.: WCTU, 1920).

46 *Union Signal*, July 21, 1921, p. 6.

47 Kenneth L. Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home* (1922; New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 332. See WLAA Series, OHS, roll 19, for heavy documentation of Johnson's British work.

48 *Union Signal*, August 10-17, 1921, p. 5.

49 WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 39, roll 19, Henry Beach Carré to ASL, Report, April 1918 to December 1919; and fl. 56, roll 25, W. J. Allison to Ernest H. Cherrington, April 7, 1920.

and continued to use Johnson in its European campaigns for a number of years.⁵⁰

Non-Americans also conducted their own independent campaigns to further the reputation of American prohibition abroad. The Scottish WCTU reformer Helen Barton, for example, toured Australia and New Zealand in 1926 at the invitation of the local prohibitionists, and yet the focus of her talks was the American law's enforcement.⁵¹ The topic was not one in which American speakers, audiences, and organizations could exert control over the discourse. Non-Americans also helped in the global strategy of the campaigns through the World's convention meetings of the WLAA and especially in the conventions of the World's WCTU held in 1920, 1922, 1925, 1928, and 1931.

Foreign travellers to the United States who were sympathetic to prohibition supplemented the efforts of American speakers, and they often returned to their home countries to report on the benefits of the Volstead Act. Some were committed reformers like Alexander Bjorkman from Sweden and Tarini Prasad Sinha from India. Sinha came to the United States in 1922 from Benares to spend six months working with the Anti-Saloon League. Sinha praised the efforts of Pussyfoot Johnson and pleaded for aid for India in its struggle.⁵² Other foreign publicists were newspapermen like the correspondent of the *Dundee Advertiser* who came to the United States in 1925 to observe "Fifteen Thousand Miles of Prohibition".⁵³ Still others were tourists and incidental visitors like the group of English Rotarians in 1925 who told the *Christian Science Monitor* that "in the main" prohibition was "a great success" in the United States, and then had their opinions publicized around the world by prohibition journals.⁵⁴

Often these visits were prompted by the timing of reform agendas in the home societies. From Australia, travellers undertook three separate investigations of the failures and successes of American prohibition, in 1918, 1922, and again in 1930, each connected with specific local-option and early-closing campaigns in their home country. Each of these travellers endorsed the American dry strategy. Frank Russell, a Victorian lawyer, wrote as late as 1930 a typical propaganda piece, *Prohibition Does Work: An Australian Investigator's Opinion*, and urged Victorians to accept a "first instalment" in the Victorian Local Option referendum on March 29, 1930. Russell argued that "economic necessity" will lead "Australia into following the

50 *SEAP*, vol. 6, p. 2915.

51 *White Ribbon Signal* (Melbourne), October 12, 1926, p. 3.

52 *New York Times*, August 27, 1922, sec. 2, p. 5.

53 *Union Signal*, October 31, 1925, p. 3; see also William Paxton, *Literary Digest*, printed in *Union Signal*, September 19, 1925, p. 7.

54 *Union Signal*, September 3, 1925, p. 2. See also, for example, "A Remarkable Interview: An Australian who was Convinced by Facts", *Grit*, July 12, 1923, p. 9.

United States".⁵⁵ Such comments encouraged American prohibitionists. Much earlier, at the end of the First World War, when the Rev. Robert Hammond, editor of *Grit*, an Australian prohibitionist magazine, wrote *With One Voice*, a stirring endorsement of American prohibition as a model for Australasia, his work was given publicity in the *Union Signal*.⁵⁶ "Australia and New Zealand", announced the *Signal's* headline, were "watching America". In a third report, brothers C. M. and Gifford Gordon wrote *35,000 Miles of Prohibition* in 1923, an account of their travels in America.⁵⁷

The WLAA's most loyal allies came from the radical or teetotal wing of the European temperance movement. These were men like Légrain, the Good Templar and total abstainer who headed the World Prohibition Federation's European committee, and the Swiss head of the International Temperance Bureau, Robert Hercod. Except in Scandinavia, these ardent allies represented minority viewpoints within the European temperance movements, which were dominated by the notion of moderation in alcohol consumption. In France, the Ligue Nationale, a federation of French temperance societies not even wedded to total abstinence principles, joined the WLAA and declared that "henceforth antialcoholism would be waged on the international level", but most French temperance reformers saw American prohibition simply as an inspiration or "an encouragement".⁵⁸ They carefully distinguished between the American and the French cases in terms of drinking habits and traditions of anti-alcohol agitation. Nevertheless, even the radicals did not blindly follow the American lead. Both Légrain in France and Hercod in Switzerland wrote on the question of the treatment of alcoholism rather than focusing on world prohibition alone. Hercod advised Americans in 1920 that "it will be the work of long years to form a prohibition opinion [in Europe]. World prohibition will come, but our generation will very likely not see it, at least in most of the European countries."⁵⁹

American prohibitionists printed such information in their journals, but they tended as the 1920s went on to become more dogmatic in their pronouncements of the imminence of world prohibition's triumph. They highlighted the claims of those dries in Europe who emphasized the chances of immediate prohibitionist success. Thus Dagmar Prior, the Danish WCTU leader, was quoted by the *Union Signal* as believing "her country will

55 Frank Russell, *Prohibition Does Work: An Australian Investigator's Opinion* (Melbourne: Ruskin Press, 1930).

56 *Union Signal*, October 17, 1918, p. 11; Robert B. S. Hammond, *With One Voice: A Study of Prohibition in U.S.A.* (Sydney: New South Wales Alliance, c. 1920).

57 C. M. Gordon and Gifford Gordon, *35,000 Miles of Prohibition* (Melbourne: Victorian Anti-Liquor League, 1923); *White Ribbon Signal*, November 12, 1923, p. 1.

58 Prestwich, *Drink and the Politics of Social Reform*, p. 231.

59 *Union Signal*, October 21, 1920, p. 6. See also Hercod, "Alcoholism as an International Problem", pp. 107-126.

outlaw the liquor traffic by 1930.”⁶⁰ Similarly, as Canada’s provincial prohibition laws were picked off one by one in the 1920s, the Canadian prohibitionists’ shrill defence of the prohibition policy of “our ally — the United States” became more noticeable. In the midst of a series of provincial setbacks, Canadian WCTU president Sara Rowell Wright stridently announced in 1925 that “the world is going dry.”⁶¹ Foreign collaboration of this type was a trap for the American prohibition movement. Weaker prohibitionist groups abroad tended to encourage the millennialist illusions of a triumphant global prohibition that the American experience at first suggested. Non-American prohibitionists too often told the American architects of a dry world what they wanted to hear.

Defeat

The year 1922 marked the high tide of this international organizing in electoral terms. In every country the prohibitionists from the United States and their foreign allies were rebuffed at the polls, in some cases only narrowly, but the pressure for extending prohibition, which had peaked at the end of World War I, now began to ebb. The Swedish prohibition plebiscite of 1922 was defeated by a 42,000 “no” majority out of 1.8 million votes. Women voted dry by a large margin, but their votes were overcome by a male plurality in favour of the existing system.⁶² The local-option poll in Scotland had been lost in November-December 1920, in an election spread out over two months in various localities. The wets lost only a few districts that they had previously controlled. Of 253 voting areas discussed in a contemporary American report by newspaperman Kenneth Roberts, 206 had voted not to change. Yet the actual voting was fairly close. The total dry vote in Glasgow was 142,328 compared to 6,449 for limitation of licence, and 182,860 for no change.⁶³ New Zealand more narrowly failed to adopt prohibition, and, though Iceland had already modified its prohibi-

60 *Union Signal*, January 25, 1923, p. 5. See also Fraulein Gustel Von Blucher, “Germany Dry by 1930”, *Union Signal*, December 7, 1922, p. 10.

61 *Report of the Twenty-Third Convention of the Dominion Woman’s Christian Temperance Union...* (1925), p. 62.

62 WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 71, roll 26, “Swedish Women Give Big Dry Majority”, clipping, September 23, 1922, and David Ostlund, “On the Dry Campaign in Sweden”, press release, September 27, 1922; Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, pp. 353, 345.

63 For accounts of the Scottish plebiscites of 1920 and 1923, in which Sara Rowell Wright, president of the Dominion WCTU, campaigned, see *Report of the Twenty-First Convention of the Dominion Woman’s Christian Temperance Union...* (1920), p. 45; *Report of the Twenty-Second Convention of the Dominion Woman’s Christian Temperance Union...* (1922), p. 75; and *Report of the Twenty-Third Convention of the Dominion Woman’s Christian Temperance Union...* (1925), p. 58. For further analysis and complete figures for the Scottish plebiscite, see *Glasgow Herald*, November 4, 1920; and WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 57, roll 25, “Smoke Lifts off Scotia’s Wet and Dry Battlefield”, *Temperance Leader and League Journal*, November 15, 1920.

tion law in 1921, this law was not actually rescinded until 1933.⁶⁴ Perhaps the most serious defeat from the point of view of drys in the United States was the gradual adoption of government liquor control in Canada from the Quebec legislation of 1921 through to the defeat of prohibition in Ontario in the 1926 provincial election. This made government regulation once again a serious rival of American prohibition on the North American continent and enhanced the opportunities for smuggling to the United States.⁶⁵

The international propaganda war continued unabated despite these losses. Prohibitionists rationalized their defeats. In Sweden, for example, the WCTU's Lydia Johnson declared late in 1922 that "prohibition for Sweden has not been lost — it has merely been postponed." Except in the three largest cities, "the entire population voted in favor of prohibition."⁶⁶ Similarly, David Ostlund of the Swedish Anti-Saloon League asserted that "we are in the middle of the fight. None of the valiant workers for a dry Sweden is considering to give up."⁶⁷ Dr. George W. Henry used the very modest gains in the 1920 Scottish plebiscite to proclaim that "Scotland would be dry in ten years."⁶⁸ Such rationalizations allowed foreign organizing efforts to continue, but by 1923 there was a shift towards defence of the heartland of American prohibition. This accelerated with the collapse of the partial prohibition measure in Norway in 1926 and culminated in the abandonment of prohibition in Finland in 1931.

The reasons for the rejection of prohibition abroad were varied. Basically, the long tradition of wine production and drinking in Europe made that continent a barren field for American prohibitionists, who insisted upon eliminating both spirits and wine.⁶⁹ European wine producers banded together in an international anti-prohibition alliance in 1922 and circulated anti-prohibitionist literature in the United States summarized in Célestin Cambiaire's 1932 volume, *The Black Horse of the Apocalypse*. This literature threatened European trade retaliation against the United States and denounced prohibition in Finland as well. Édouard Barthe, president of the International Bureau of Wine, pointed out that 18 million Frenchmen earned a living from the grape and claimed that the ability of the French to buy American products would be greatly reduced by the curtailment of this

64 WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 71, roll 26, David Ostlund, "Iceland Losing Temporarily in Her Fight for Prohibition", circular, April 28, 1922; and press release, November 1, 1933.

65 *New York Times*, December 2, 1926, pp. 1, 3; *Report of the Twenty-Third Convention of the Dominion Woman's Christian Temperance Union...* (1925), p. 58 (on the defeat of prohibition in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta); "Ontario's Experiment: Shall We Follow Our Northern Neighbor's Example?", *Union Signal*, April 18, 1931, p. 6.

66 *Union Signal*, December 7, 1922, p. 10.

67 Ostlund, "On the Dry Campaign in Sweden".

68 *New York Times*, November 27, 1920, p. 24; also editorial, "At Least a Start Was Made", *New York Times*, November 5, 1920, p. 14.

69 Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Chester Harvey Rowell Correspondence, Chester H. Rowell to Julia Deane, December 22, 1922.

major French industry. In this way French (and other European) objections to prohibition were brought into the American domestic debate.⁷⁰ In addition, resentment against interference in national and class-based drinking cultures stood as a powerful obstacle to prohibition in many European countries. The beer halls of Germany, the restaurants and cafés of France, and the pubs of Britain all served as important social institutions deeply imbedded in popular culture.⁷¹

A further obstacle was an anti-Americanism expressed through irritation at the growth of American political and economic power in Europe. This was especially clear in the British case. Prohibition became for the British press an example of American interference in Europe and the equation found an almost perfect metaphor in the “meddling” of Pussyfoot Johnson. In the words of a popular English ditty of the time:

Who are you who are you,
Pussyfoot?
Don't you know we hear your meow,
Why Don't You stay in the U.S.A.
And Wail in Your Own Backyard?
Though you've got the public puzzled,
The Bull-Dog isn't muzzled
Keep Away, Keep Away,
Pussyfoot.⁷²

Pussyfoot's reception in England at first made him a figure of fun. He was burned in effigy on Guy Fawkes night, and students attacked him in a dangerous and ugly confrontation at a meeting in November 1919 in which he lost the sight of one eye.⁷³ American newspaperman Kenneth L. Roberts concluded that Johnson was “the best anti-Prohibition argument in the Wets' bag, and a constant irritant to the British”.⁷⁴ Henry Beach Carré agreed,

70 Célestin Cambiaire, *The Black Horse of the Apocalypse (Wine, Alcohol, and Civilization)* (Paris: Librairie Universitaire J. Gambler, 1932), especially pp. 296, 297; *Union Signal*, December 21, 1922, p. 3; Ernest Cherrington, “Foreign Wet Influences in Our Politics”, *Union Signal*, September 1, 1928, p. 9.

71 See, for example, James S. Roberts, “The Tavern and Politics in the German Labor Movement, c. 1870–1914”, in Susanna Barrows and Robin Room, eds., *Drinking Behavior and Belief in Modern History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 98–111. On cafés, see Henry-Melchoir de Langle, *Le petit monde des cafés et débits parisiens au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990). For the British reaction, see Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, pp. 267, 279, 302.

72 “How London Has Viewed Mr. ‘Pussyfoot’ Johnson”, *New York Times*, November 23, 1919, p. 7.

73 Alexander Bjorkman and others to Johnson, January 6, 1920, repr. in *American Issue*, February 14, 1920; Frederick Arthur McKenzie, “Pussyfoot” Johnson: *A Man Among Men* (New York: n.p., 1920); Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, p. 303.

74 Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, p. 302.

claiming that the heckling of prohibitionists by British audiences was “particularly noticeable when Americans are speaking because the opposition claims that we are intruders and meddlers in their affairs”.⁷⁵

Johnson was a formidable tactician and publicist, however, who inspired loyalty and admiration among foreign prohibitionists. He gained a more sympathetic reaction from the British press for his bravery when he devoted a medical fund raised on his behalf to blind British soldiers. British prohibitionists exploited the tradition of “fair play” while denouncing the damage done to Johnson’s sight; noted anti-prohibitionists such as the chairman of the Wine and Spirit Defence Fund were forced to apologize; and prohibitionists rallied in a packed meeting under a banner entitled “Pussyfoot’s Eye will Make England Dry”.⁷⁶ Johnson’s travail also stimulated support elsewhere in Europe. A group of prominent temperance leaders, led by Sweden’s Alexander Bjorkman and involving representative organizations from four Scandinavian countries, hailed his “noble example and martyrdom” and claimed it “incites us to new efforts”.⁷⁷ After this incident, British wets took more serious notice of the WLAA. Sir William Barclay Peat, a prominent British brewer, claimed the Americans were “possessed of considerable financial support” and Johnson was said to be “a real danger to the brewing industry”. Fearing Johnson’s talent for publicity, brewers and distillers stepped up the wet campaign, emphasizing in the process the anti-American theme.⁷⁸

Anti-American sentiment was by no means the only factor in Europe, however. Economic pressures impinged on prohibition in Scandinavia, just as they would after 1930 in the United States. If Norway, Iceland, and Finland dropped prohibition more quickly and more easily than the U.S. did, this result did not reflect greater cultural homogeneity in comparison with the turbulent ethnocultural conflicts of 1920s America.⁷⁹ Rather, the small size of these Scandinavian countries made them very vulnerable to international trade retaliation from wine-producing countries. In Iceland in 1921 and Finland in 1931 these economic factors were important. The Finns caved in under the pressure of threats to exclude their fish products from southern European markets unless wines were allowed freely into Finland. The same pressure had forced Iceland to admit Spanish wines in 1921, even

75 WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 39, roll 19, Carré to ASL, Report, April 1918 to December 1919.

76 Sinha, “Pussyfoot” Johnson and His Campaign in Hindustan, pp. 72–73, 80.

77 WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 71, roll 26, “Scandinavians Spurred on to Greater Activity by Attack on Pussyfoot”, clipping, February 14, 1920.

78 *New York Times*, December 30, 1919, p. 2.

79 Cf. Norman H. Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976, pp. 136, 139: “the Prohibition experience of more homogeneous societies was reasonably tranquil and modestly progressive. ... [W]hen people modified their Prohibition laws, they in most instances did so with grace and intelligence. But in the United States, such modifications would come neither so quickly nor so easily.”

though the Parliament was unwilling to abandon prohibition as a statutory law. The latter case was crucial because Spain did not export significant quantities of wine to Iceland prior to the introduction of prohibition in 1912. The motive in the tough diplomatic initiative was to signal to other Scandinavian countries not to follow the Icelandic example. Pressure from the wine-producing countries of southern Europe was also effective in contributing to the Norwegian shift in 1926.⁸⁰

In still another variation, the issue of governmental regulation was significant in neutralizing the temperance vote in some countries where prohibition sentiment was strong. In Sweden in the early 1920s, prohibition faced as an alternative a strict system of government-controlled passbooks and liquor permits, the Bratt System, which attracted some temperance support after its introduction in 1917.⁸¹ In Canada, too, the decline of prohibition in the 1920s was marked by the rise of government-controlled liquor outlets in a number of provinces, but the country's regional and cultural differences also contributed to prohibition's demise. The maintenance of prohibition was initially undermined by the opposition of the populous, poorer, Catholic and French-speaking province of Quebec and by the financial temptation of smuggling alcohol across the border to the American republic and to other provinces. Smuggling also contributed to prohibition's weakness in Finland.⁸² The ebbing of prohibitionism outside the United States was thus partly the result of factors peculiar to each country or group of countries that require further study from historians of these national experiences.

Also present in many cases was evidence of the increasing resistance to prohibition in the United States, which was fully reported in the foreign media. For example, in New Zealand, prohibition had very nearly succeeded in 1919; the loss was by only 1,000 votes in over 540,000. As one modern historian has concluded, "only the vote of the troops in Britain saved New Zealand from national prohibition in 1919."⁸³ Consequently Mary Harris Armor went to New Zealand for the next poll in 1922. The ubiquitous Pussyfoot also campaigned there. Despite the strenuous efforts of New

80 Ostlund, "Iceland Losing Temporarily in Her Fight for Prohibition"; WLAA Series, OHS, press release, November 1, 1933; *White Ribbon Signal*, June 12, 1929, p. 6; *SEAP*, vol. 5, p. 2031; *Union Signal*, May 15, 1926, p. 3.

81 Per Franberg, "The Social and Political Significance of Two Swedish Restrictive Systems", paper delivered at the International Conference on the Social History of Alcohol, Berkeley, Calif., January 1984, p. 1; Ostlund, "On the Dry Campaign in Sweden".

82 Sara Rowell Wright, "Canada's Struggles, Defeats, and Triumphs", *Union Signal*, September 8, 1928, p. 4; Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil*, p. 138; "More Smuggling Expected With Alberta and Manitoba Added to 'Wet' Provinces", *New York Times*, November 12, 1923, p. 19; *New York Times*, December 2, 1926, pp. 1, 3; *Union Signal*, June 30, 1928, p. 4, and September 29, 1928, p. 3.

83 Erik Olssen, "Towards a New Society", in W. H. Oliver with B. R. Williams, eds., *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (Oxford and Wellington: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 263; *Union Signal*, August 10-17, 1922, p. 5.

Zealand prohibitionists and their American allies, no-licence polled 20,000 more votes than in the previous election, but continuance still won by a 16,000 majority. Armor blamed anti-prohibitionists for the failure of the dry vote to keep pace with the wet. "Never was a crime committed in America but it was heralded from one end of the Dominion to the other, as being the result of prohibition," Armor lamented. She concluded, however, that more American influence upon other nationalities, not less, was required: "they [the New Zealanders] could not have been deceived" if "the masses could have been made to understand our mode of government."⁸⁴

Anti-prohibitionist literature and arguments drawn from American experience had also been useful to the wets in Scotland in 1920 and in Sweden in 1922. John Koren, the American advocate of liquor regulation and a member of the Committee of Fifty, called American prohibition "terrible", and his indictment was widely published in the wet press in Sweden during the 1922 campaign. In the Scottish campaign, too, U.S. anti-prohibitionists such as Charles A. Windle of Chicago were employed to show what was wrong with prohibition. Windle had debated prohibition in the *Chicago American* on behalf of the (Liquor) Manufacturers and Dealers Association of America, and he carried out the same task throughout Britain, contesting both the economic and health benefits of prohibition and drawing attention to extensive law enforcement violations under American prohibition in Chicago.⁸⁵ Ironically, this use of American agents and American material coexisted with the strong theme of anti-Americanism. The debate testified deftly to the expansion of American cultural influence even though the prohibitionists were roundly defeated. As the *Chicago Tribune's* correspondent put it in his account of the Scottish campaign: "whether Scotland goes dry, wet, or merely moist, Americans on either side will bear much of the responsibility."⁸⁶

The overt arguments were probably overestimated, however, by journalists who missed the significance of the new media, particularly film. One of the clearest trends across a number of countries was the image of an America racked by sexual immorality, divorce, crime, and gangster violence conveyed in American movies, which were outlets in no way directly controlled by liquor interests. Moral reformers outside the United States across a broad

84 *Union Signal*, February 15, 1922, p. 4. A similar complaint was made after the subsequent 1925 referendum. See K. Austin Kerr, "The Failure of Prohibition in New Zealand in 1925: A Research Note", *Social History of Alcohol Review*, no. 19 (Spring 1989), pp. 14-16.

85 Library of Congress, Richmond Hobson Papers, box 2, A. P. Daniels to R. P. Hobson, February 4, 1916; Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, pp. 355, 345-347; WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 56, roll 25, W. J. Allison to Ernest H. Cherrington, April 7, 1920.

86 *Chicago Tribune*, quoted in *New York Times*, September 27, 1920, p. 17. (Windle was editor of a magazine called Brann's *Iconoclast*.) See also the Scottish wets' use of anti-prohibitionist arguments by Samuel Gompers, quoted in *The Pioneer: The Official Organ of the Wesleyan Methodist Temperance and Social Welfare Department*, no. 1 (June 1920), p. 92.

range of positions on the prohibition issue did not like what they saw in these movies, and American prohibitionists reported back home the negative impact this had on support for prohibition outside the country. Maude Aldrich, director of the Motion Pictures Department of the WCTU, reported in 1925 that "American motion pictures are presenting lawlessness, crime, theft, murder, highway robbery, broken homes, ... and free love as typical of American life." This "misrepresentation" was "severely crippling our work for world prohibition".⁸⁷

Implications for Hegemony

Prohibition and its rejection in Europe and elsewhere in the world was part of a wider debate over Americanization. This process was not entirely new in the 1920s. William T. Stead, the British journalist and moral campaigner, had written a prescient volume, *The Americanization of the World*, some 20 years earlier, and the work of several scholars has shown how popular culture was influenced by American practices long before film and television.⁸⁸ Further investigation is required before we can definitely say that the 1920s saw an intensified dissemination of American culture on a global scale. In the case of alcohol prohibition, however, the 1920s does feature prominently in the attempt to universalize American experience and solutions. Leadership of the international temperance movement before 1910 had been shared between Britain and the United States.⁸⁹ Even in the case of the women organized under the pioneering global efforts of the WCTU, the leadership had been committed to an Anglo-American partnership, and within the British dominions and colonies, where temperance was strong, British examples were still vitally important from 1900 to 1910. After prohibition's rise to prominence on the American national scene around 1910, this pattern changed decisively. The literature of non-American total abstinence societies became dominated by the debate over American prohibition.⁹⁰

The issue is more than one of "Americanization", however, with all of the implications that phrase had, and still has, for a one-way flow of influence. The abortive drive for world prohibition in the early 1920s can be linked to a process in which American values became identified as modern values and so exercised a hegemonic role in the evolving international culture and state

87 Openshaw, "'Glare of Broadway'", pp. 50–51; *Union Signal*, October 24, 1925, p. 9; "Unclean Pictures", *Grit*, July 2, 1931, p. 7.

88 W. T. Stead, *The Americanization of the World, or The Trend of the Twentieth Century* (1902; New York: Garland, 1972); Richard Waterhouse, *From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville: The Australian Popular Stage, 1788–1914* (Kensington, N.S.W.: University of New South Wales Press, 1990); Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*.

89 Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, pp. 62–63.

90 Analysis of New South Wales Alliance affiliated *Grit* from 1907 to 1911, compared to 1926–1930, shows this shift to be clear and decisive; see also *Grit*, October 17, 1907, p. 6; and *ibid.*, chap. 12.

system. In the prohibition issue, a number of the strands necessary to the creation of an international hegemonic order came together: the political and social disruption of existing power arrangements; the role of Americans in spreading their values and institutions abroad; the role of foreign collaborators in encouraging this process; the resistance of indigenous cultural institutions to Americanization; and the creation of a field of debate in which American issues defined what was contested.

The resistance of foreigners to the process of expansion is easy to document. After all, prohibition was rejected in all countries where it was tried and this rejection was linked to anti-Americanism, where "Pussyfootism" became a kind of code word for American meddling.⁹¹ Yet the defeat of prohibition abroad obliterates the role American temperance played in the creation of a new kind of hegemony in the international arena only if we understand hegemony as a process of domination. Prohibitionist critics — and historians — have missed the central significance of this moral expansionism for the assertion of a new form of hegemony in the international order.

More important than overt rejection was a process of selective incorporation. Prohibitionists used American arguments, but did so for their own purposes and often modified the American message. The STI literature, for example, illustrates this point. Because this literature was widely used does not mean it remained unmodified. The correspondence of the Scientific Temperance Federation shows clearly that representatives understood the resistance to purely American material which did not fit school curricula in their own countries; American examples needed therefore to be creatively interpreted by local representatives. In India, the missionaries discarded some chapters as irrelevant, while in Canada STF representatives published separate literature, which, however, incorporated American material where relevant to Canadian experience.⁹²

American domination was decisively rejected in the liquor issue, but the field of hegemony is much broader. The prohibitionists contributed to the assertion of an American hegemony in one way that Arrighi believes is distinctive of the American contribution: anti-colonialism. Prohibitionists contributed to unsettling colonial rule in the British Empire by siding with indigenous forces. This activity had begun well before World War I through the efforts of the World's WCTU, but it reached its peak in the early 1920s. Pussyfoot Johnson saw the international prestige of American prohibition as an opportunity for asserting American influence by encouraging Indian nationalists in their struggle for moral reform and self-rule. Johnson was vividly aware, as were other American prohibitionists, of the nationalist

91 "Pussyfootism", *The Forum*, September 13, 1922, p. 15.

92 STF Series, OHS, fl. 64, roll 23, Joan Davis to Elizabeth Middleton, July 11, 1925, and Helen Billings to WCTU, March 24, 1925.

unrest and its link with the liquor question. "The situation in India at this time is very acute and disturbed," he wrote home to his superiors. Despite the addition of six million indigenous voters to the rolls for the November 1920 elections, "The Nationalists are sore at the British Government largely because the British Government has not gone farther or faster in the matter of self-government for India." Even so, Johnson planned to enter this tumultuous fray to take advantage of it for the sake of world prohibition.

Johnson's tour was planned in 1921 at the time of widespread unrest and the implementation of M. K. Gandhi's boycott of liquor shops. Rumours swept the country that the celebrated American agitator had been discouraged from going by the British authorities.⁹³ Johnson and others manfully laboured to deny the charge that they were seeking to unsettle British authority. His visit was organized by the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association and had also been planned by agreement with Lord Clwyd of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association and Charles Roberts, former Under-Secretary for India in the British government and son-in-law of Countess Rosalind Howard, World's WCTU president. Johnson did not openly support the "extreme" Nationalists "who are very aggressive and very dry." He told his WLAA superiors that "they propose a general boycott of the British Government similar to that which is taking place in Ireland, but it is quite doubtful whether this idea will prevail." Rather, Johnson tried to side with the more moderate party "made up mostly of Indians whose theory is to accept what has been given by the British government in the new Act and to holler for more". Johnson set himself against the "whites, particularly Britishers" who were against the extension of self-government and who "want their rations of whiskey and soda" as well.⁹⁴ Despite Johnson's attempts to avoid the tag of extremism, the unsettling effect of the tour was expressed in his highly charged symbolic actions. His tour of the site of the Amritsar massacre and his laudatory correspondence with Gandhi indicated a willingness to exploit the power of the non-co-operation movement for the benefit of world prohibition, and at the expense of British power.⁹⁵

The WCTU added to the unsettling effect by publicizing the effort of the nationalists. American Methodist missionary and WCTU president of India, Emma S. Price, injected the themes of American progressivism and prohibition reform into the debate over home rule. She rejoiced in the early 1920s at the "growing self-consciousness and aspiration toward nationalism" in

93 WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 36, roll 22, clipping, August 6, 1921.

94 WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 36, roll 22, Pussyfoot Johnson to Ernest H. Cherrington, October 2, 1920; Sinha, "Pussyfoot" Johnson and His Campaign in Hindustan, *passim*. I have not been able to locate G. V. Krishna Rao, "Pussyfoot" Johnson: *The Man and His Work* (Madras, 1922), but it is clear that Johnson's visit produced at least two books on him in India in 1922.

95 Sinha, "Pussyfoot" Johnson and His Campaign in Hindustan, pp. 243-244, and W. E. Johnson to M. K. Gandhi, November 1921, cited in full, pp 205-206; *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Government Publications Division, 1966), vol. 21, pp. 508-509.

India and argued that the “new democratic age” would “not unprotestingly suffer longer at the hands of big business”. Price hinted at revolution in India when she argued that institutions and customs which did not suit the new, modern age of reform “must go down”. The hints were taken further by the *Union Signal*, which published in 1921 an article by an Indian nationalist named Taraknath Das on “the Progress of Prohibition in India”. This article stated that “The Prohibition movement is known in India as the National Purification movement and is designed to make the people more capable of carrying on their struggle for independence.”⁹⁶ The controversial nature of the material in the colonial setting was quickly emphasized when Das was arrested amid a government crackdown on seditious literature in 1922. Thereafter the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in India retreated from political comment, unable to support the British imperial rule yet unwilling to risk the tag of sedition and revolution.⁹⁷ The evidence from both Pussyfoot’s tour and the activities of the WCTU suggests that American prohibitionists contributed to the subversion of the old British imperial hegemony in India, while being unable to exploit that unrest for their own purposes of world prohibition.

Supranationalism, the second of Arrighi’s themes, is less clearly applicable to the prohibitionists of the 1920s. American prohibitionists did advocate supranational objectives that coincided with the drive for a new kind of hegemony, but with mixed commitment and results. After World War I, the imperatives of prohibition implied to some reformers the need to support Wilsonian liberalism and the League of Nations. Former Democratic Congressman Richmond Hobson wrote ASL boss Wayne Wheeler in 1920 that “a little penetration of vision will show up an effective League of Nations, with Prohibition America a dominant member, as a most important, if not necessary agency, for winning International and World prohibition.”⁹⁸ The Anti-Saloon League, with many Republican as well as Democratic supporters, did not throw its weight behind the Democrat James Cox, however, preferring instead to maintain its non-partisan stand. The division over the League of Nations issue weakened the international campaigns, and the WLAA was forced to work through prohibition groups in member nations to achieve anti-liquor action in that forum. Efforts were made by the WLAA, the World Prohibition Federation, and several League member states including Finland and Poland to get the League to investigate the international alcohol problem as an extension of its investigations of the

96 *Minutes and Reports ... Sixteenth National Convention ... WCTU of India* (Mysore: Wesleyan Press, 1922), pp. 8–9; WLAA Series, OHS, fl. 37, roll 22, Taraknath Das, “Progress of Prohibition in India”, *Union Signal*, September 29, 1921.

97 Library of Congress, Richmond Hobson Papers, box 80, Lawrence Adams (International Narcotic Education Association) to Mary Leitch, May 17, 1932.

98 Library of Congress, Richmond Hobson Papers, box 6, Hobson to Wayne B. Wheeler, July 16, 1920.

traffic in women. Attempting to stir up anti-foreign feeling, Ernest Cherrington argued that these efforts were stymied by French opposition at Geneva to the inclusion of beer and wine in the study, but the Australian government, for example, opposed the Baltic states' plan for a League-sponsored treaty on smuggling of liquor because the issue lay outside the formal League of Nations covenant.⁹⁹

Strong support for supranational organization came not from the Anti-Saloon League but from the WCTU, which had a long history of international involvement through the World's WCTU and a history of peace activism as well. It is not surprising, therefore, that the WCTU favoured American membership in both the League and the World Court. In the absence of official American involvement in the League, the WCTU was forced to depict itself as a forerunner of international co-operation. Ella Boole, national president of the WCTU after 1925, even declared the U.S. a "little league of nations". In another example, the WCTU forged links with the internationalist peace group, the Institute of Pacific Relations. The Honolulu WCTU entertained this group during a conference in Hawaii in 1925, and the *Union Signal* lauded their achievements in the struggle for disarmament.¹⁰⁰

This form of internationalism equated American aspirations with "true" internationalism. Its significance derives from the extent to which American cultural values were received outside the United States as trans-national and modernistic rather than purely American. Such cultural hegemony did not rely purely on the initiative of individual states and the assertion of their power. Rather, the new hegemony had to be systemically based, which is to say that it was both promoted by and reflected trans-national influences that were partly cultural in nature. By looking at the transmission of values and the issue of the detachment of those values from direct association with a single nation-state such as the United States, we can move beyond Arrighi's rigid formula for hegemony.

The prohibitionist efforts jelled with the spread of American technology and economic influence, and so contributed to the promotion of a new kind of hegemony. The WCTU pushed, despite its putative association with fundamentalism in the United States, a modernist line in its ideology that emphasized the productionist values of Henry Ford and mechanized civilization. Symbolically the WCTU held its 1925 convention in the "Motor Capital of [the] World", which it depicted as the epitome of modernity. Ignoring widespread violation of prohibition in Detroit, the WCTU empha-

99 Prestwich, *Drink and the Politics of Social Reform*, pp. 212, 231; Cherrington, "Foreign Wet Influences in Our Politics", *Union Signal*, September 1, 1928, p. 9; Stanley Melbourne Bruce (Australian Prime Minister) to R. B. Hammond, December 6, 1927, printed in *Grit*, December 15, 1927, p. 4; *White Ribbon Signal*, July 12, 1928, pp. 2-3.

100 *Union Signal*, August 20, 1925, p. 5; *California White Ribbon Ensign*, September 1934, p. 7.

sized instead a "Speed Up Convention", in which prohibitionists everywhere would "step on the gas" to promote world prohibition.¹⁰¹ They also praised Henry Ford for seeking dry areas around his automobile plants in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Melbourne, Australia.¹⁰² Ford had argued in the *Dearborn Independent* that "modern civilization wants increased speed because it increases efficiency, but a high standard of efficiency cannot be attained ... without clear thinking and quick action. Prohibition is one of the means by which clear thinking is accomplished."¹⁰³ The possible impact of the motor car in enforcing sobriety won the enthusiastic support of prohibitionists abroad who stressed the incompatibility of driving and drinking. Even non-prohibitionists conceded that social order and machine civilization implied a closer regulation, if not prohibition, of dangerous drugs. "The motorisation of America", said a contributor to the normally unsympathetic *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1927, was "a trump card in the hand of prohibitionists".¹⁰⁴ Not just motor cars but the whole paraphernalia of machinery, Taylorism, and electricity appealed to foreign prohibitionists. They embraced the iconography associated with modern technology in the form of enthusiastic press reports upon the social values of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford.¹⁰⁵

This positive gloss upon modern machine civilization was by no means confined to prohibitionists. European industrialists had their own reasons for adopting "techniques like mass production, standardization and rationalization" to combat the "American business invasion" of the 1920s.¹⁰⁶ No one can say that prohibitionists' support of Ford strengthened his claims in Europe, since anti-prohibitionists there attempted to use the link to denigrate American automobile manufacturers. Moreover, anti-prohibitionists quipped that Ford invested in European branch plants even though prohibition had not been adopted in the host countries.¹⁰⁷ The European dries did manage to convince themselves of the positive advantages of Ford's version of American modernity, however. Therein lies the hidden value of their propaganda, which constituted one way in which hegemonic modern values were transferred from the United States.

101 *Union Signal*, November 28, 1925, p. 5.

102 *Union Signal*, November 21, 1925, p. 3, and October 31, 1925, p. 3. Prohibitionists emphasized that the Volstead law had given America the "inside track" in "world manufacturing competition". *Union Signal*, October 10, 1922, p. 2; see also George W. Henry, *New York Times*, November 27, 1920, p. 24.

103 *Union Signal*, October 31, 1925, p. 3.

104 F. J. B., "The Car and Social Life", *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 31, 1927; *White Ribbon Signal*, November 12, 1927, p. 2; "Motors and Sobriety, Why America Must Remain Dry", *White Ribbon Signal*, March 12, 1925, p. 6.

105 *Grit*, March 2, 1933, pp. 9, 10; "Edison Talks about Prohibition", *Grit*, November 27, 1930, pp. 9-10; "What Thomas A. Edison Thought of Prohibition", *White Ribbon Signal*, January 1, 1932, p. 1.

106 Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion*, chap. 5, especially p. 141.

107 Cambiaire, *Black Horse of the Apocalypse*, pp. 313-316.

Prohibitionists in a number of countries — for example Sweden, Britain, and Australia — emphasized in their propaganda the importance of economic efficiency and rationalized labour. ASL official George W. Henry noted in 1920 that “sentiment in the British Isles is growing in favor of prohibition for economic and industrial reasons.”¹⁰⁸ This went beyond prohibitionists to segments of the business community. In Sydney, New South Wales, the Business Men’s Efficiency League heard in 1922 one James Nangle speak on “alcoholism” as “a hindrance to efficiency”. Nangle distanced himself from the “sudden” introduction of prohibition in the United States, and could not say whether “complete prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors would immediately be successful”, but “sooner or later” he expected “probable good results” would follow for economic efficiency.¹⁰⁹

The significance of such foreign endorsements has escaped many commentators, but not the Italian communist, Antonio Gramsci. From his prison cell in Italy, Gramsci explored in a cryptic article on American cultural influence abroad the importance of the ideology and practice of “Fordism” and its cultural paraphernalia like prohibition. Gramsci was one of the few European intellectuals who was able to step beyond the immediate, superficial reaction against Americanization in Europe among cultural conservatives to see how American cultural expansion, not through diplomacy and state power, but through a range of voluntaristic organizations like Rotary International and the World’s WCTU, could contribute to a new system of international hegemony that did not equate the power of modern capitalism with the conventional imperial domination of a single state.¹¹⁰ Gramsci was impressed by the way Ford praised prohibition, and he judged it to be intrinsic to the creation of an efficient rationalized system of mass production that would locate hegemonic power in the factory itself and its surrounding culture. For Gramsci the task was how to subvert this new mutation of capitalism by recognizing and exploiting its contradictions; for the WCTU and the Anti-Saloon League, the intention was simply to implement the aims of Ford. Neither they nor Gramsci achieved their goals.

The overlapping and yet conflicting aspects of American cultural expansionism of the 1920s made a challenge to the emerging American style of hegemonic rule difficult, as Gramsci perceived. The WCTU and other moral crusaders in the British dominions also discovered this complication in their campaigns over the impact of the American cinema. The attitude of prohibitionists and allied moral reformers toward the impact of American motion

108 *New York Times*, November 27, 1920, p. 24.

109 *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 12, 1922, p. 10.

110 Victoria de Grazia, “The Exception Proves the Rule: The American Example in the Recasting of Social Strategies in Europe Between the Wars”, in Jean Heffer and Jeanine Rovet, eds., *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?* (Paris: Éditions de l’École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1988), pp. 167–192.

pictures is pertinent, since it illustrates the contradictory and complicated reception of American influence abroad. In the debate over this issue in Australia, centred around the Royal Commission of 1927 into the motion picture industry, the critique of immoral influences came from those advocating an Empire film quota, but was weakened by the failure to press the issue of anti-Americanism. According to film historian Diane Collins, the “much publicized bogey of ... Americanization ... and the belittling of the Englishman through ... [motion pictures] failed to achieve a large measure of support” among “women’s groups” such as the WCTU and other moral reform organizations.¹¹¹ Moral reformers favoured Empire film quotas, but failed to advocate clear alternative regulatory policies to those that had allowed American cultural penetration. The question is why? Australian historians who have studied this issue note the contradictory and unsustainable position of the critics of American culture.¹¹² The reformers were unable to mount an effective campaign against the moral dangers inherent in American movies, in part because they themselves drew on the American critique of “immoral” influences in the cinema. They could not denounce American institutions completely, nor did they wish to eradicate American influence in the film industry. They wished to side with those Americans determined to clean up the motion picture industry, so as to make it, as the Canadian WCTU put it, “of great value in the training of the child [and] the youth of our land”.¹¹³ These British Empire critics of the motion picture industry’s derelictions wanted to import American culture in other respects, and this desire made it difficult for them to defend consistently a British imperial stance on the level of culture. In this way, the dilemma of the moral critics pointed towards a new form of hegemony in international cultural relations in which foreign audiences attempted with some success to negotiate the content of American films.¹¹⁴

Having failed to turn back the tide of American motion pictures, prohibitionists abroad attempted to exploit the medium for their own advantage

111 Diane Collins, “Cinema and Society in Australia, 1920–1939” (Ph.D. thesis, Sydney University, 1975), pp. 267, 277; Ina Bertrand and Diane Collins, *Government and Film in Australia* (Sydney: Australian Film Institute, 1981), p. 30. On the reception of American films and the foreign reaction, see Sklar, *Movie-Made America*, chap. 13; Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment*; and Strauss, “Rise of Anti-Americanism in France”, pp. 753–759.

112 Richard White, “A Backwater Awash: The Australian Experience of Americanisation”, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1983), p. 117; Collins, “Cinema and Society in Australia”, *passim*; Openshaw, “‘Glare of Broadway’”.

113 *Grit* editor Robert Hammond denounced “unclean pictures” emanating from the United States, but the demand for the best in American moral reform prompted the Australian prohibition journalist to promote in 1929 showings of a WLAA propaganda piece, *Deliverance*, that explained the virtues and success of the 18th Amendment. *Grit*, August 29, 1929, p. 4.

114 Openshaw, “‘Glare of Broadway’”; *Twenty-Fourth Convention of the Dominion Woman’s Christian Temperance Union* (1927), p. 99; Maude Aldrich, “Misrepresentation”, *Union Signal*, October 24, 1925, p. 9.

and sided with parallel efforts in the United States to remove scenes of bootlegging, gangsters, drinking, sex, and violence from films.¹¹⁵ In Australia, the Good Film League had been founded in 1921 under the umbrella of the National Council of Women affiliated to the International Council of Women. A coalition of moral reform groups, including the WCTU and the prohibitionists behind *Grit* magazine, infiltrated this organization after 1929 and sought to influence the quality of American films. Eleanor Glencross of the WCTU expressed on behalf of her organization in Australia “full support” for RKO and Fox Pictures “with whom we are proud to be affiliated” because these companies had agreed to produce suitable films. The WCTU and male allies sided after 1934 with the new American Hays Code, endorsed specific movies that promoted moral themes, and rejoiced that “the campaign for cleaner pictures now has for its allies the producers themselves.”¹¹⁶

It was ironic that prohibitionists abroad should praise American technology and embrace modern values, because these modern technological values were in reality vehicles for the subversion of the moral world of the prohibitionists. The electric world, like the movie industry, was the world of consumption, not restraint.¹¹⁷ This new hegemony was also tricky for the beneficiaries of power in the U.S. Such an “empire” as the United States was in the process of constructing in the 1920s had important negative connotations at the centre for those like the prohibitionists who rejoiced at American cultural expansion. The fragmented and often contradictory impact of American power, located in such diverse phenomena as modern movies and dry politics, created a larger number of potential sites of opposition and anxiety, and hence threatened always to embroil the U.S. in interminable and costly foreign wrangles that reached deeply into civil society at home as well as abroad. Prohibition was particularly disruptive of the international order in the 1920s in ways that have not yet been fully explored by historians. Only Lawrence Spinelli’s study of Anglo-American relations in *Dry Diplomacy* has attempted to connect the cultural and the diplomatic spheres through the prism of prohibition. Yet as Swiss temperance reformer Robert Hercod noted in 1926, “It is significant that such a world power as the United States has found it impossible to defend itself effectively against alcohol smuggling ... without entering into special agreements with nine sea Powers,” not to mention the Dominion of Canada.¹¹⁸ The mere phenome-

115 Collins, “Cinema and Society”, p. 322.

116 *White Ribbon Signal*, September 2, 1935, pp. 166–167; Ruth Vasey, “Foreign Parts: Hollywood’s Global Distribution and the Representation of Ethnicity”, *American Quarterly*, vol. 44 (December 1992), pp. 617–642.

117 Harold Platt, *The Electric City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Lachlan Partridge, “Electricity and Ideology in Sydney: 1920–1940” (B.A. hons. thesis, University of New South Wales, 1994).

118 Hercod, “Alcoholism as an International Problem”, p. 118.

non of prohibition itself, as well as the occasional disregard for established international law in the American pursuit of smugglers, suggested to British authorities that the United States was "not prepared to assume its position as a respected member of the international community".¹¹⁹ Spinelli's monograph shows how American cultural expansion in the 1920s was disruptive of the old hegemonic order without implementing a new world order that was American dominated.¹²⁰

Prohibition was a response to a social problem which has at various times in history and in other social settings been dealt with in very different ways from that attempted in the 1920s. The WLAA and its allies proved unable to compromise on the eradication of a severe social problem defined in Christian millennial terms as an absolute evil. Prohibition in the 1920s required logically a global vision and a global politics that both extended American power and yet complicated it through foreign resentment and resistance.

The world has witnessed since 1989 the dismantling of an alternative form of hegemonic order in Eastern Europe and the Soviet bloc; its inability to command the consent of its tributary states and its own multinational populations stands out. The message for some theorists seems to be a resurgence of nationalism over the creation of supranational states. Alongside that particularism we have the apparent anomaly of globalization in economic, ecological, and technological life. The resolution of the contradictions in politics and culture produced by this internationalizing process is not easily achieved in present scholarly discourse, but the phenomenon of "Americanization" in the 1920s showed how politics, economics, and cultural change were not tightly synchronized but often conflicting. Even cultural influences such as American motion pictures and prohibition received quite different receptions. The distinctiveness of the American form of hegemony glimpsed in the 1920s may be, as Arrighi suggests and Gramsci long ago anticipated, its ability to detach the mechanisms of coercion and consent from the question of alliance to a particular country and imperial structure. The United States presented a more intractable form of trans-national influence than the Soviet Union; analyzed in retrospect, it suggests that we are not going to return entirely to the particularistic and nationalistic politics of the past.

119 Spinelli, *Dry Diplomacy*, p. 158; see also Department of State, *I'm Alone Case: Diplomatic Correspondence between the Governments of the United States and Canada Concerning the Sinking of the "I'm Alone", Together with an Opinion of Attorney General William D. Mitchell and the Conventions of January 23 and June 6, 1924, for the Prevention of Smuggling of Intoxicating Liquors* (Washington: Government Printer, 1931).

120 The alcohol issue in this respect presaged the embroilment of Americans in international anti-drug diplomacy. In recent times the search for solutions to pressing domestic social and moral problems such as narcotic control has had the corollary of an impact on surrounding countries. See, for example, William O. Walker III, *Drug Control in the Americas*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

This is not to advocate once again the old theme of American exceptionalism. The American form of hegemony asserted in the 1920s was a new version of an old process. The leading role in the European state system had been taken since the seventeenth century in different ways by different great powers. The American version's promise to detach hegemony from the political power of a single state was new in potential, but this promise was not immediately realized, not in the 1930s, not even after the Second World War. In the 1930s, depression and fascism curtailed the extension of American influence. When that power and influence were fully asserted in the post-1945 period, the attempt to combat the Soviet Union ensured that American hegemony would contain a strong dose of the old forms of hegemony associated with imperialism and a centralizing state. Rather than supplant British imperial hegemony, American power after World War II partly recapitulated its terms by mixing power politics and military intervention with ideological and cultural modernization on an increasingly global scale. Today, in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, the potential for the new hegemony may yet be realized. We await at this time of "the new world order" more evidence of how the post-1945 order is being reshaped. Studying the cultural components of the emergence of the last world order in the 1920s may give us some clues to that shape. The role of non-government organizations and the impact of their cultural and political agendas would, as in the prominent case of the prohibitionists, be an excellent place to start that reappraisal.