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The German-American Community as a Nationality, 1880-1940

Festoons of oak stood by the entrances of the new Harugari Hall in Buffalo, New York, in 1886. Louis Buehl, a hotelkeeper, welcomed the audience from the speaker's table. If a latter day practice held true, the officers also were seated in front, facing the members, wearing medallions held by ribbons of the German tricolor—black, red and gold. Buehl's speech was a series of injunctions. He enjoined his hearers to preserve German traits in Buffalo. According to Buehl, the work of Harugari prospered, as it was "right" and "necessary" to foster the "German language," the "noble" customs of the German people, and to "Germanize" America. This was the "duty" of *Deutschtum*, the German community.¹

Amidst the work on minorities in the United States during the last thirty years, there are reasons to wonder why an ethnic leader could recite a list of demands and speak of "duty." "Ethnicity" has come to mean a temporary construction of identity. And yet, if identity is always in flux, how can there be duty? In the German-American case, the recent literature has stressed the accommodations and inventions of ethnicity, the uncertain and shifting identity of the Germans, and the intrusions of a German socialist culture. But their own community was "Deutschtum," the realm of Germanism—not Ethnicism or Socialism. German-American poets fashioned prayerful requests to the fatherland, and hymns to the Kaiser, German songs, and even lager beer. The essence of *Deutschtum* consisted in the imposition of remaining German, and this too was its lure in an age of nationalism. As a German-American lawyer noted in 1908, the "love for fatherland is such a powerful factor in world history, that we must view it as a gift from heaven."²

Nationalism was not only a consciousness; it was a power. It existed when demands were made in the name of a nation, and followers dutifully obeyed. The story of *Deutschtum* from the standpoint of Buffalo, New York, suggests how the German-American community embraced nationalism and functioned as a nationality. As Buffalo's community was prosaic, its ideology was representative. The sensibility of being a dutiful German remained viable in the United States through the 1930s, but especially in the period before World War I.

Nationalism was a gift from heaven, at least in a sense. In Buffalo, a century ago, the Germans dominated much of the skyline. On Main Street, the tallest Catholic church, St. Louis, conveyed what the speaker, Buehl, had called Germanization. Among

downtown Gothics such as St. Joseph's Cathedral, and the new St. Paul's Episcopal, St. Louis was conspicuously ornamented and European. Its austere finials, front façade tower, and spire of diaphanous openwork resembled the cathedrals at Freiburg and Ulm. Thirteen years before, German trustees had gutted its low-key Romanesque predecessor. It now housed a purely German Catholic congregation, on the edge of a Yankee neighborhood on land seized from a French congregation over the protest of an Irish Bishop. Other Gothics of the East Side such as St. Andrew's Lutheran, St. Anna's Catholic, and St. Boniface lacked the intricate tracery of St. Louis, but dutifully followed the German pattern with façade towers, belfries, and fanciful Germanic spires that dwarfed surrounding neighborhoods. Other buildings also emanated Germanic standards. The Germans had a *Turnverein Halle*, spelled with an *e*, the city's Music Hall with a frieze of a Germanic eagle, book stores, a dark stone bank, a hospital, a "Buffalo Freie Presse" high-rise, and a half dozen fanciful breweries with loud gables and dentils. At Lafayette Square, at the city's heart, a massively ornamented German Insurance Building maintained eight truncated tent roofs. Hundreds of feet of iron fretwork crested the tent roofs like a crown. Did not the Harugari speaker say that German culture was noble? And was not being German in 1900, like an insurance policy, a portfolio that promised dividends as the German fatherland led a worldwide renaissance of Germanic achievement? As a whole panorama in 1900, German Buffalo was overwrought but serious; its highest points evoked the fatherland.³

German-American architecture itself was didactic, and this made the effort to preserve German culture intelligible. Though later allegations that the German schools in the United States were "nurseries of Kaiserism" were overdrawn, the German presence in education was imposing. In 1981, ten years before the Ukraine became its own nation, there were Ukrainian cities without schools that taught Ukrainian. From 1874 to 1908 in Subcarpathian Europe, over 400 persecuted Rusyn schools passed at first into a bilingual status, and finally into schools where Hungarian replaced Rusyn altogether as the language of instruction. By contrast, from 1884 to 1917, there remained about twenty-five parochial schools in Buffalo that maintained instruction in German and English. By 1910, the best of the parochial schools such as St. Boniface, St. Anna, St. Mary, Sacred Heart, First Trinity, and St. Andrew's Lutheran had become two- and three-storied brick monuments to bilingual education, built with the over-reverent, over-sturdy air of the Insurance Building and the Music Hall. Pastor-teachers such as August Senne and John Sieck in Buffalo taught the theology of Christ's twofold nature, and the history of the Reformation in German, and also covered mental arithmetic, and the story of the American government in broken English. The Buffalo Mission of 300 Jesuits, many of them teachers, fought successfully in 1903 to remain within the German province of Jesuits. To outsiders, they were "aliens," and "Germans." Many could hardly speak English. Some taught that the German tongue was the "vessel of faith." Children who resisted the onslaught of German received the switch, and if one can imagine this scene, one can perceive a classic image of nationalism. In the public schools, German became an elective at the Central High School in 1862, and at four primary schools after 1868. By 1916, all of the city high schools and

thirty-three of the primary schools had electives in German. By this point, a group of East Side primary-school principals maintained five-year programs of instruction in the German language, despite the opposition of the State Board of Regents who offered tests for only one year of German.⁴

Americans had one of the most progressive public school systems in the world, but the Germans willingly pushed their demands in the midst of this achievement. The petitions of local Germans first for German courses, and then for Kindergartens, and German gymnastics (*Turnerei*) were an intermittent feature of the period from the Civil War to World War I. These bids were demands for those who recognized that the Germans were threatening political retaliation if German was not taught. In 1873, Buffalo's oldest newspaper, the *Commercial* referred to the case for German instruction as a show of "German proscription." Forty years later, a study of the New York State Teacher's Association, noted that the program of German classes in the primary schools had been sustained through "the demand of German parents." In Cleveland at this time, a German pastor "demand[ed] . . . a brand of German language instruction that is sufficient to know the wealth and value of the German spirit." The *New York Times* in 1905 even found the problem of German proscription in education a test case of national character. For it was the "Germans" who "clamor . . . again and again" for the teaching of German, "and by so doing incite others much more truly alien to make demands even more absurd."⁵

Even as parents pushed for German language classes, it seemed unlikely that any kind of secular didacticism could enter the German churches. Pastors and priests suspected worldly aspirations, and were alert to strictures that departed from apostolic teaching. But as the brick and mortar campaign of the late-nineteenth century concluded with success, many wondered who would inherit the translucent stained glass windows, and the three-manual pipe organs: Germans or Americans? The Lutheran, Henry Karsten, a produce dealer, argued that the German liturgies should always be retained, for they alone were "beautiful." A third-generation housewife told her family that German must always be retained, for it alone made the worship services "pleasant." Reverend Friedrich Kahler built his Lutheran church on Main Street, married a Presbyterian, and used English for the services. But this enraged even fellow moderates in the New York Ministerium. In 1902, Kahler's church, under fire, withdrew from the Ministerium. Kahler complained that East Side Germans believed in a "Teutonic Jesus." At Bethlehem Evangelical church before World War I, a mother complained that elders and pastor were forcing their daughter to be confirmed in German. By 1915, the Catholic devotional newspaper in Buffalo, the *Aurora*, told all of its readers to become a member of the German-American Alliance. It expected its readers to "work unremittingly" to counter Anglophiles who wanted the United States to go to war against Germany.⁶

The demands of nationality entered the churches, and flourished in *Vereine*, associations dedicated to singing, gymnastics, humor and literature. Some had "papas" (founding members) and military units. Some conducted funerals and weddings. Such solidarity connoted a willingness to be bossed that was absent from the more chummy American clubs. Their formation even before 1871 as "German" societies also made

Germanic legalisms an elemental, binding force. The *Saengerbund* rehearsed by a sign: "Honor the German Language." The *Liedertafel* had a banner: "Stay True to the Watch on Rhine." The festival brochure of the German Society in 1891 bore the motto "Uphold the German Word." Sweeping demands blended naturally with good-natured post-prandial oratory: "stay true to our traditions," "Germans to the front," "stay continually as one," and "hold fast to the language of our fathers." At the fiftieth anniversary of the German Society in 1891, F. A. Georger noted that the demand to preserve the German language in the organization went even beyond duty. It was "indispensable" for the survival of the *Verein*.⁷

At the apex of importunity, the leaders of Buffalo's *Deutschtum* acted as the righteous, highhanded guardians of Germanic idealism. During the years after 1900, Dr. Wilhelm Gaertner emerged as the German leader in Buffalo. With a Ph.D. from the University of Marburg as well as an American M.D., this gruff physician had such authority, that local Germans called him the "Führer." When the prominent singing society, Orpheus, showed signs of lapsing in its commitment to the German language, Gaertner suddenly emerged from the ranks of its passive members to become its president. He arranged for a 1905 Schiller Festival in Buffalo, and for Orpheus-sponsored visits of a Vienna men's choir and a German admiral. The climactic moment of his service came at the start of World War I when he read a letter he had composed to thousands of local Germans. As the head of the German-American Alliance in Buffalo, Gaertner pledged to the German Kaiser, the moral and financial support of Buffalo's *Deutschtum*.⁸

Singing society directors also had a penchant for winning prestige while playing the part of the didactic German. The *Buffalo Truth* observed in 1886 that the most widely known German conductor in Buffalo, Frederick Federlein, "often stormed and swore at luckless singer[s]." His regard for ladies in the mixed chorus was said to resemble the outlook of warriors in the *Nibelungenlied*, a medieval German poem. Nevertheless, Federlein lasted thirty years with the *Saengerbund*, an organization with over 500 members. A group of women supported him, and members arose to his defense when Buffalo's German mayor, Philip Becker, tried to have him fired in 1883. Hermann Schorcht, a conductor of Orpheus during Gaertner's tenure, also like Federlein, rehearsed all-German programs in a demanding manner. Schorcht once challenged an American-born singer to a duel over a "gibe," and, on another occasion, threw a pencil at the choir because of their crooning. A German choir, he exclaimed, needed to convey more power of expression.⁹

This was classic nationalism—demands placed on others in the name of a people, a fatherland, and a culture. And if there were striking requests in this vein, one appeared in the *Buffalo Demokrat* in 1913: "Stay true to Germany, true until death." This is not as staunch as "defend Buffalo's *Deutschtum* and German honor, even in the face of a fanatic American who might pistol-whip you to death should you try." It is not necessarily fanatical, like the call of the pro-Indian, Sikh Ghadar party of California in 1911: "Come, let us become Martyrs." But the cry of this mainstream German-American newspaper is truly nationalism. It is not merely an ethnic phrase such as: "German is the language that God spoke to Adam" or "knowing the German language

profits a man in whatever field." Instead, it is inherently religious as it deals with ultimate concerns. The 1913 quote has a kinship not with ethnic one-upmanship, but with an observation of a German Catholic priest in Buffalo in 1932 that love for the German fatherland stemmed from Christ's commandment to love one's heavenly father.¹⁰

It is notable that in German-American circles, the Buffalo community bore a stigma of inferiority. Theodore Sutro, a distinguished New York City businessman and poet told local Germans in 1908 that they were one of the "mainstays" of *Deutschtum*, but only in the state of New York. Years before, Karl Heinzen charged that the Germans of Buffalo were interested only in beer, business and dancing. L. Viereck in an exhaustive study of German influence in the public schools classified the efforts of Buffalo's *Deutschtum* as "indifferent." There are some major implications here about the scope of nationalism throughout the United States. For this community, skipped by Prince Henry of Hohenzollern in his celebrated tour of German-America in 1902, was, by the standards of the world and of local Anglo-Americans, a major immigrant colony. In 1906, the membership of German Lutheran and German Evangelical churches alone in Buffalo surpassed that of the Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Disciples of Christ combined. In 1915, there were more German Catholics in Buffalo than Mormons in Salt Lake City. By 1900, there were more residents of German descent in Buffalo than there were Serbians in Belgrade, Russians in Minsk, Finns in Helsinki, Bulgars in Sophia, Croats in Zagreb, or even Greeks in Athens. Lackluster Buffalo alone had half as many German newspapers as the entire Brazilian *Deutschtum* in 1900. Buffalo's German league of nationalist *Vereine*, the Alliance, predated the ones in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires by a decade, and appears to have attracted more supporters.¹¹

The demands of German nationalism were alive and well outside of Buffalo. Karl Ruemelin, a Cincinnati politician, spoke of Germans in America who "demand that only German bees make their German honey." German newspapers and major German-American leaders disseminated injunctions as Buehl did, in one community after another. Germans were to support a noble family life. German women could not be dilettante mothers like their American counterparts, but true candy-withholding madonnas of virtue. German girls were to dress more discreetly than American girls. German men were to shun factory-made folktypes such as the American male, who swore, drank whiskey and boasted of his new "auto-machine." German males were to command their families through respect, stay awake for their family after work, fight prohibition, and always tell the truth since this was a key "German trait."¹²

The importunate character of this culture was possible, as many German-Americans had internalized the demands. Secretary of State John Hay once told Theodore Roosevelt that it was a "singular ethnological and political [fact] that the prime motive of every German-American" was to support Germany in world affairs, even above the United States. In fact, municipal elections indicate that sizable numbers of German-Americans—in Buffalo's case, probably a plurality—supported anti-war and anti-draft candidates after the United States had declared war on Germany. In 1895, a leader of the *Turnverein* could claim that German-American women "never"

neglected their domestic work. A German Jewish lawyer, Jacob Stern, argued in 1907 that the Germans would never assimilate in the United States, because in the hearts of German-Americans, there was "always" a pride of German achievements. In the fight against prohibition, the German county of Comal, Texas, produced a 99 percent majority for a wet gubernatorial candidate in 1912. Rudolf Cronau, a prolific, award-winning author, took it for granted in 1916 that the Germans "set a higher value on truth . . . than any other peoples. They all love truth."¹³

Even amidst the proliferation of those who baked pies instead of kuchen, and pronounced the letter *b* there were probably millions of Americans on the eve of World War I who were on some level of their psyche responding to the demands of German nationalism. This alone was the German case, in a nation of 100 million. The following numbers are only suggestive, and do not constitute a sum of those who showed fidelity to *Deutschtum*. But they do provide a sense of dimension. On the national level, a conservative estimate of the size of the German-American Alliance in 1914 (2,000,000) shows a group as large as the American Federation of Labor. Include the wives and children of Alliance members, but subtract all who were Catholics or Lutherans. Include one-tenth of all the congregations of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States in 1916, for they were German national parishes. Include about 1,000,000 Missouri and Wisconsin Synod Lutherans who maintained bilingual, or all-German parochial schools. There were about as many Germans here as there were people in the western third of the United States in 1910.¹⁴

To be sure, during the turn of the century, Theodore Roosevelt stopped congratulating farmers for being as German as he was. Histories note that more and more Americans of German descent spoke English at home. Still, the entire population of German descent probably doubled in the United States from 1875 to 1915. If $X + Y = Z$, and Z doubles, it remains illogical to suggest a decline for Y just because X happens to increase. A *Verein* address book and newspaper accounts from Wilmington, Delaware, indicate that German associations such as *Harmonie*, and the *Saengerbund* increased to the point that by 1914, the combined *Verein* membership equaled half of the city's German-born population. From 1895 to 1915, the circulation of German newspapers in small towns such as Hermann, Missouri, Carroll, Iowa, and Aurora, Illinois increased. In Chicago, the circulation of local German newspapers during this time increased from about 114,000 to 141,000. The German-American Alliance registered a 66 percent gain in membership from 1907 to 1915. In the nation's high schools in 1915, 28 percent of all students enrolled in a German-language class. This marked an all-time high for a foreign language in United States schools, a proportion that has only been matched by Spanish-language enrollments in the late 1990s. In the prairie town of Perham, in west central Minnesota, the percentage of German-Americans able to speak English actually declined from 1900 to 1910, and the rate at which Germans married out of their nationality dropped. It was little wonder that the *New York Times* referred after 1900 to an "adamantine *Deutschtum*."¹⁵

The case of Buffalo evokes the sense of "duty" alluded to in the beginning, the otherwise uncanny penchant for German-Americans to hold fast to their culture. From 1890 to 1915 the circulation of the four non-socialist German newspapers in

Buffalo increased from about 15,900 to 22,664. This came despite the falloff of German immigration after 1890 and despite the fact that the ratio of immigrant family heads to American-born family heads within the German population dropped from three in 1892 to one in 1915.¹⁶ During this same period, the number of pupils taking German in Buffalo's public schools increased from 5,435 to 12,406. By 1916, two-thirds of all Buffalo primary schools offered German, and the number of students completing the "highest grammar grade"—six years, increased from 40 in 1892 to 943 in 1915.¹⁷ From 1890 to 1915 in Buffalo, the number of students enrolling in *Turnverein* gym classes and Kindergartens, the number of German families in German neighborhoods, and the number of German Lutheran churches in the city increased. The names of parks attesting to German influence and nationalism—Teutonia, Schiller, Humboldt, and Germania—increased to four by 1914. In 1914, the largest gathering relative to the German-American population in Buffalo's history was reached when an equivalent of one-fourth of all German-Americans attended a German Day tribute to early German victories in World War I.¹⁸

In some cities, such as Los Angeles, California, or Newark, New Jersey, increases in the German immigrant population after 1890 remained impressive. But Buffalo's German-born population began to decline in the 1890s when the generation that crowded into the city in the 1850s began to die off. Moreover, Buffalo, unlike New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis, had a distinctive Bavarian, and south-German slant to its German population. The Buffalo community, more so than other more renown centers of *Deutschtum*, contained a large number of south Germans from rural areas, the very group considered least attuned to the nationalistic political parties of Germany after 1871. Yet even in Buffalo, *Deutschtum* by 1917 was a movement with potential, rather than a rearguard act as has been suggested. The extent of nationalistic ardor implied here for the German-American experience as a whole, in fact, may be significant from an American, and even a world standpoint.¹⁹

Consider, for instance, the German case in relation to Southern nationalism before the Civil War. In the last thirty years, at the same time it has become unfashionable to speak of immigrant groups as nationalities, much has been made of Southern or Confederate "nationalism." But how was the Confederacy essentially nationalistic? When newspapers such as the *Carolina Watchman* in 1850, the *Charlotte Hornet's Nest* in 1850, the *Charleston Courier* in 1850 and the *New Orleans Daily Crescent* in 1855 embraced the cause of a Southern nation, they began with the premise that northern attacks on slavery had become intolerable. Their Southern nation began as a solution to a larger problem, an expedient. Leading German-Americans spoke and sang of blood as a "good cement," of their culture as "holy," and of the fatherland as "above the nations." But George Fitzhugh had more faith in the system of slavery than in the South, and Josiah Nott stressed the dominion of the "American Caucasian" rather than a Southern race. German-American poets such as Ernst A. Zuendt, Wilhelm Mueller, and Paul Hoffmann addressed Germany with the warmth one might a lover, but Southern writers were more likely to extol "Charleston," "Carolina," or a "Kentucky Belle" than the South. German-American newspapers extolled the German language and German customs. Newspapers such as the *Richmond Whig* in 1854 and the *New Orleans*

Daily Crescent in 1855 were more interested to prove how the Yankees had divided a people of the same "language" and "descent," than to justify Southern nationality.²⁰

Southerners consistently missed chances to promote a sense of duty to the Southern nation. James Hammond claimed in 1859 that not the South, but cotton was king. Robert Toombs of Georgia urged his countrymen to worship at the "altar of liberty" rather than at the shrine of their new nation. Fire-Eaters such as Nathaniel Beverly Tucker, John Quitman, Robert Rhett, and William Yancey were the earliest and most adamant proponents of a southern nation. But Tucker spoke of Virginians as a "nationality." Quitman believed that any group or business could form its own state if it was willing to pursue a private act of imperialism in Latin America. Robert Rhett felt it was better to tear a nation into "1,000 fragments" than endure a powerful government. From the waving of the palmetto flag in 1861 to the decision of Robert E. Lee to fight for Virginia's sake, and the threatened secession of Georgia, the Confederacy teemed with anti-nationalist, libertarian desire. It was not just that wartime commands outweighed nationalistic demands. Essentially, the South proved willing by 1861 to follow the commands in order to evade the demands.²¹

In the United States, "liberty" was Jefferson's "true God," Lincoln's providence, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's piety. Even the "Americanizers" of World War I, failed to surmount this tradition. As their demands were weak, they too lacked the nationalistic flair of the German-Americans. The Superpatriots of this era, as their name implied, began as patriots, not nationalists. Their leader, Theodore Roosevelt, was more of a professor than a boss. He intimated that all immigrants should be learning English, but found it impossible to insist that all Americans know English. He proclaimed that ethnic voting was treason, but failed to urge countermeasures. He argued that there was no room in America for other nationalities, but admitted that Americans were still "developing our own distinctive culture." President Woodrow Wilson, who embraced Superpatriotic ideals in 1915, essentially demanded that all immigrants cease unpatriotic activity. Instead of demanding that they cut ties with their fatherland, he argued that it was "sacred" to love the land of one's birth. Moreover, Wilson often equated American patriotism with an essentially un-nationalistic internationalism. "Think first of humanity" demanded Wilson to new American citizens at Philadelphia's Convention Hall in 1915. Though wartime pressures incited a brand of American chauvinism that included kiss-the-flag ceremonies, and beatings, the ideological basis of such bullying remained weak. The question lingers: Was it nationalism or scapegoating? In numerous essays on Americanization before World War I by Frances Kellor, Jane Addams, the Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Lane, and others, one finds an unusual degree of hedging. What is an American? What is an American supposed to do? The only demand that emerged in these works was an implicit suggestion. Americans should believe in democracy.²²

Germans in the United States were but imitators of the European nationalists, but still, their tone was more fatherly, and their demands more sweeping than the Americanizers. In addition, the degree of German nationalism in the United States even appears to have ranked high among the other German colonies around the world. In Riga, Latvia, Germans dominated trading houses, and banks, but remained politically

vulnerable and called their culture "Baltic." The German farmers in Chilean and Volga River hamlets knew nothing of "German Days" and Schillerfests. The German communities of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires included German utility companies and employment agencies, and yet South American communities lacked broad and indigenous movements.

The Harugari speaker, Louis Buehl, had called for a Germanized America. But the defeat of Germany in 1918 shattered the nationalistic faith, and after a brief revival of "Deutschtum" in the 1930s, the descendants of Buffalo's "Great German East Side" scattered, and its neighborhoods turned into a ghetto. Americans of German descent uttered few trenchant lamentations for *Deutschtum*, for it came to represent a religious and social abyss. They fled it. Elderly Americans with German backgrounds today believe that their ancestors Americanized quickly. One might assume from their accounts and from the outcome of *Deutschtum* that American culture was too charismatic for an immigrant culture to withstand its influence. But the case in Buffalo shows that there was no victory for the forces of Americanization before 1917. *Deutschtum* not only endured in Buffalo's prosaic community, but showed signs of progress. During the age when beer gardens and spires marked the bounds of German efforts in the United States, *Deutschtum* lived in tension with American culture. It was not a natural but a moral phenomenon. When this foreign intrusion collapsed, it was not due to the allure of American culture that had worked unsuccessfully against it for years, but to the bankrupt status of German nationalism as a secular religion. The "Faith" faltered in 1918, and limped back to life in the 1930s only to die after 1941. Much of world and American culture has demonized it thereafter.²³

To see the *Deutschtum* that once existed as a nationality, however, is to see much more than the German-American experience, unclouded by modern bias. It is to see the *Polonia*, the Hungarian *Magyarsag*, and *La Colonia Italiana* in a new light as well. The literature on foreign nationalism suggests that groups such as the Irish, Hungarians, Asian Indians, Greeks, Poles, Cubans, and the fascist-era Italians showed even more ardor than the Germans. But the case of *Deutschtum*, properly construed, underlines the scope and importance of other nationalities. A new image of the United States emerges as well. Here was a nation that was able to defeat serious nationalistic movements without having a strong nationalism of its own. In the United States—even in its Southern Confederacy in 1861—the demands of society have had more to do with an individual's economic rights and political liberties than with nationalism. How then did the United States persevere? Certainly, as the great superpower of the twentieth century, the living proof that all other nationalist fantasies did not amount to much. At the very least, victories in the World Wars have compensated for the uneven appeal of American nationalism. The United States has not needed to convert its nationalities, so much as to subvert its wounded and discredited remnants. Perhaps like the Assyrians of the eighth-century BC, the United States has not so much bedazzled foreign nations with its culture, as it has discredited other cultures with its success.

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Notes

¹ My thanks to Shemetric Jones, who helped prepare this manuscript, and to Jaci Walker who helped with searches for information. *Buffalo Freie Presse*, 10 July 1879, 12 March 1886; "One-Hundred-and-Fifteenth New York State Grand Lodge: German Order of Harugari Convention 1962," Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.

² Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Boston, 1969), 14; Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York, 1964), 27-29; Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York, 1986), 14-15; April Schultz, "The Pride of the Race Had Been Touched: The 1925 Norse-American Immigration Centennial and Ethnic Identity" *Journal of American History* 77 (March 1991): 1267. Leonard W. Doob in *Patriotism and Nationalism* (New Haven, CT, 1964), 6, has provided one of the clearest and most useful definitions of nationalism. He notes that nationalism is the "set of more or less uniform demands" which arise from patriotic ideology. Standard works in German-American history have evaded the consideration of German nationalism. Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Ethnicity as a Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German-America on Parade" in Werner Sollors, ed., *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York, 1989), 69-72; David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri: 1900-1918* (Columbia, Missouri, 1985), 20; Frederick Luebke, "The Germans" in John Higham, ed., *Ethnic Leadership in America* (Baltimore, 1978), 67; Brent O. Peterson, *Popular Narratives and Ethnic Identity: Literature and Community in Die Abendschule* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), 248; Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz, eds., *German Workers in Industrial Chicago, 1850-1910* (Dekalb, IL, 1983), 5; Hartmut Keil, ed., *German Worker's Culture in the United States 1850 to 1920* (Washington, DC, 1988), 97, 122, 171. The religious and nationalistic dimensions of German-American poetry is seen in: *Boston Germania*, 9 May, 20 June, 1 August 1914; Gustav A. Zimmermann, *Deutsch in Amerika: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutsch-amerikanischen Literatur* (Chicago: Ackermann und Eyler, 1892), 42-43. *Chicago Abendpost*, 2 August 1914; *Freie Presse*, 17 August 1908. In the late 1930s, the *Buffalo Volksfreund* told its readers to: "speak German, think German, act German." "The German language must always be kept alive." "Do not let yourself be robbed of the Deutschum." 9 August 1936, 14 August 1938, 13 August 1939.

³ Andrew P. Yox, "The Parochial Context of Trusteeism," *The Catholic Historical Review* 76 (October 1990): 722, 725; *Geschichte der Deutschen in Buffalo und Erie County* (Buffalo, NY, 1898), 73, 148; Richard C. Brown and Bob Watson, *Buffalo* (Woodland Hills, CA, 1981), 119, 123; *Buffalo* (Buffalo, 1908), 127-41.

⁴ Gail Lapidus, "From Democratization to Disintegration: the Impact of Perestroika on the National Question" in Gail Lapidus and Victor Zaslavsky, eds., *From Union to Commonwealth: Nationalism and Separatism in the Soviet Republics* (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), 50; Paul Magocsi, *The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus', 1848-1948* (Cambridge, MA, 1978), 65; H. Perry Smith, ed., *History of the City of Buffalo and Erie County*, 2 vols. (Syracuse, NY, 1884), 2: 164-78; *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 131, 274. Sacred Heart German Catholic school was said to have been sturdy enough to have supported an inbound train. The school had wooden rafters one foot wide and floor joists eighteen inches deep. *Buffalo Times*, 28 April 1929; Interview with Martha Murbach, former member of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, 13 August 1979; Francis X. Curran, "The Buffalo Mission of the German Jesuits 1869-1907" in James A. Reynolds, ed., *Historical Records and Studies*, 43 (New York, 1955): 122-24; Department of Public Affairs, *Buffalo: Its Schools* (Buffalo, 1916), 30.

⁵ *Buffalo Commercial*, 19 May 1873; *Freie Presse*, 20 May 1873; Department of Public Affairs, *Buffalo*, 30; Willi Paul Adams, *The German-Americans: an Ethnic Experience* (Indianapolis, 1993), 27; *New York Times*, 26 September 1905. It is sometimes noted that important German programs, such as the language classes of St. Louis, were discontinued before 1910. It should be noted, however, that the political power of the Germans waned as their relative size in the city declined after 1890. Also, advocates of the German parochial schools, as in the case of St. Louis, often opposed funding for German in the public system.

⁶ Adaline M. Greenthaner, "Years of Grace," unpublished manuscript, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society; Paul Bloomhardt, *Frederick August Kahler* (Buffalo: Otto Ulbrich, 1937), 28, 33; Alphonse Wolanin, "A Brief History of the Genesee Community," unpublished manuscript, Buffalo and Erie County Library, 1967; *Aurora*, 6 August 1915.

⁷ Ernst Besser, comp., "Buffalo Deutscher Saengerbund," unpublished scrapbooks, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society; Die Deutsche Jungmaenner Gesellschaft, *Festschrift zur Feier ihres fünfzigjährigen Stiftungsfestes* (Buffalo, 1891), 1, 12; *Buffalo Demokrat*, 12 May 1891, 10 March 1897, 10 May 1898, 22 April 1903.

⁸ *Buffalo und Sein Deutschum* (Philadelphia, 1912), 90-92, 124-25; *Demokrat*, 4-7 May 1905, 10

August 1914.

⁹ Besser, "Deutscher Saengerbund;" *Buffalo Courier*, 13 May 1907; 24 January 1909; *Volksfreund*, 13 October 1909.

¹⁰ *Demokrat*, 9 August 1913; Joan Jensen, *Passage from India* (New Haven, CT 1988), 191; *Volksfreund*, 15 August 1932; Matt. 22:37.

¹¹ *Freie Presse*, 17 August 1908; Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845-80* (Urbana, IL, 1990), 104; L. Viereck, *Zwei Jahrhunderte Deutschen Unterrichts in den Vereinigten Staaten* (Braunschweig, Germany, 1903), 174. From a systematic sample of 1,486 Buffalo households, drawn from the federal manuscript census schedules of 1900, I estimated that the size of the population with German surnames and/or German nativities in 1900 was about 130,000. This tabulation used a probability chart for the nationality of surnames based on a printout of Buffalo's entire population of 1855. Lawrence Glasco compiled the 1855 tabulation for his 1973 dissertation at the State University of Buffalo at New York, "Ethnicity and Social Structure." Andrew P. Yox, "Decline of the German-American Community in Buffalo 1855-1925" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 1983), 385; The following population sizes are found in B. R. Mitchell, comp., *International Historical Statistics: Europe, 1750-1993* (London, Eng., 1998), 74-76, for the year 1900/01 in thousands: Athens (111), Belgrade (91), Helsinki (91), Minsk (91), Sofia (68), and Zagreb (61); Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1906, Part 1*, 80-81; Frederick Luebke, *Germans in Brazil* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1987), 54. The *Volksbund* of Argentina had, perhaps, 10,000, and the Brazilian *Germanischer Bund* about 6,000 members in 1916. These leagues were organized by German nationals, and were often cold-shouldered by the naturalized "Teuto Brazilians" and the Argentine "Volksdeutsche" of the South American nations. In Buffalo, some fifty-seven *Vereine* were affiliated with the German-American Alliance, and the total of individual members may have exceeded 20,000. The Alliance-sponsored German Day of 1914 in Buffalo attracted 25,000 adults. *Buffalo News*, 10 August 1914; Ronald C. Newton, *German Buenos Aires, 1900-1933* (Austin, TX, 1977), 57, 63, 142.

¹² Carl Ruemelin, "Die Zukunft des Deutschtums in Amerika," *Deutsche Pionier* 2 (1870-71): 343; *Freie Presse*, 9 August 1907; *Volksfreund*, 9 May 1905; *Buffalo Echo*, 29 July 1915, 16 September 1915.

¹³ This is not to say that communities such as Buffalo's *Deutschtum* would have satisfied Johann G. Fichte any more than they satisfied German-American leaders such as Karl Heinzen, and Theodore Sutro. But masked balls, beer and flirtation among Germans had a nationalist dimension. Nationalism was not confined to highbrow cultural interests. William R. Thayer, comp., *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, 2 vols. (Boston, MA, 1915), 2:291; Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty* (DeKalb, IL, 1974), 293. In Buffalo, the Mayoral Primary of 16 October 1917 featured a German socialist candidate, Friedrich Brill, who opposed both America's entry in World War I and the draft. In all the neighborhoods in which German families comprised over half of the population—The Orchard, Peckham, East Lovejoy, Upper Sycamore, Humboldt, and Schiller (Wards 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, and 19)—Brill won a plurality. Use of the Spearman correlation shows a strong and positive relation between ward rank in percent German-born, and the ward rank in the percent voting for Brill (.900). Also, the Spearman correlation is positive (.634) between ward rank in percent American-born with German surnames, and ward rank in the percent voting for Brill (N=27 wards). *Buffalo Enquirer*, 17 October 1917; 1915 New York State manuscript census schedules. A systematic sample of 2,254 households was used to establish the proportions for the minorities in the Buffalo wards. Yox, "Decline of the German-American Community," 312-13, 403-4. Hugo Muensterberg, *Tomorrow: Letters to a Friend in Germany* (New York, 1917), 85; *Buffalo Sonntagspost*, 14 April 1895. *Freie Presse*, 7 August 1907; Seth S. McKay, *Texas Politics, 1906-1944* (Lubbock, TX, 1952), 50; Rudolf Cronau, *German Achievements in America* (New York, 1916), 126. To be sure, the content of what was German sometimes changed from case to case. The unifying principle, however, was nationalism, the willingness to follow the demands that emanated from the leaders of a nationality. Those who conformed to these cultural patterns such as Wilhelm Hellriegel, an East Side shop keeper, or Philip Becker, a former Mayor, were referred to as a "good German" or a "genuine German." *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 45, 108.

¹⁴ Clifton J. Child, *The German-Americans in Politics 1914-1917* (Madison, WI, 1939), 4; Harold Livesay, *Samuel Compers and Organized Labor in America* (Boston, MA, 1978), 114, 171; Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York, 1990), 154; *Courier*, 16 October 1911; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1950* (Washington DC, 1952), 1-11. In the sensational, war inspired book, *The German-American Plot*, Frederick Wile claimed there were ten million "pro-German sympathizers in the United States" in 1915. (London, Eng., 1915), 29; In 1917, Hugo Muensterberg claimed that "millions keep German social traditions alive. . ."

in the United States. *Tomorrow*, 81. However big the number, I would not claim that devout German Catholics and Lutherans made particularly good nationalists. But along with Isaiah 26:13 many could later confess: "O Lord our God, other lords than you have ruled us, but we acknowledge no one other than you."

¹⁵ Phyllis Keller, *States of Belonging: German-American Intellectuals and the First World War* (Cambridge, MA, 1979), 236, 234, 261; Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War* (Columbus, OH, 1936), 5; Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Immigrants, Immigrant Neighborhoods, and Ethnic Identity," *Journal of American History* 66 (December 1979): 609; J. Emil Abeles, "The German Element in Wilmington from 1850 to 1914" (M.A. Thesis, University of Delaware, 1948), 17, 37; Some have viewed Milwaukee as a textbook case of assimilation. But according to Karl Arndt's, and Mary Olson's exhaustive survey, the subscriptions to German newspapers in Milwaukee showed hefty increases up until World War I, with the *Vorwaerts* and the *Germania* leading the way. See *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals 1732-1955* (New York, 1965), 48, 56-73, 133, 240-41, 676-97. Not all newspapers in the survey compiled by Arndt and Olson provided circulation figures for the same year. To gain an estimate for the year 1915, I thus used slopes based on the known points of circulation on the graph from the years 1910 to 1916. Heinz Kloss, *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums: Die Geschichte einer unvollendeten Volksgruppe* (Berlin, 1937), 255; Edwin H. Zeydel, "The Teaching of German in the United States from Colonial Times to the Present," *The German Quarterly* 37 (1964): 362; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1997* (Washington, DC, 1997), 69; David Peterson, "From Bone Depth: German American Communities in Rural Minnesota Before the Great War," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11 (Winter 1992): 36-37; *New York Times*, 27 March 1901.

¹⁶ The city's oldest German newspaper, the *Demokrat*, climbed from 1890 to 1915 in circulation from about 5,000 to 10,327. The *Volksfreund* and the *Aurora* also registered gains, as did the socialist newspaper, the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. The *Freie Presse* died in 1912. To determine the sizes of the German-American population from 1890 to 1915, I used a sample of 1,636 from the 1892 New York State manuscript census schedules, and 2,254 from the 1915 New York State manuscript census schedules. Yox, "German-American Community," 198, 384, 413; Arndt and Olson, *German-American Newspapers*, 319-29.

¹⁷ Department of Public Affairs, *Buffalo*, 30, 45.

¹⁸ Marie Hassett, "The Contributions of the Germans to the Development of Buffalo as evidenced by the Buffalo Turnverein," unpublished manuscript, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, 1969, 31; Department of Public Affairs, *Buffalo*, 45. Though the number of families with German surnames declined in many of the older neighborhoods such as the Orchard, and lower Sycamore, the number of German families more than tripled from 1890 to 1915 in new areas on the city's extreme East Side such as the Schiller Park area, East Lovejoy, and the so called "Kaisertown" district. Yox, "German-American Community," 403-4; Buffalo Council of Churches, *Where Buffalo Worships* (Buffalo, 1927), 58-62; "Parks in Buffalo," unpublished scrapbook, Buffalo and Erie County Library. The 1914 German Day in Buffalo attracted 30,000 residents at a time when the entire German population of Buffalo (based on surnames) reached about 130,000. The 1871 parade celebrating the unification of Germany may have attracted a higher relative audience, but the crowd was not in one place, and was not counted. Other outstanding crowds for German festivals included the 1851 St. John Picnic, the National Fest of 1895, and the 1913 German Day. See Yox, "German-American Community," 415.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34; Max Hannemann, *Das Deutschtum in den Vereinigten Staaten: Seine Verbreitung und Entwicklung seit der Mitte des 19 Jahrhunderts* (Gotha, Germany, 1936), Tables 5-7. The proportion of the German population considered Bavarian was consistently higher for Buffalo than for midwestern cities such as Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Louis, as well as for eastern centers such as New York and Philadelphia. Francis A. Walker, *The Statistics of the United States* (Washington, DC, 1872), 1:388-89; *Compendium of the Tenth Census* (Washington DC, 1883), 548-49.

²⁰ Avery O. Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1981), 90, 100, 103, 152, 221, 243; *Sonntagspost*, 7 April 1895; Julius Goebel, *Das Deutschtum in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika* (Munich, 1904), 54; *Das Goethe-Schiller Denkmal in San Francisco, California* (San Francisco, 1901), 20; *Volksfreund*, 5 October 1909. George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* (Cambridge, MA, 1960), xv; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Cambridge, MA, 1981), 153; Ernst Anton Zuendt, "Deutschland erwacht," and Wilhelm Mueller, "Der alten Heimath," in Zimmermann, *Deutsch in Amerika*, 123, 202; *Germania*, 9 May 1914. John McCardell and others have noted that Southern writers were relatively late in embracing the idea of a Southern nation. *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism* (New York, 1979), 164-65.

²¹ Eric H. Walther, *The Fire-Eaters* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1992), 36, 109, 123; in a recent work, Mitchell Snay argues that few Southern clergymen advocated a separate Southern nation before 1861. *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1993), 6.

²² Philip Davis, comp. and ed., *Immigration and Americanization* (Boston: Athenaeum, 1920), 21, 612, 616-17, 627, 655; Winthrop Talbot, *Americanization* (New York, 1917), v; Emory Bogardus, *Essentials of Americanism* (Los Angeles, 1919), 11.

²³ Benjamin Disraeli once noted: "Duty cannot exist without faith."

