



Destruction of an illegal still, Miami, Florida, 1925  
 Florida State Archives



Anti-Prohibition campaign, Wilmington, Delaware, ca. 1930  
 Hagley Museum

## Should Prohibition Be Repealed?

"Five Years of Prohibition and Its Results," *The North American Review*  
 June-July-August 1925 & September-October-November 1925 ■ EXCERPTS

After decades of vehement debate, the "Noble Experiment" of Prohibition commenced on January 17, 1920, one year after the Eighteenth Amendment had been ratified by the states. The debate did not end at that point, of course; it switched to the issues of efficacy, unforeseen consequences, popular support, and repeal. In 1925 the *North American Review* invited essays on Prohibition—its success or failure—from leaders in the law, government, public health, business and labor, education, and the church. Excerpts from the twenty-one essays are presented here; the pro-repeal arguments appearing first, as they were in the *Review*. What factors were central in the debate five years into Prohibition? What later factors entered the debate, especially in the 1928 presidential campaign? [Images added.]

### "the greatest mistake in the world"

Samuel H. Church was president of the Carnegie Institute. His essay was titled "The Paradise of the Ostrich."

Finding myself seated one night at dinner beside a United States Judge who possesses one of the greatest judicial minds that our country has produced in this generation, I asked him what he thought of Prohibition. "Regardless of what your feelings may be concerning the use of liquor," he replied, "the American people made the greatest mistake in the world when they inserted the statute itself in the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The Amendment should have given Congress the power to legislate for it, or against it, or to prohibit it, in accordance from time to time with the changing views of the people. But now that they have got the statute itself in there, it will be difficult to get it out, and in the meantime—" and his deep-seated eyes, sparkling with humor, fastened themselves upon a man across the table who was at that moment raising a glass of wine to his lips, "—in the meantime—there you are!"

And that, indeed, is just where we are! Moved by the deep emotions of the war, we have indolently [carelessly] permitted a well-organized and enormously financed body composed of zealots, fanatics and bigots, together with their paid orators and professional agitators, the whole of them clearly less than five per cent of the potential vote of the country, to insert a Draconian [excessively severe] statute in the great charter of our liberties, while on every hand the man opposite is raising a glass of liquor to his lips. And there you are! . . .

Prohibition is the paradise of the ostrich. With his head in the sand the stupid bird believes that what he will not see does not exist. But all around him there has been created a business worth hundreds of millions a year, which pays no tax, knows no control, is without responsibility, dispenses more or less poisoned liquors, debauches youth and age, corrupts the politicians, demoralizes the police, and spreads everywhere a contempt for all law.

**“America must open its eyes”**

Henry Bourne Joy was president of the Packard Motor Car Company. Originally a supporter of Prohibition, he came to oppose it as enforced and testified before Congress for its repeal. His essay was titled “Prohibition against Human Nature.”

Five years have rolled by, and many think that Prohibition has had its chance. Many have come to think and believe that after the most diligent effort for five years by the government of the United States of America to enforce bone-dry prohibition upon our people, it has totally failed. Vast appropriations have been made by the national government and by the state governments to no avail. In Michigan one of the leading state officials recently said that the more money we appropriate and the more people we employ to enforce Prohibition, the more freely is liquor available. . . .

Have the American people lost their balance wheel of common sense so that they can no longer understand human nature? We might as well legislate against the natural functions of existence [i.e., respiration, elimination, etc.] as to seek to continue on our present path towards a complete disrespect for our laws and for the natural rights of a free people.

**“What is the remedy?”**

John Philip Hill was a “wet” representative in Congress from Maryland. His essay was titled “A State’s Rights Remedy for Volsteadism.”

What is the effect of Prohibition on general crime increase? Today, Leavenworth and Atlanta prisons, both federal penitentiaries, are so overcrowded that they are caring for several hundred convicts above the institutions’ facilities. There are about 3,200 now in Leavenworth and 3,023 in Atlanta. Temporary dormitories for the two prisons probably will have to be provided in the industrial shops. Apparently the experiment in national regulation of local beverages and habits has been a failure and has brought with it increase rather than decrease in general crime. What is the remedy? . . .

I should like to see the Eighteenth Amendment repealed, power being retained by the Congress to protect the states from outside interference with their local laws, but while the Eighteenth Amendment is part of the Constitution I feel that there might be a substitute for the Volstead Act [law of Congress implementing Prohibition] which would greatly improve the existing situation.

Repeal the Volstead Act and enact the following:

Section 1.— Each State shall for itself define the meaning of the words “intoxicating liquors” as used in Section 1 of Article XVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, and each State shall itself enforce within its own limits its own laws on this subject.

Section 2.— Any person who transports or causes to be transported into any State any beverage prohibited by such State as being an “intoxicating liquor” should be punished by the United States by imprisonment for not more than 10 years or by a fine of not less than \$10,000 nor more than \$100,000, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

**Prohibition Is Discussed  
By Dry and Wet Leaders  
As It Begins Eighth Year**

**Both Sides Admit Law  
Has Cost Heavily in  
Money, Sentences and  
Lives Since Passage.**

...  
**BY ALFRED P. RECK.**  
Washington, January 14.—Nation-  
wide prohibition will start upon its  
eighth year Sunday.

ly to the annual income of people of  
this country.  
“It has greatly improved conditions  
of labor.  
“It has cut drunk-caused poverty  
to a record low mark.  
“Since prohibition, arrests for  
drunkenness have rapidly decreased  
from 20 per 10,000 persons in 1914,  
to five per 10,000 in 1920 and less  
than four per 10,000 in 1925.”  
Both wets and dries admit that  
this has not been accomplished with-  
out heavy cost.  
**Cost Heavy.**  
Since 1920, more than \$63,081,000

The Atlanta Constitution, January 15, 1927

...  
The Volstead Act is certain to be modified. The Eighteenth Amendment, in the minds of the majority of the American people, was never intended to apply to wine, beer and cider, and by the adoption of such a law as I have proposed, those states which wish such beverages may obtain them legally even while the Eighteenth Amendment remains part of the Constitution.

**“how far are we succeeding?”**

William H. Stayton was vice president of the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment. His essay was titled “Have We Prohibition or Only Prohibition Laws?”

All of us know that terrible evils flow from the abuse of alcohol; all wish to lessen those evils; all believe that in *some* way it can be done.

But how?

And this question brings us to the age-long controversy as to whether—in dealing with vices, as opposed to crimes—we more effectively reach the hearts and minds of men by persuasion or by force and punishment. The United States has adopted the latter method in an effort to banish intoxicating beverages from our country and our lives. How far are we succeeding? . . .

Approximate Arrests for Drunkenness

1919, last pre-Volstead year .....	892,595
1921, first Volstead year.....	1,010,190
1922, second Volstead year .....	1,377,865

This enormous increase in drunkenness in so short a time is high corroborative evidence of the increased consumption of hard liquor. The [Anti Saloon] League maintains the theory that crimes of all sorts are largely due to drunkenness, and consequently increase as intoxication increases. . . .

Approximate Arrests for All Causes

1919, the last pre-Volstead year .....	4,600,860
1921, the first Volstead year.....	5,557,310
1922, the second Volstead year .....	6,339,260

These figures of the Anti-Saloon League are supported by the official figures, federal, state and municipal [city], and established the fact that (1) arrests for intoxication and (2) arrests for all causes have greatly increased since the passage of the National Prohibition law.

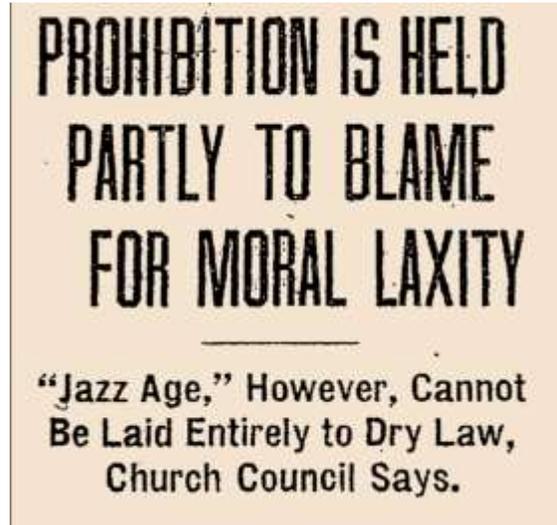
To what are such increases due?

We believe them to be due to the greater consumption of hard liquor hereinbefore shown to exist. But if contrary to the *prima facie* proofs<sup>1</sup> advanced, less hard liquor is now consumed, then it follows that when we have less liquor we have more crime, and the Prohibition hypothesis is worse off than before.

**“in a class by themselves”**

George Gordon Battle was a New York attorney active in the New York Democratic Party. His essay was titled “The Effect of Prohibition upon Crime.”

I believe that the Prohibition laws are regarded as in a class by themselves. Very few of our people feel any obligation to observe these laws. But I do not observe that this habitual violation of the Prohibition statutes carries with it any general contempt of law. I believe that the great majority of men and women pay no attention to these statutes, but are as obedient as formerly to other laws. And in conclusion, I repeat that the most dangerous feature of the present situation is to my mind the official corruption which now forms such a scandal in the enforcement of these laws. If steps can be taken to cleanse the service of this evil, in my opinion, the principal menace of Prohibition will cease to threaten us.



*The Washington Post*, September 16, 1925 [Federal Council of Churches]

<sup>1</sup> *Prima facie*: “at first sight” (Latin), i.e., on first impression until proven otherwise.

## “he rejects the inferiority complex”

James P. Holland was president of the New York State Federation of Labor. His essay was titled “The Workingman’s View of Prohibition.”

The workingman is aware that sumptuary laws<sup>2</sup>—such as the Prohibition Amendment—are generally enacted for *his* particular benefit, and to help *him* to lead a “moral” life, to *protect* him from this, that, and the other thing. He resents this patriarchal [fatherlike/parental] attitude of the lessees [holders] of all goodness and morality, such as the Anti-Saloon League, and demands the liberty to shape his own standard of life, now and hereafter. He rejects the inferiority complex which is foisted upon him by “benevolent” employers with the aid of professional reformers. . . .

As an American citizen, the workingman has another just as strenuous objection to the Prohibition Amendment. The workingman insists upon remaining a *citizen* of the United States of America, and refuses to become a *subject* of the government, without his specific consent.

## “the evil results now familiar to us”

Oscar Terry Crosby was a businessman, writer, and former assistant Secretary of the Treasury. His essay was titled “The Enforcement of Prohibition.”

There have always been thousands of total abstainers and there have always been many more thousands of moderate drinkers. Presumably the present rigid laws were enacted to prevent one man in a hundred from drinking to such excess as would make of him a nuisance and a danger to others. *It seems safe to say that if government had exercised but a small fraction of the tyranny now employed for the total suppression of the traffic in intoxicating beverages, it could have dealt with the small fraction of drunkards among us with equal success, as far as their elimination is concerned, and without producing the evil results now familiar to us. . . .* [Italics in original]

I, for one, shall take no part in the absurdly snobbish attitude of many people of my acquaintance, who excuse the Eighteenth Amendment in all its tyranny because it presumably imposes upon the so-called “working classes” particular methods of spending their money. Heaven help us! Let us have done with what may be indeed a sincere form of meddling-Mattie activity, but what often seems to be a mere affectation of superiority.

## “stupid and ineffective Volstead Law”

Charles L. Dana was a physician and physiologist specializing in “nervous diseases” [mental illness] at Cornell University Medical College. His essay was titled “Nervous and Mental Diseases and the Volstead Law.”

All experience shows that the methods of state control of the sale of alcohol, such perhaps as exist in Quebec or Sweden, are infinitely better than the stupid and ineffective Volstead Law. This opinion is not in conflict with the theory of Prohibition. We are solemnly told that “the law ought to be obeyed” and that the best way to get rid of a bad law is to obey it. This kind of Apostolic admonition makes good Sunday editorial, but it carries no conviction.<sup>3</sup> The law forbidding one to play ball on Sunday, or to carry a bottle of wine to a sick friend, makes a very different kind of appeal from that law which forbids one to steal, or assault, or murder.

## “stimulate a disregard of all law”

Henry Samuel Priest was a Missouri attorney who had served as a U.S. district judge. His essay was titled “Prohibition and Respect for Law.”

We have hundreds of thousands of laws that should have no place upon the statute books and that come to be disregarded as a matter of course and merely stimulate a disregard of all law of whatever character. The Eighteenth Amendment and its enforcing Act [Volstead Act] are a conspicuous type of such frivolous enactment. They are of a purely sumptuary character. They enforce no duty and protect no rights. . . . The constitutional provision announces no fundamental principle of government. It is an effort to regulate the morals of the country, to make that immoral and criminal which is neither immoral nor criminal *per se* [in itself]. The evil consists in the excessive use of intoxicants, not in their moderate use.

<sup>2</sup> *Sumptuary laws*: laws that forbid or restrict the purchase and/or use of specific items, including alcohol, luxury clothing, etc.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., this kind of religious command may sound good in a newspaper’s Sunday editorial, but it does not thereby have any logical or social merit.

## "New York is not as great an offender"

Lawson Purdy was the former tax commissioner of New York City. His essay was titled "States and Statistics."

A great many citizens seem to take it for granted that the Prohibition Amendment and the Volstead Law are more generally violated in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania than in any other three States of the Union, and that New York stands far ahead of any other State in the number of violations per thousand of population. . . .

Figures of arrests for drunkenness compiled by the Research Secretary of the World League Against Alcoholism are summarized for the year 1923. For present purposes data given for fifteen cities, scattered from coast to coast, is reproduced in tabulated form:

State and City Cited		No. of arrests for drunkenness, 1923	No. to 10,000 Population
California	Los Angeles	12,839	222
California	Sacramento	2,331	358
Colorado	Denver	3,111	121
Georgia	Atlanta	7,003	350
Indiana	South Bend	2,096	299
Iowa	Des Moines	4,489	356
Maine	Portland	1,754	254
Minnesota	St. Paul	4,364	186
Nebraska	Omaha	4,817	252
New York	New York City	10,643	19
New York	Albany	3,555	314
Oregon	Portland	3,099	120
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	45,226	248
Washington	Seattle	7,974	253
Wisconsin	Milwaukee	3,789	82

It is probable that these statistics are not absolutely comparable. There are at least two sources of error: 1.—The policy of the police in making arrests for drunkenness probably differs in the different cities; in some, arrests may be made for much less cause than in others. 2.—The classification of arrests employed by the officials in the different cities may differ. After making every allowance for these possible differences, these statistics nevertheless show that the City of New York is not as great an offender as are other cities of the country.



Carey Orr, "The Unhappy Couple," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 21, 1925



Carey Orr, "Bullet Proof," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 29, 1926

**“there will be no turning back”**

James J. Britt was a lead attorney in the Prohibition Unit of the U.S. Treasury. His essay was titled “Prohibition and Respect for Law.”

Upon the whole, the progress made has justified the hopes of all familiar with the history of great reforms. At the beginning many thought it would take a generation to effect the end [achieve the goal]. We are dealing with human aptitudes deeply ingrained and long-abiding. It took more than three hundred years to lead the people of Israel from the practice of idolatry, and more than forty years for the American people to stop the slave trade after Congress made it unlawful. In the light of human experience, we should not expect complete Prohibition for some time yet, but that it will come, and be a part of the nation’s order of life, let no one doubt. . . .

That there is a general increase of lawlessness, all know, but it has no connection with the Prohibition Amendment other than as all laws are involved. It is due to the general lowering of morale following a war in which the moral props of centuries were removed. In very truth Satan was loosed for a season, nor has his recapture been too vigorously undertaken. America, with the rest of the world, was tremendously shaken, and has not yet regained its former steadiness. The letdown is universal. . . .

Much of the misunderstanding arises from the fact that it is practically impossible for Prohibition to get a fair report. Nothing in all American history has been so misrepresentative as the attitude of the press. With a few honorable exceptions, it is impossible to obtain a correct news account or favorable comment on anything relating to the subject. . . . Obedience to law, the sober conduct of the great masses, their quiet pursuit of industry, morality, and religion, furnish no headlines. . . .

In Prohibition there will be no turning back. The course of the nation is fixed. The Eighteenth Amendment will be honored, not in the breach, but in the keeping.

**“that is why it is here to stay”**

Gifford Pinchot was the governor of Pennsylvania and the well-known advocate of conservation. His essay was titled “Prohibition and Law Enforcement.”

If the Eighteenth Amendment were a failure, which it is not, Pennsylvania would be a natural place for it to fail. In Pennsylvania it is not a failure but a success. If progress can be made in Pennsylvania it can be made in any state, for the handicaps are many. . . .

My two years’ contact with law enforcement has convinced me beyond question:

- First. That the Eighteenth Amendment is growing steadily stronger in the confidence and approval of the American people.
- Second. That it has already conferred benefits of the largest value and most profound importance upon our people.
- Third. That in spite of the activity of the bootleggers and the amount of space their operations occupy in the public press, the total drinking of alcohol in this country is insignificant in amount compared to what it was when the Eighteenth Amendment was adopted.
- Fourth. That the talk of modifying the Volstead Law is mere waste of breath. The proposal to do so could not even lead to serious discussion until the law is actually enforced, and when that times comes what little demand there is for modifying it will have disappeared.
- Fifth. That the law can be enforced, that it will be enforced, that enforcement is gaining on violation, and that when the federal government demonstrates that it intends to enforce the law, which it has never done yet, the problem of law enforcement up to the point of average efficiency will disappear.

The Eighteenth Amendment brings to our people solid advantages which are more and more apparent and more and more fully recognized. That is why it is here to stay.

## “Liquor can never ‘come back’”

Richard J. Hopkins was a justice in the Kansas Supreme Court. His essay was titled “Prohibition and Crime.”

Liquor can never “come back.” Those who have hopes or misgivings of the ultimate outcome of the struggle should consider the history of Kansas. Kansas is forty-five years removed from the thought of legalizing the saloon. Liquor is an outlaw within her borders. She does not want and would not tolerate modification. Conviction of violators is easier than in the past, because public sentiment has been crystallized; her people realize that intoxicating liquor is a commercial and social detriment to any community. Kansas officials and private citizens are agreed the Prohibition is the state’s best asset.

## “Does Prohibition prohibit?”

Wayne B. Wheeler was an attorney and major publicist with the Anti-Saloon League of America. His essay was titled “Is There Prohibition? And to What Extent?”

Prohibition has accomplished so much that we expect it to build Rome in a day. It has cleaned up so much of the moral and social wreckage of a century in which Booze was King that we are shocked today to find, hidden away furtively in the corner, some of the debris from the old Belshazzar’s Feast.<sup>4</sup> Here is the situation that existed when Prohibition began to dawn and which made it imperative, and the contrasted situation today.

THEN	NOW
177,790 licensed liquor saloons, most of them selling after legal hours and to minors and drunken persons, also 100,000 speakeasies.	No licensed saloon. Speakeasies exist, as filthy and criminal as in license [unregulated pre-Prohibition] days.
1247 breweries making 2,000,000,000 gallons of beer a year.	483 cereal beverage plants today produce 151,606,909 gallons with less than one-half percent alcohol. No breweries operating lawfully. Few break the law today where courts use padlock power.
507 distilleries producing 286,085,463 tax gallons of distilled spirits in 1917.	No distilleries legally operating. Total British whiskey export to Canada and West Indies, 1924, 1,429,274 gallons, a little of which was not drunk by Canadians but was smuggled into the United States.
Drinking made cheap, easy, and inviting.	Drinking made costly, difficult, and dangerous.
Alcoholic death rate of 5.8 per 100,000 yearly.	An alcoholic death rate of 1.1 to 3.2 per 100,000 yearly.
An average annual death rate of 13.92 per 1,000.	An average annual death rate of 12.36 per 1,000.
1,250,000 drunkards arrested yearly, although only 20 per cent of public drunkards arrested.	Over 350,000 average annual decrease in drunkenness arrests since War Prohibition, although nearly all drunkards are now arrested.
Crowded county jails.	200,000 fewer county jail commitments per year. Many jails empty or for sale.
Rising penal ratio [ratio of imprisoned persons to total population].	Drop of 5.8 in penal ratio per 100,000 according to Federal Census (last criminal census) 1922.
Charity societies, Salvation Army, churches, almshouses [poorhouses], etc., spent millions yearly for drink-caused poverty.	Decrease of 74 per cent in drink-caused poverty; federal census shows lowest pauperism [poverty] ratio in history.
275 drink cures [alcoholism treatments], all busy.	27 drink cures, most of which handle alcoholic cases only as a “side line.”

<sup>4</sup> *Belshazzar’s Feast*: i.e., debauchery from pre-Prohibition days. As described in the Book of Daniel (Old Testament) and captured in numerous works of art and music, the Babylonian king Belshazzar gave a feast for his court, serving wine from sacred Israelite vessels captured in Jerusalem by his father.

Delirium tremens wards full [hospital wards for withdrawing alcoholics].	Few delirium tremens wards exist.
Saloons on valuable business sites decrease neighborhood realty values.	Realty [land] value of former saloon sites trebled; neighborhood values more than doubled.
Slums for poorly paid workers.	Fifty-one percent of home building, for workers in 1924; slums practically gone.
Red-light districts in license towns [prostitution in towns with no liquor regulations].	The brothel has practically vanished.
Venereal disease menaces national life.	Venereal disease vanishing.
Protection of law given to debasing traffic [trade].	Drink traffic outlawed.
Brewery corruption pervades politics, boycotts business, and threatens courts.	Corruption less in politics and business but still reaching officials although in a less degree.
Many times the amount received from liquor licenses spent to care for drink-caused crime, pauperism, and insanity.	Liquor criminals through fines pay cost of own detection, prosecution, and imprisonment.
Industrial production checked by blue Mondays [worker absenteeism after excessive drinking on weekends], drink-caused accidents, and inefficient drinking workers.	Industrial production speeded up, accidents lessened, efficiency increased.
Saloons divert over \$2,000,000,000 annually from legitimate trade [legal businesses].	Retail trade, savings, and insurance profit from saloon closing.
Homes wrecked and home building checked [stopped] when saloon took margin of earnings between actual existence needs [necessities] and total wages.	Home building increased 152 per cent since Prohibition, while purchases of small homes have trebled. Building and Loan assets more than doubled in five dry years.

That is only a sample of the catalogue one might continue, using the deadly parallel, comparing conditions since Prohibition with those before.

They are a fair answer to the query: Does Prohibition prohibit?

**“an honest desire to protect human life”**

Rev. Walter A. Morgan was chairman of the Law Enforcement Commission of the Congregational Churches of the United States. His essay was titled “A Moral and Ethical Argument for Prohibition.”

The first moral significance of the particular Eighteenth Amendment, it needs to be repeated, lies in the fact that it registers the will of the great majority of the American people. It sets the standard of a dry nation. To permit one’s thinking to become befogged over the matter of enforcement is to refuse to think straight or hard. All men admit that the Eighteenth Amendment is not enforced always and everywhere. Where on American soil is any law always enforced? How many uncaught and unpunished murderers are there today living in Chicago and New York?

The moral quality of the will that voted the nation dry had its origin in a moral and social source. It was an honest desire to protect human life. This wish was made concrete and appealing through the lives of women and children. The moral tone of any people rises or falls in accordance with its attitude towards mothers and their young. As the race has evolved, womanhood and childhood have come to occupy more commanding positions. Today in the United States the moral sense of the people puts them first. What is good for them should become a law. So the voters were led to believe and so they acted. Men and women merely said, “The liquor business is a menace to our women and children. Let us get rid of it.” . . .

. . . Salvation Army leaders, social workers, district nurses, Prohibition officers, child welfare organizations, and others who are in close observance of social conditions, have repeatedly declared that no other law has worked so great a revolution in social welfare as has Prohibition. . . . Nearly one hundred million dollars of funds once spent to cure the harm done by the saloon is now expended in fresh air work, free dental clinics, prematernity care, district nursing, hospitalization, and other forms of work. Can more be expected when opposition is great and the law is only five years old?

## “for the benefit of the social body”

Howard A. Kelly was a physician and professor at Johns Hopkins University. His essay was titled “Prohibition and the Medical Fraternity.”

We insist with every energy at our command that the state has the inalienable right to restrict any action whatever—whether it concerns our eating or drinking or other personal habits—in order to promote the public welfare. If the government (*nemine contradicente*<sup>5</sup>) controls our use of opium and of cocaine, then why not, by parity of reasoning, alcohol? . . . We believe that this “due regulation” of our conduct for the benefit of the social body is clearly implied in the very word “government,” and so as citizens who esteem the public welfare as an obligation higher than our personal tastes, we cheerfully render due obedience to all laws.

## “blame rests with the older generation”

Cornelia James Cannon was a prolific essayist on progressive causes. Her essay was titled “Prohibition and the Younger Generation.”

The generation of children growing up, who have never seen a saloon, to whom the once common sight of the Saturday night bacchanalian orgy<sup>6</sup> near the drinking resorts is not the ordinary tolerated incident of the week, is the generation most profoundly affected by Prohibition. These children are coming to maturity in a world becoming emancipated from the degradations and vulgarities which are inevitably associated with free access to alcohol. The flaunting defiance of the law against alcohol in our large cities cannot be dissociated from the defiance of all other law in those crowded, inchoate centers,<sup>7</sup> and should not blind us to the decencies and conformities in our smaller communities where the Eighteenth Amendment brings additional strength to an enforcing public opinion. . . .

As far as the young women are concerned there are certainly groups, both among girls who are brought into juvenile courts and those who are expelled from college, who are using alcohol as the same type of girl did not do a generation ago. But is this due to the existence of the Eighteenth Amendment, or to the extraordinary extension of opportunity open to the young women of today? . . .

. . . Insofar as Prohibition has failed to do for the young what was hoped of it, the blame rests with the older generation. If we leave gunpowder around, can we punish children for blowing off their fingers? If we ourselves fail to have conviction enough to impress our standards upon our boys and girls, shall we hold them guilty?

## “Prohibition did not make them criminals”

James J. Britt was a lead attorney in the Prohibition Unit of the U.S. Treasury. His essay was titled “Prohibition and Respect for Law.”

That there is a general increase of lawlessness, all know, but it has no connection with the Prohibition Amendment other than as all laws are involved. It is due to the general lowering of morale following a war in which the moral props of centuries were removed. In very truth Satan was loosed for a season, nor has his recapture been too vigorously undertaken. America, with the rest of the world, was tremendously shaken, and has not yet regained its former steadiness. The let-down is universal. . . .

Much of the misunderstanding arises from the fact that it is practically impossible for Prohibition to get a fair report. Nothing in all American history has been so misrepresentative as the attitude of the press. With a few honorable exceptions, it is impossible to obtain a correct news account or favorable comment on anything relating to the subject. . . . Obedience to law, the sober conduct of the great masses, their quiet pursuit of industry, morality, and religion, furnish no headlines. . . .

There is an increase of murder, manslaughter, burglary, theft, false pretense, and other crimes, but is there anything in the Prohibition Amendment or statutes either countenancing or encouraging these crimes? It is not impossible that cheats, whose business is ill-gotten gain, seeing a larger opportunity in bootlegging, may have shifted from one crime to another, but Prohibition did not make them criminals; they were already criminals, and merely revealing their cloven hoofs in a different way.

<sup>5</sup> *Nemine contradicente*: of one mind, without dissent (Latin).

<sup>6</sup> *Bacchanalian orgy*, i.e., excessive and unrestricted drinking (Bacchus: Roman name for Dionysus, Greek god of wine and intoxication).

<sup>7</sup> *Inchoate*: formless, rudimentary, immature; here meaning without regulation and social self-discipline.

## “Prohibition turned the tide”

Richard H. Scott was president of the Reo Motor Car Company in Michigan. His essay was titled “Prohibition as Seen by a Business Man.”

The businessman sees Prohibition’s results, not in terms of moral issues or personal appetites, but in the dual terms of business: production and distribution. Especially noteworthy have been the effects upon production. The efficiency of the average worker was increased. Factories were more nearly able to work up to the reasonable expectation of their machine power. Instead of dulled minds, unsteady muscles, and jumping nerves after the holiday of Saturday afternoon and Sunday, the workers began the week on Monday with full power. . . .

These factors in the business problem—increased efficiency per worker, continuity of machine output due to fewer absences of workers, lowered labor turnover and fewer accidents, would have been sufficient to change the red ink [deficit] figures of loss to a substantial profit so far as production is concerned. In each of these factors, Prohibition turned the tide.

Distribution is the other element in business. Products must be sold. Prohibition created new markets for our products. New standards of living were set nineteen per cent higher than when Prohibition arrived, according to Secretary [of Commerce Herbert] Hoover. Instead of a pail of beer, the worker bought oil and gasoline. Better homes, better furniture, better clothes, more amusement were demanded. The wage check that once went into the bartender’s till began to travel to the local merchant. . . . The great mass of the people are sober, making money, buying luxuries as well as necessities of life, banking undreamed sums, and keeping business steadily on the high plane of prosperity in spite of all the prophets of disaster.

## “prosperity among our working classes”

Thomas N. Carver was a Harvard economics professor. His essay was titled “Prohibition and Prosperity.”

The money that used to be spent on drink, estimated at \$2,000,000,000 annually, did not evaporate as soon as Prohibition was adopted. It continues to be spent—some of it, to be sure—for bootleg liquor. The poorer classes, or the classes that were formerly poor, are not the ones who are spending their money on bootleg liquor; it costs too much. Those who do, do not get so much liquor for their money and are at least so much better off. . . .

The most significant figures of all, however, relate to the extent to which laborers are entering the capitalist class.<sup>8</sup> Savings deposits multiplied two and a half times from 1914 to 1924, while the number of [bank] depositors increased more than three and a half times. The amount of new industrial insurance per month increased from \$61,484,000 to \$292,094,000 between 1917 and 1924. The investment of wage workers in the shares of corporations is increasing so rapidly that all statistics are out of date before they can be published. . . .

Anyone who attempts to explain all these amazing signs of prosperity among our working classes without mentioning Prohibition seems to me as extreme as the one who would explain them on the ground of Prohibition alone.

**PROHIBITION BENEFITS BOTH EMPLOYER  
AND EMPLOYED, “TIMES” SURVEY SHOWS**

*Investigation in Over Hundred Principal Los Angeles Industrial Plants  
Disproves Allegation That Workers Oppose Dry Law; Men Buy  
Homes, Autos, Education; Live Better Than Before*

The Los Angeles Times, February 14, 1926

<sup>8</sup> I.e., entering the middle class with money to save and invest.

**“the chip fell from labor’s shoulder”**

John G. Cooper was a Ohio Congressman and a member of the railroad union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. His essay was titled “Prohibition from the Workingman’s Standpoint.”

Greater gains have been made by labor since the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment, with fewer strikes, than in any other equal period of time. When the saloon closed, the “poor man’s club” may have vanished, but we are replacing it today with comfortable homes, fine labor temples, and a chain of strong labor banks. There are some who want to go back to the old days when the beer saloon was the center of a slum neighborhood where labor lived, but they are not representative of labor’s best interests and they are becoming fewer yearly. . . .

Prohibition has made the settlement of the perennial [ever-present] capital-labor disputes easier. It is not so easy to get a strike vote through a sober meeting. Alcohol is a mighty inflammable substance. Put it in the mind of a worker with a grievance and something is going to burn. Too often it was the worker who got burned. Strikes are costly. They are the ultimate weapon of labor, just as war is the ultimate weapon of nations, but today we arbitrate instead of striking and we are making steady advances toward industrial justice. The chip fell from labor’s shoulder when the beer pail dropped from labor’s hand. Sound logical argument has supplanted the sentimental argument of the “downtrodden workingman.” Credit Prohibition with a large share in that. . . .

Labor has learned that there is neither profit nor pleasure in getting drunk. It gets more “kick” out of an auto and a decent home than it ever did out of the corner saloon. . . . Men might “drown their sorrows in the flowing bowl” but labor hasn’t as many sorrows as joys today and no one wants to drown joy. . . . Labor is “sitting pretty” just now, with high hopes for the future and with an increasing conviction that drinking never was what it was cracked up to be, anyhow.

The Washington Post

**PROHIBITION 5 YEARS OLD AS MANDATORY JAIL TERM IS URGED**

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**Sentences for All Rum Violators Voted by House Committee.**

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**DRYS REJOICE, WETS SNEER AT BIRTHDAY**

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**New Prosperity Era, Wheeler Asserts; No Reason for Joy, Stayton Says.**

January 16, 1925  
 Sen. Burton K. Wheeler, Democratic Senator from Montana  
 W. H. Stayton, Association Against the Prohibition Amendment

**PROHIBITION STUDY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS URGED INTENSIVELY**

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**W. C. T. U. Told Insufficient Emphasis Is Placed Upon Subject.**

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**TEST ON PROHIBITION CONSIDERED CERTAIN IN ELECTION OF 1928**

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**Drys Seen as Accepting Challenge Made to Them by Wets.**

June 30, 1926  
 WCTU: Women’s Christian Temperance Union

May 22, 1927