

Prohibition in the United States of America: 1920 - 1933

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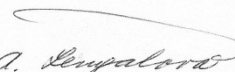
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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce vnáší pohled do doby prohibice ve Spojených státech amerických v letech 1920 až 1933. Zákaz alkoholu nebyl omezen pouze na těchto třináct let, ale jeho stopy zasahují až do 19. století, kdy již mnoho organizací mělo snahu o zařazení alkoholu mezi nezákonné prostředky. Tato práce dále pojednává o organizovaném zločinu, který vznikl v důsledku prohibice. Posléze uvádí, proč prohibice selhala.

Klíčová slova:

Prohibice, Organizovaný zločin, Mafie, Al Capone, Castellamarská válka, Protialkoholické hnutí, Progresivní doba, 18. ústavní dodatek, 21. ústavní dodatek

ABSTRACT

This work brings perspective to the Prohibition period in the United States, 1920 - 1933. Although the Prohibition of alcohol was not limited only to these thirteen years, the origins of the movement can be traced into the nineteenth century when many organizations fought to make alcohol illegal. This thesis also deals with the organized crime that arose in response to Prohibition. Finally, it documents the reasons Prohibition ultimately failed.

Keywords:

Prohibition, Organized crime, Mafia, Al Capone, Castellammare war, Temperance movement, Progressive Era, 18th Amendment, 21st Amendment

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INTRODUCTION

In 1888 Londoners were gripped by fear over Jack the Ripper, who killed five prostitutes and victimized many more. This case has never been fully solved, but a message left by Jack the Ripper, whoever he was, still resonates: “One day men will look back and say I gave birth to the twentieth century.”¹ Similarly, it could have been said about Prohibition that one day people would look back and say it gave birth to organized crime.

Prohibition, or the so-called “Noble Experiment”, is a well known period in the United States lasting for thirteen years, starting in 1920 and ending in 1933. Actually, it was only the culmination of previous events that finally led to the banning of alcohol. The Noble Experiment had an unforgettable impact on the daily life of American citizens. Some people who were involved in crime before Prohibition began new illegal activities during the time of Prohibition, while others who were previously innocent suddenly became somehow involved in crime. The number of victims also increased, as burglary, bribery and corruption became a part of daily life.

Ultimately, the story of U.S. Prohibition is a cautionary tale. Prohibition of any kind has to be very properly discussed; people should weigh all pros and cons and spend time deciding on the right and appropriate solutions for the nation and its people. Actually much money and police resources are used up in the enforcement of prohibition, and people forget the more important issues which should be achieved. Prohibition was a failure in every way, and in some sense America still suffers from its consequences.

¹ Vickie Britton, “Jack the Ripper: Case Study,” Suite101.com, <http://www.suite101.com/course.cfm/18593/seminar> (accessed March 10, 2011).

1 THE BACKGROUND OF PROHIBITION

National Alcohol Prohibition is one of the most interesting events in American history, with banned alcohol and the subsequent rise of organized crime making it the stuff of Hollywood legend. According to Charles Hanson Towne prohibition was long in coming. Prohibitionists considered alcohol as evil, and they wanted to get rid of it. They supported the idea that the state should intervene to deprive people of a vice that was ruining them.²

Americans were strongly polarized over the issue. They were prohibitionist or opponents of prohibitions. Prohibitionists believed that if they could get prohibition started, it would be difficult to stop it. While opponents feared that prohibiting something could lead to increased crime and addiction. There were also concerns that the majority, which wanted to legalize prohibition, would discriminate against the minority who still wanted to drink. Prohibition would then have no moral authority, and then the goals of prohibitionists would be compromised.³

The Noble Experiment, as Prohibition was called, had many motives. Firms and industrial associations had a profit-seeking motive; the reform groups were guided largely by moral conviction. The success of Prohibition depended on public-spirited groups or professional organizations and bureaucracies to form effective coalitions which would fight hand in hand against producers and consumers of certain products. For this reason the campaign against alcohol needed to be both long-lasting and thorough.⁴

² Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 39.

³ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

2 EARLY TIMES

Prohibitionism started long before enacting the Eighteenth Amendment in 1920. The development of prohibitionism can be divided into three parts. The first period of prohibition started in colonial times and ended in Civil War trenches. The second period lasted from the end of the Civil War until 1900. The last period during which banning became a more visible and discussed topic and a part of social life occurred during the Progressive Era, 1900 – 1920.⁵

2.1 America during colonialism

Alcohol in colonial America was seen as a daily necessity and a normal matter. Honestly, alcohol was safer to drink than water. Distilled water did not exist and alcohol was pure.

Drinking of nowadays differs from drinking of our ancestors. Today people usually drink at some events or parties. Celebrating of Christmas, New Year's Eve are traditions where people meet together and raise a glass of spirit with others. The early Americans did not seek for such occasions. They woke up and enjoy one pick-me-up for good morning and when going to sleep one put-me-down for sweet dreaming. During the day they also did not forget to have some small glass of a tasty spirit – either for lunch, break or dinner.⁶

Many colonial Americans viewed alcohol as a gift. It had the power to cure sick, help ill, give energy to old people and generally keep people in a good physical and mental condition. They made it a custom and a tradition. When they had taste, they just took their favourite spirit, pour it in a favourite glass and drink. Alcohol was a common matter. No purpose, no thinking – just drinking. It made them happy and it was impossible to even consider alcohol as prohibited.⁷

Alcohol was a part of social events such as weddings, funerals or trials. It was not unusual to drink at work and craftsmen, shoppers in stores and sailors enjoyed alcohol with pleasure. Students also enjoyed the taste of malted beverages, and Harvard had its own private brewery. Anyway in 1639 the school did not offer beer, and the result was that President Nathaniel Eaton got fired.⁸

⁵ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 41.

⁶ Ed Crews, "Rattle-Skull, Stonewall, Bogus, B," *CW Journal* (2007):
<http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/holiday07/drink.cfm> (accessed April 1, 2011).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

On the other hand some disagreements occurred within society and much legislation was passed to control the consumption of alcohol. The Puritans did not approve of excessive drinking so they legislated against it. They also prohibited the use of tobacco. This legislation, however, was not effective and was later abandoned. Other legislation prevented the sale of alcoholic drinks to people in the lowest positions such as Indians, servants, apprentices or slaves. These people then usually ran away from their overlords and drank in poor conditions. The banned sell of alcohol also affected business with Indians because alcohol was the main means of barter.⁹

Alcohol became an important and indispensable product in national and international trade. It became the most extensive and popular business in America. A large amount of rum was produced in the Boston area per year in the early nineteenth century. Rum was the crucial product connecting the trade with the slave coast of Africa, the West Indies sugar plantations and the rum producing areas in America. Government interventions turned the market upside-down. Regulations, licensing, monopoly, taxation and the intervention had an impact on prices, amount and quality of products, competition among distributors and the choice of the customer.¹⁰

2.1.1 Income tax and the Whiskey Rebellion

The state wanted to control the alcohol market by licensing and protectionism in order to tax it. The license system gave rise to monopolies in the form of innkeepers who then had the control over the distribution of alcohol. This activity was seen as beneficial to the political and economic development of the state, because it provided revenue for the government. Disadvantages were the increase in corruption or products of poor quality.¹¹

But this arrangement also led to the infamous Whiskey Rebellion. The federal government decided to adopt the Revolutionary War debts of thirteen states and Congress introduced taxes on distilled spirits to pay the debts. Large eastern American distillers did not have a problem with the taxpaying, however smaller distillers, located west of the Appalachian and Allegheny Mountains on the nation's frontier, fought strongly against the taxation, because it ruined their business. Many distillers refused to pay and others started to use violence and rebellions against the whiskey collectors, mainly in southwestern

⁹ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 41.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 42.

Pennsylvania. Rebellion spread to counties along the frontier very quickly. President George Washington considered the situation and finally decided to use force against the rebels. His approach was that no small state in the U.S. will govern the whole nation. Subsequently a militia arrested one hundred and fifty rebels in October 1794 in the western counties of Pennsylvania. Some of them were later set free due to a lack of evidence, and others were pardoned. The Distilled spirits tax and other Federal Taxes were repealed by Congress until 1802.¹²

2.2 Fighting against intemperance – Benjamin Rush

Many Americans started to see alcohol as a sin, as an evil thing which should be omitted and society should get rid of. In the late eighteenth century, Benjamin Rush, a physician, writer and humanitarian, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the supposed father of American psychiatry, studied mental illness and alcoholism and wrote a work on this topic in 1785. His attitude to alcohol was negative. He determined that alcoholism was a disease and not the failure of will or an addiction. Starting with Benjamin Rush's anti-alcohol book in continued in the half of the nineteenth century when about five million temperance pamphlets were published. Each pamphlet was written differently but all had two rhetorical features in common – logos and pathos. Logos uses science to prove the information is right. While pathos appeals to emotion and was merely used in writing. Benjamin Rush used mainly the logos and although he was one of the leaders of anti-liquor propaganda, his efforts had a little influence on alcohol consumption. He was convinced that the scientific proves will persuade people of badness of alcohol. Actually the drinking of alcohol rose during his crusade.¹³

He also took part as a reformer in the temperance movement. He was fighting intemperance along with reformers John Cotton, Increase Mather and Lyman Beecher. They saw the plan of the government. The license system was created for the government support for alcohol rather than to help the society and to control the consumption of drinks. Two organizations were organized against alcohol: the Massachusetts Society for the

¹² Michael Hoover, "The Distilled Spirits Tax of 1791," Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, http://www.ttb.gov/public_info/whisky_rebellion.shtml (accessed April 21, 2011).

¹³ Ed Crews, "Rattle-Skull, Stonewall, Bogus, B," *CW Journal* (2007): <http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/holiday07/drink.cfm> (accessed April 1, 2011); Leah Rae Berk, "Alcohol, Temperance and Prohibition," Brown University Library for Digital Initiatives, <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/temperance/essay.html?PHPSESSID=6fac18fb26ceec76ac9f24e079ccb8c9> (accessed March 18, 2011).

Suppression of Intemperance the aim of which was to contain the heavy drinking associated with the War of 1812 and the American Temperance Society which was organized in 1826. These organizations became so popular that they had over a million members by 1833, mostly consisting of religious people, mainly Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians. Protestants believed that the second coming of Christ was near, and their aim was to prepare earth for this purpose. So there is no surprise that they supported the temperance organizations in fighting against alcohol.¹⁴

While some organizations spent time fighting alcohol through legislative, means other groups opened their eyes and focused on drinkers and those who wanted to abstain from drunkenness. The voluntary organization was called the Washingtonians mainly consisting of former drinkers. They helped people by giving them money more than any other organization and accomplished their aim by convincing some members to abstain.¹⁵

2.3 Maine Laws

In Maine, temperance movements slowly but safely came to prohibition of alcohol itself. They viewed intemperance as excessive drinking and evil drunkenness. The only solution was to inform people about the evil danger of alcohol and bad influence by educating them. The next way was a turn toward abstinence from spirits. This was meant to be obtained through education by example and through voluntary means. Nobody felt pressure from the temperance organizations. People felt that they could trust them, and therefore the organizations did well at this time. Also the pledge of abstinence played a significant role in increasing the power and popularity of the temperance movement. People felt of becoming a part of an organization and believed to change the nation by giving the promise to stay dry.¹⁶

A new branch of the movement occurred. Along with the temperance people who wanted to achieve the goal voluntary a new party of radical strategists wanted the total abstinence from all alcohol, including wine and beer. They organized coalitions to pass restrictive legislation. These restrictions were finally not effective; however the strategists

¹⁴ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 43-44.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

were extremely successful in establishing interventionist measures. They were politically strong along with the abolitionist and anti-immigrant movements.¹⁷

Neither interventionism nor the temperance organizations were able to totally dry Maine and get rid of all alcoholic beverages. They wanted everything but achieved nothing. After each failure they set up stricter rules, but each of them either failed or did not achieve the required goal. They started with local options, then moved to local sale requirements and finally to local prohibitions. The profits were so high from the business with alcohol and the competitiveness so great that Prohibition could not succeed.¹⁸

2.3.1 Neal Dow and the Maine Laws

A very significant role was played at this time by the mayor of Portland, Neal Dow. He was born in 1804 and is considered the Father of Prohibition. He led a tireless campaign against liquor and was the author of the Maine Law in 1851. These stricter laws prohibited the consumption of alcohol in Maine, and many northern states and territories later adopted it. However these laws did not last long. By 1880 only Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire maintained prohibition. One of the reasons was the increase of immigrants, especially German and Irish who did not agree with prohibition. Scotch-Irish immigrants were also the nation's whiskey makers from the late 1700s and after a while their production gained a good reputation.¹⁹

The end of the Maine Laws is connected with a violent event in which Neal Dow was negatively involved. He was indicted by his opponents of profiting from the governments earnings from the sell of controlled alcohol. He had a conflict with his accusers who were convinced that in Portland's City Hall was hidden alcohol, which he used against his own law. When the rioters broke into the liquor agency Dow ordered the militia to fire on them. As a result, he was considered a fanatic and The Maine Laws were abandoned.²⁰

¹⁷ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 45-46.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "Neal Dow," Department of the Secretary of State, Maine State Archives, <http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/research/civilwar2/ndow.html> (accessed March 28, 2011); Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 46.; Ed Crews, "Rattle-Skull, Stonewall, Bogus, B," *CW Journal* (2007): <http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/holiday07/drink.cfm> (accessed April 1, 2011).

²⁰ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 47.

2.4 Organizations for Prohibition since 1850

The second half of the nineteenth century is very closely related to the official Prohibition starting in 1920. Many movements played a very significant role, including the women's movement, the Prohibition Party, the Anti-Saloon League and other professional organizations.²¹

2.4.1 Women against alcohol

Women were supporting prohibition from the very beginning. Men spent their salaries on alcohol instead of food for the family. Women suffered and their problem was of certain origin – alcohol. They decided to fight against it. In 1869 the Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association were found and women started to push the political area in the United States. They received the right to vote in Utah and Wyoming. When receiving the right to vote, they were able to force through prohibition. The Brewer's Association realized women's suffrage could be a threat to the liquor industry, because with the right to vote they could very strongly support the anti-prohibition movement. Their effort to push away the voting rights was so big that prohibition became even more popular, especially among women.²²

2.4.2 Spiritual “parties” ending

The Prohibition Party was formed in 1869 by temperance movement groups. Its main purpose was to fight against consumption of alcohol. This party is often not given much credit. But as Thornton said: “However the Prohibition Party was the first party to support the banning of alcohol, child-labor laws, direct election of senators, an income tax and woman suffrage.” Also free public education or prohibition of gambling. The percentage in the presidential voting of the Prohibition Party rose from 0.05 percent in 1872 to 2.25 percent in 1892.²³

The party had the biggest success in states where prohibition was first enacted. This party was supported by the women's suffrage movement and the Anti-Saloon League.

²¹ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 47-48.

²² Ibid., 48; Rohit Naimpally, “Prohibition and Women's Suffrage,” Chicago Beer Travelers, entry posted July 7, 2010, <http://www.chicagonow.com/blogs/chicago-beer-travelers/2010/07/prohibition-and-womens-suffrage.html> (accessed March 29, 2011).

²³ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 48-49.

Until 1920 they gradually introduced a number of other progressive changes. Their triumph came in 1919 with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, which prohibited the use and manufacture of alcohol and a year later, in 1920, with the Nineteenth Amendment, which allowed women to vote.²⁴

2.4.3 Anti-Saloon League of America

One temperance organization played a significant role in prohibition - the Anti-Saloon League of America. The Anti-Saloon League of America was formed from two organizations – the Ohio Anti-Saloon League founded in Oberlin, Ohio and the other in Washington, DC, both in 1893. The members of the organizations were convinced that America was losing its morality and religious values and everything was caused by the social evil – alcohol. The best way to decrease the influence of spirits on the society was reached through laws. They tried to eliminate the main threat of the society which was taverns, bars or saloons where alcohol was served and consumed. In 1895 these two organizations finally merged together and set up the Anti-Saloon League of America. They had a successful idea to use local churches to recruit followers. Its popularity is proved by 30,000 Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches and 60,000 organizations which cooperated with the Anti-Saloon league by the year 1920.²⁵

The League also took part in the political scene when involving individual political candidates and their personal view on alcohol instead of supporting one party over the other. A clear example is from the 1909 elections held in Ohio. A member of the Republican Party and the current governor, Myron Herrick, had an opposite approach against the League's effort to prohibit alcohol in local communities. The League looked first for a candidate amongst the Republican to oppose the current governor. After not finding an appropriate candidate the League turned its support to Democratic candidate John M. Pattison who finally won the elections and who also demonstrated the increasing strength of the Anti-Saloon League of America.²⁶

²⁴ "Prohibition Party," Law Library, <http://law.jrank.org/pages/9492/Prohibition-Party.html> (accessed March 29, 2011).

²⁵ "Anti-Saloon League of America," Ohio History Central, <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=845> (accessed April 07, 2011); Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 50.

²⁶ "Anti-Saloon League of America," Ohio History Central, <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=845> (accessed April 07, 2011).

The establishment of their own publishing agency in Westerville, Ohio helped to increase their influence on the public. It was called the American Issue Publishing Company and was set up to promote their persuasion of the evil effect of alcohol. The company published tons of literature every year, including their main publication the *American Issue*.²⁷

The League had also its critics. It fought against the dissatisfaction of its supporters, the Prohibition Party, church groups and opponents. Thornton says: “The league’s strategy of political opportunism, consisting of large payments to professional reformers and the direct use of the pulpit for political purposes, was often criticized by member churches. The league’s criticism of blacks and Catholics, comparing them to the Ku Klux Klan or characterizing them as noncitizens or nonhumans who would sell their vote for a drink, was also criticized.”²⁸

After fifteen years promoting change in local communities, they started to focus on the nation as a whole. In 1913 the League’s superintendent, Purley Baker, introduced an amendment to the U.S. Congress which was fundamentally the Eighteenth Amendment. By putting pressure on the U.S. Congress, they finally reached their main aim – to pass the Eighteenth Amendment – which prohibited the use, manufacture and trade of alcohol. Actually the thirteen years were not harmonious. An argument appeared between the leader of the American Issue Publishing Company Ernest Cherrington and a League member Wayne Wheeler. Wheeler’s approach was to pass stricter laws but Cherrington disagreed with his idea. This struggle weakened the League and the temperance opponents had the chance to bring in the Twenty-First Amendment, which ended the Prohibition. The Anti-Saloon League and its agencies concluded.²⁹

²⁷ “Anti-Saloon League of America,” Ohio History Central, <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=845> (accessed April 07, 2011).

²⁸ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 51.

²⁹ “Anti-Saloon League of America,” Ohio History Central, <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=845> (accessed April 07, 2011).

3 PROGRESSIVE ERA

The Progressive Era lasting roughly from the 1890s - 1920s, was a period of growing American development and expansion. During this era the United States introduced many remarkable economic, social and political changes and became a global powerhouse.³⁰

As writer Faith Jaycox says: “Progressivism was not one organized, national campaign, but an accumulation of many independent, occasionally interlocking, but sometimes unrelated and even contradictory reform movements.”³¹

3.1 The Progressives

It is very hard to define exactly who the Progressives were. It was not a single group of people who focused on one idea or belief. They shared a vision of their own power to change the world, which was definitely a different approach from the vision in the earlier nineteenth century when they were convinced that the world will change automatically. The Progressives were different from each other. While some put forth prohibition, others saw it as a mistake. The progressives' aim was to set up different reformations in various national spheres such as politics, economy and business and social sector. Nevertheless, they shared the vision of renewing the democracy in America and they fought together for the American values. They found out the need of uniting the public to end corruption and solve social issues which were the result of the rapid boom of industrialism.³²

However, kind of discrimination appeared in the society. Elizabeth V. Burt argues, that: “Labor reformers sought to improve working conditions in mines, factories, and transportation, but opposed any reforms that would open jobs to African Americans.”³³

People who definitely participated in the progressive drive and supported a number of progressive reforms and changes were politicians like Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson or Wisconsin Senator Robert M. La Follette. Robert M. La Follette was offered a bribe one day to put things right at a case court. Since this day in 1891 he became a passionate fighter against corruption in politics and dishonest manners. His followers

³⁰ Elizabeth V. Burt, *The Progressive Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1890 to 1914 (Debating Historical Issues in the Media of the Time)* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 2004), 1.

³¹ Faith Jaycox, *The Progressive Era: Eyewitness History (Eyewitness History Series)* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 190.

³² Elizabeth V. Burt, *The Progressive Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1890 to 1914 (Debating Historical Issues in the Media of the Time)* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 2004), 1-2; Faith Jaycox, *The Progressive Era: Eyewitness History (Eyewitness History Series)* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 190.

³³ Elizabeth V. Burt, *The Progressive Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1890 to 1914 (Debating Historical Issues in the Media of the Time)* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 2004), 2.

considered themselves as the Progressive Republicans. They believed in their idea that the government is not a business but was established to represent people's needs. In 1900 he was elected the governor and immediately started to put through reforms.³⁴

3.2 Era of changes

Many important changes took place during the Progressive era. The development of technology, industry and architecture grew rapidly. Large cities and towns were built and many people including immigrants moved from countryside. Cities rose with the construction of skyscrapers, the first skyscraper being built in Chicago in 1885. America suddenly became the world economic and military leader.³⁵

The development of technology was also important, Henry Ford, introduced the automobile in the United States. Wright Brothers conquered the sky.

The foundation of film or so called motion pictures and the growth of the first professional sport – baseball, gave the public a new ways of entertainment. Jazz, a new musical style born in New Orleans, achieved nationwide popularity by the 1920s.³⁶

3.3 Immigration

The United States also saw a significant change in the population. Immigration greatly increased, with about five million people arriving annually between 1890 and 1893. In 1880 only about 11% of the European immigrants moved to America, while in 1900 the number increased to 73%. The largest group to come to America was Italians, who later on very notably contributed to the rise of organized crime. Four million people from Italia and Sicily immigrated to America by 1920. Slavic-speaking people were the second largest group to contribute to the American melting pot. Most were from the Eastern Europe – Poles, Czechs, Slovaks' and Russians and other nationalities. Likewise, Jews from all over

³⁴ Elizabeth V. Burt, *The Progressive Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1890 to 1914 (Debating Historical Issues in the Media of the Time)* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 2004), 2; "The Progressive Era: 1895-1925," Wisconsin Historical Society, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/topics/shorhistory/progressive.asp> (accessed March 7, 2011).

³⁵ Faith Jaycox, *The Progressive Era: Eyewitness History (Eyewitness History Series)* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), IV; Tom Ravenscroft, "History of America's Tallest Buildings," *Suite101*, November 13, 2009. <http://www.suite101.com/content/americas-tallest-building-a169429> (accessed April 8, 2011).

³⁶ Faith Jaycox, *The Progressive Era: Eyewitness History (Eyewitness History Series)* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), IV.

Europe migrated to the land of freedom from their homeland where they faced religious and social persecution.³⁷

Immigration to America far outpaced that of other English speaking countries such as New Zealand, Australia or Canada, in part because previous immigrants sent positive letters to their relatives praising America as a nation full of opportunities, freedom of religion and a place to start a better life than before. Some people came from rich families, however most of the immigrants were poor, with little to no education. Their incorporation into the society was slow and sometimes very hard. They usually rejected assimilation by establishing groups of the same ethnicity where they shared their own language, traditions and customs.³⁸

3.3.1 Great Migration

From 1916 to 1930, northern American cities were influenced by the biggest immigration of African American people. About seven million people left the South and more than half a million of them settled in Chicago during these years. They hoped in the North to be free from racial discrimination, however employers still preferred whites, and African Americans had fewer opportunities. Even so an African American industrial working class developed in Chicago and the Great Migration gave blacks political and social capital.³⁹

3.4 World War I

One of the most significant events influencing the whole world was the First World War. Despite Europe being the smallest continent, its difference in race, culture and power invoked a struggle among nations. Two opposing sides were found. Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy created the alliance called the Triple Alliance. The opposing side was the coalition among Britain, France and Russia, called the Triple Entente. The Balkans was “a powder box”. Austria-Hungarian Empire wanted Bosnia and Herzegovina to incorporate to their empire, however, Bosnia and Herzegovina opposed this idea, because the state wanted to unite with Serbia. Austria-Hungary wanted to prevent from the union and showed its power by the demonstration of military powers in Bosnia and at the end of the demonstration the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand with his

³⁷ Faith Jaycox, *The Progressive Era: Eyewitness History (Eyewitness History Series)* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*; 7-8.

³⁹ James Grossman, “Great Migration,” *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/545.html> (accessed April 28, 2011).

wife, arrived. Bosnian viewed this as a provocation and an association called the Black Hand assassinated Franz Ferdinand and his wife on June 28, 1914. This event initiated the First World War.⁴⁰

The United States stayed neutral until 1917 by the effort of the American President Woodrow Wilson who argued that America is too proud to fight. On the beginning of WWI American army had a little war supply and absence in military training and organization. However, several events in Europe finally changed Woodrow Wilson's opinion and he asked Congress for a declaration of war on Germany in April 1917. America entered war when the power of Triple Entente was declining a little. They believed that the United States will save them and support them with so needed war material. American industry cannot supply them with tanks, airplanes or artilleries, so this demand depended mainly on the French. In June 1917, General John J. Pershing arrived in France and until March 1918 about two million men arrived there from the U.S. In May 1918, Pershing occupied east of France and forced the German army to recede.⁴¹

As a basis for diplomatic dealing, peace and a better world President Woodrow Wilson announced his Fourteen Points to Congress on January 8, 1918. The most important points were: international dealing in public view, freedom of sea, freedom of world trade, reduction of armament, international adjustment of all colonial claims, evacuation and freedom for Russia, evacuation and restitution of Belgium, evacuation of French territory and return of Alsace and Lorraine back to France, adjustment of Italian border, autonomous development of Austria-Hungary nations, evacuation of Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, autonomous development of Turks, independence of Poland, establishment of association of nations. Woodrow's Fourteen Points became the basis for the armistice of nations participating in the WWI. First World War officially ended on November 11, 1918.⁴²

The United States government influenced the American society by a vast propaganda machine of the war to recruit young men for various services in the WWI. Thousands of propaganda materials were published to help the Triple Entente achieve victory in Europe. Propaganda was everywhere, from newspapers to leaflets, books, radio or political

⁴⁰ Alexandr Ort, *Evropa 20. Století* (Prague: Arista, 2000), 7-16.

⁴¹ John Keegan, *První Světová Válka* (Prague: Pavel Dobrovský - BETA a Jiří Ševčík, 2003), 294-97; "America in the Great War," Eyewitness to History, <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/snpwwi1.htm> (accessed April 28, 2011).

⁴² Alexandr Ort, *Evropa 20. Století* (Prague: Arista, 2000), 26-31.

campaigns. It was held to persuade people that the participation of the United States in WWI is right. People were enthusiastic about it.⁴³

World War I had a close relation to prohibition of alcohol. People were confused and as they saw what was happening in Europe, they started to oppose everything what was foreign. People inclined to patriotism and likewise considered prohibition. Certain amount of alcohol beverages was produced by German American producers and Prohibitionist propaganda defined alcohol breweries as foreign business. People also felt that government is the upholder of American values and morality and so they trusted the government.⁴⁴

3.4.1 Return to Normalcy

America was confused and chaotic and people prayed to return to normal way of life before the First World War influenced American lives. They sought stability and Republican nominee for Presidency, Warren Harding, offered them the “Return to Normalcy”. He promised the isolation of America from Europe and the refusal of activist government. However, this promised did not include a return to alcohol consumption. The Republicans were in power until 1932. The economy of “Roaring Twenties” was strong during these years until the big crash in 1929. The growth of technology, increasing production, consumption, and manufacturing output were the reasons for this strong economy.⁴⁵

3.5 Wealth and poverty

The development and the modernization of the American nation had its sacrifice. The last untouched Oklahoma Indian Territory was opened for settlement in 1889. Native Americans tried to protect their last piece of inheritance and started hopeless battles to protect their rights and land.⁴⁶

America fast economical growth had its consequences. An evident gap occurred between rich and poor. For every millionaire, there were thousands of poor. Some people

⁴³ “WWI and WWII Propaganda Posters,” WWI and WWII Propaganda Posters, <http://www.propagandaposters.us/> (accessed April 28, 2011).

⁴⁴ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 18.

⁴⁵ Kaplan *Sat Subject Test: U.S. History 2009-2010 Edition* (New York: Kaplan Publishing, a division of Kaplan, Inc., 2009), 244-50.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth V. Burt, *The Progressive Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1890 to 1914 (Debating Historical Issues in the Media of the Time)* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 2004), 3.

were surrounded by unimaginable luxury, while others lived in harsh conditions. They had financial problems and even if their wives and children worked they still suffered.⁴⁷

As each period in history has its pros and cons so did the Progressive Era. Some people got like they never dreamt before. Others had to fight for their own lives and survive.

3.6 The Amendments

A significant aspect of the Progressive Era was the reforms which were passed.

3.6.1 The Eighteenth Amendment

The idea of prohibition started much earlier, and Americans lived under prohibition restrictions before the Eighteenth Amendment was enacted and went into effect. By 1913, many prohibitory provisions were in effect in most of the states, and more than half the population and seventy one percent of the area of America was under some prohibitory legislation. Even so, people did not feel threatened by prohibition that much because they could get alcohol from “wet” states.⁴⁸

1913 was an important benchmark in the fight against alcohol. The Anti-Saloon League determined it was the right time to intensify its effort to prohibit alcohol in a more significant way. The League held a meeting for leaders of the Temperance organizations in November, 1913. The result was the organization of a general campaign for National Constitutional Prohibition. It was said that a committee of one thousand men would march to the Capitol in Washington D.C. and will introduce to the Senate and the House of Representatives the League’s proposal of National Constitutional Prohibition. The men were joined by one thousand women of the Christian Temperance Union and the number increased to almost three thousand people who appealed to Congress to submit National Prohibition to the Legislatures of the several states. The Committee argued that people already lived under prohibition and that it had an increasing effect on the lifestyle of people.⁴⁹

The submission was later introduced in both Houses of the Sixty-Third Congress in 1914 by Representatives Richmond Pearson Hobson and Senator Morris Sheppard. The

⁴⁷ Faith Jaycox, *The Progressive Era: Eyewitness History (Eyewitness History Series)* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 9.

⁴⁸ Ernest H. Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States of America* (Westerville, Ohio: The American Issue Press, 1920), 320.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 322- 333.

measure, however, did not receive the required two-thirds vote in the House and did not pass. The Sixty-Fourth Congress was more successful than the previous one. A similar joint resolution was placed by the House Judiciary Committee on the House calendar and by the Judiciary Committee of the Senate on the calendar of the Senate. However, because of the adjournment of this Congress, both resolutions were tabled.⁵⁰

Similar resolutions were finally presented successfully in the Sixty-Fifth Congress and passed in the Senate on August 1, 1917 and in the House on December 17, 1917. Finally it was adopted as a law on December 18, 1917. After this event and before the Eighteenth Amendment itself, states began ratifying the law. Alaska, Puerto Rico and Hawaii accepted Prohibition, followed by Mississippi, Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland etc.⁵¹

The amendment providing for national prohibition of the manufacture, sale, transportation, import and export of intoxicants was ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the states on January 16, 1919 and went into effect at midnight, January 16, 1920, as the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.⁵²

The Eighteenth Amendment prohibited spirits with more than 40% alcohol. Meanwhile in October 1919 the Volstead Act was enacted which delineated its enforcement and definitely banned all drinks with over 0,5% of alcohol. This was also a shock for previous protagonists of the Eighteenth Amendment, and veterans from World War I viewed it as ingratitude from the state.⁵³

Despite the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment, the former American President Theodore Roosevelt did not agree with America becoming dry. He shared his opinions in his autobiography pointing out that it would definitely cause unrest and dissatisfaction among the society. He was also surprised by closing saloons and not replacing them with something else. He knew some liquor dealers who had nice and clean bars and felt sorry for them that they had to close their business. He could not understand what the workers would do without their favourite places where they sat down, drank, chat and relaxed. He did not know the result or the outcome of ratification of the prohibition; however he was

⁵⁰ Ernest H. Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States of America* (Westerville, Ohio: The American Issue Press, 1920), 325-326.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 360.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 374.

⁵³ "Whisky a Zákon II. - Americká Prohibice," Skotská Whisky.cz, <http://www.skotska-whisky.cz/clanky/whisky-a-americka-prohibice.html> (accessed April 28, 2011).

convinced of one thing: that if it will be once enacted, it will be very hard to end it. The Volstead Act was later vetoed by President Woodrow Wilson.⁵⁴

3.6.2 The Nineteenth Amendment

Women participated in enforcing prohibition from the beginning. This amendment gave women the right to vote. It was first introduced in Congress in 1978. Majority of the suffrage organizations united in their idea of a constitutional amendment. After several struggles, pain and lobbying for the thing they believed in they finally achieved their goal. The breaking point was the support of President Woodrow Wilson in 1918. On August 26, 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment was finally ratified to the satisfaction of American women.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Charles Hanson Towne, *The Rise and Fall of Prohibition; The Human Side of What the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act Have Done to the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 83-87.

⁵⁵ "The Constitution: The 19th Amendment," National Archives & Records Administration, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/amendment_19/ (accessed March 10, 2011).

4 THE BEGINNING OF PROHIBITION

Prohibition as a law came into existence on January 17, 1920. The Noble Experiment, as the Prohibition era was called, was begun to better the lifestyle of the American society, their health and hygiene conditions and to lower crime and corruption. However, the effect was contrary.⁵⁶

4.1 Prohibition is useful

Prohibition laws existed in most of the states and people already lived under their restrictions and the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment was not a surprise for them. Approximately from 1913 were noted positive effects on the labor, level of drunkenness and overall lifestyle of American people. A comparison between two dry states, Maine and Kansas, and the wet state New Jersey was made. The population in New Jersey was 2,881,000, while Kansas and Maine 2,574,000 people in 1915. The number of automobiles in N.J. was 75,420 and in the two states 113,250 in 1916. The families owning homes in N.J. was 34 % and in Kansas and Maine 60%. The number of colleges and normal schools and students was visibly higher in Kansas and Maine with 16,359 while in N.J. it was only 5,227. The prison population was 3,365 in 1918 in N.J. and 1,534 in Kansas and Maine.⁵⁷

Many positive opinions on prohibition laws were recorded in a book by Charles Stelzle titled *Why Prohibition!* Published in 1918 it gives the view of the situation at that time and the opinions of people, both famous and ordinary people. Mr. Clint C. Houston, who was the editor of the *Denver Labor Bulletin*, wrote about it. He mentioned that labor under prohibition in Colorado was 50 % higher than before and people who were for saloons and thought prohibition would end their enterprise finally changed their opinions.⁵⁸

However, this survey was misguided, because it was a comparison of rural state New Jersey and urban states Maine and Kansas.

4.2 Prohibition upside-down

From 1910, the consumption of alcohol was declining every year. The anxiety and pressure of the temperance organizations to dispatch alcohol from the society was large. With the

⁵⁶ Mark Thornton, "Alcohol Prohibition Was a Failure," Cato Institute, http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=1017 (accessed April 29, 2011).

⁵⁷ Charles Stelzle, *Why Prohibition!* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), 285.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 282-283.

reduction of alcohol and saloons the supply of spirits decreased, the prices increased and the consumption of alcoholic beverages decreased until 1922.⁵⁹

People still had reserves at that time. Prohibition laws were not in every state so they could transport alcohol from one state to another. In 1920, alcohol was prohibited all over the United States area and people started to feel the real need of it. They started to produce alcohol illegally and as a result the quality was low and also the consumption was dangerous for their health. This is very closely connected to the rise of organized crime, corruption of highly placed people, and the beginning of bootlegging and speakeasies.⁶⁰

Women were given the right to vote, and their position in the society was equal to men. They had always fought for temperance and against alcohol. However, the younger generation did not fulfill the ideas of their temperance mothers and grandmothers and they wanted to drink at secret bars called speakeasies.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Mark Thornton, "Alcohol Prohibition Was a Failure," Cato Institute, http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=1017 (accessed April 29, 2011).

⁶⁰ Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 45.

⁶¹ Garrett Peck, *The Prohibition Hangover: Alcohol in America from Demon Rum to Cult Cabernet*, 2nd ed. (Rutgers University Press, 2009), 13.

5 THE RISE OF ORGANIZED CRIME

According to historian Garrett Peck:

...Prohibition laid out the welcome mat for organized crime. Corruption and bribery became commonplace: people simply wanted to drink, and they were willing to pay for it. Politicians paid lip service to support Prohibition, but alcohol's interests were too deep. And there was money at stake, lots of money. Bribes flowed freely to politicians, police and Prohibition Bureau agents. Prohibition brought a tidal wave of corruption that, hyperbole aside, was a genuine menace to the democratic system.⁶²

The second half of the nineteenth century continuing until World War I was the most significant period in the transformation of the United States. The state wide development in areas such as industry, culture or technology enabled the growth of railroads and shortened the trade between towns and cities. New working opportunities originated and this invoked the interest of a large amount of immigrants. The immigration was represented by Chinese, Russians, Irish, Jews, and African and important to mention – Italian people. Only in New York the number of Italians was in 1890 about 150,000 and in 1910 already two million of Italians. Most of them were obedient, some of them were criminals and they created gangs in their neighborhood.⁶³

Americans were confused of such a large arrival. Mafia has its roots exactly in this period of American history. Racism increased among the society and organization such as Ku Klux Klan was formed to fight against black people.⁶⁴

5.1 Organized crime

According to historians Philip Carlan, Lisa Nored and Regan Downey: “Organized crime syndicates, realizing that demand for alcohol would dramatically increase, quickly seized the opportunity and established bootlegging operations throughout the nation. The competition for business quickly turned deadly, and organized crime was thrust into the

⁶² Garrett Peck, *The Prohibition Hangover: Alcohol in America from Demon Rum to Cult Cabernet*, 2nd ed. (Rutgers University Press, 2009), 13-14.

⁶³ David Critchley, *The Origin of Organized Crime in America: The New York City Mafia, 1891-1931 (Routledge Advances in American History)* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 14.

⁶⁴ Michael Woodiwiss, *Organized Crime and American Power: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2001), 69.

spotlight as a major problem in the United State, particularly in larger cities like New York and Chicago.”⁶⁵

Organized crime is not an activity of an individual but of two or more people who have a formalized structure and are divided in groups. Their aim is to get money in an illegal way and at minimum expense. They use different methods to intensify and strengthen their position in the underground world. The methods are certainly of immoral, negative physical and psychological character, including graft, violence, extortion, threatening, kidnapping, or corruption and bribery of high positioned people.⁶⁶

Criminal organizations are connected to the most significant and serious federal crimes and other offences against the law. The Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States includes these activities under racketeering activity; the federal crimes are bribery and sports bribery, counterfeiting, embezzlement of Union Funds, mail and wire fraud, money laundering, obstruction of justice, prostitution and others. The state crimes include: murder, kidnapping, gambling, arson, robbery, bribery or drugs.⁶⁷

5.1.1 Bootleggers

Prohibition became a phenomenon and it gave birth to another one – the bootleggers. They were the ones who praised Prohibition as it made their dreams come true. They were prepared to fulfill any wish concerning alcohol. Law could not make America dry for one clear reason – alcohol was a part of American culture. They saw a big opportunity in National Prohibition. People asked for, almost begged for alcohol and bootleggers realized that people will pay anything for it. One woman stated that she planned a party and she just rang up one bootlegger and he delivered anything in fifteen minutes. Thousands of American people saw this as the fastest way of becoming rich. It became an ordinary business. It was seductive, recent and exclusive.⁶⁸

A never-ending chain of illegal business spread throughout the United States. Alcohol was smuggled from Canada and Mexico. At the beginning the bootleggers did business

⁶⁵ Philip Carlan, Lisa Nored and Regan Downey, *An Introduction to Criminal Law* (Sudbury: Jones & Bartlett Publishers, 2010), 169.

⁶⁶ “Organized Crime,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/organizedcrime/glossary> (accessed March 17, 2011).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Charles Hanson Towne, *The Rise and Fall of Prohibition; The Human Side of What the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act Have Done to the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 129 – 137; Garrett Peck, *The Prohibition Hangover: Alcohol in America from Demon Rum to Cult Cabernet*, 2nd ed. (Rutgers University Press, 2009), 13.

individually, however as the time passed the trade evolved. Middle-men began to reap part of the profit, because they established shops and delivered the bootleggers the so needed and desired alcohol. The most favourite alcohol before Prohibition was enacted was beer, however the bootleggers went further and to attain a larger profit they did business in distilled spirits. Because of the low or no quality of the liquor more than 50,000 people were poisoned between 1920 and 1933.⁶⁹

5.2 Mafia – history

“There are three rules on the isle of Sicily; Rome, regional government and Mafia. However one has to obey the Mafia, or he dies.”⁷⁰

Sicilian proverb

The Isle of Sicily, situated in the Mediterranean Sea, is strategically located between Europe and Africa. Throughout history, Sicily changed hands multiple times from the Greeks, Carthaginians, Germanic tribes, North Africans, Arabians etc. In the late fifteenth century Sicily was under the command of Spain and this situation lasted until 1860. In 1860 Garibaldi fought for the unification of Italy against the Spanish, Sicilians supported him and they won. Nevertheless, the following years were not as prosperous and happy as the Sicilian people had expected. The northern part of Italy derived benefit from the south and as a result northern industry and agriculture grew, while the south was suffering. The gap between the south and north is visible till nowadays.⁷¹

Sicilians were tired of the persisting invasions and finally they established organizations later known as the Mafia. The aim was to protect Sicilian society against the influence of conquerors. The Mafia grew in a close relationship of families and in secret associations. The origin of the word Mafia is not specified till nowadays. Some historians argue that it comes from the sentence “Morta All Francia, Italia Anela”, which was used in the battle between the Sicilians and their French occupiers in the thirteenth century and the meaning is “Death to France, cries Italy”. Linguists connect the word with many languages

⁶⁹ Charles Hanson Towne, *The Rise and Fall of Prohibition; The Human Side of What the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act Have Done to the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 129 -137; Garrett Peck, *The Prohibition Hangover: Alcohol in America from Demon Rum to Cult Cabernet*, 2nd ed. (Rutgers University Press, 2009), 13-14.

⁷⁰ K. Polkehn and H. Szeponik, *Mafie* (Prague: Orbis, 1975), 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

– Tuscan word *moffa* (misery, unhappiness), French *mauvais* (bad) or from a tribe called *Maafir*, etc.⁷²

The rise of Mafia as an organization can be dated to the first half of the nineteenth century and even more to 1894 when the Italian Minister of the Interior said the Mafia is a plague and a social evil and threat. The capital of Sicily and the Mafia is Palermo also nicknamed “*capitale della Mafia*”. The Mafia is an organized and very sophisticated organization. It is so called “*Onorata Societa*” meaning venerable society. And where exactly did the funding come from? The organization promised to protect people, and they had to pay for the protection. Nevertheless, it was not an offer but a hidden order. Who did not want to pay could find his animals dead or his window broken. And so people paid. Many famous and important people were involved in the Mafia. Lawyers, politicians, doctors and policemen were only a small part of them.⁷³

5.3 The Rise of Mafia in the United States

Thousands of Sicilian and Italians immigrated to the land of opportunities. Since 1890 a huge wave of immigrants from Eastern and Western Europe hit the United States. From these immigrants, politicians readily created gangs for their own irresponsible practices. They used them to get rid of other unsuitable opponents. Gangs later transformed to criminal organizations which operated in robberies, extortion, etc. The Sicilians remembered the Mafia from their home, and some continued it in the United States.⁷⁴

5.4 The Black Hand – La Mano Nera

The first city influenced by the Mafia was New Orleans. An organization called *La Mano Nera* was established before 1890. The organization was probably led by two brothers from Sicily – Antonio and Carlo Matranga. They used the same methods as the Mafia in Sicily except for one thing. When threatening people they left a black hand on the message. They took control of the main transit point in New Orleans and became the bosses of the city. A series of murders occurred in New Orleans at that time. It was no surprise to find a shot Italian there and a buried man somewhere else.⁷⁵

⁷² K. Polkehn and H. Szeponik, *Mafie* (Prague: Orbis, 1975), 16-18.

⁷³ K. Polkehn and H. Szeponik, *Mafie* (Prague: Orbis, 1975), 16-18.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 26-28.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 26-32.

Nevertheless, the police commissioner David Hennessy was surprised that his men are blind to what is happening on the streets. He sought evidence to take action. In the evening, before the day of delivering the case to the court, he was shot on the way home. Before he died in 1890 he told the policemen it was the Italians. The next morning, the news was all around the city that La Mano Nera had crossed the boundary. New Orleans was the most corrupt city in America, but the murder of a policeman was too much. Nineteen Sicilian immigrants were arrested. However, because of no proof, only three of them were sentenced. Two days after the process a protest of high positioned people took place at the prison. Despite a calm beginning, demonstrators slaughtered two of the Sicilians and finally hung them on a street light. Nine Mafia members were shot in front of a wall. The discrimination and hate against the immigrants rose. The influence of La Mano Nera spread in the beginning of the twentieth century to St. Louis, New York or Chicago.⁷⁶

5.5 Mafia in Chicago

Chicago grew quickly, thus making it a perfect environment for crime. It later became the most corrupt city in the United States, and the home of the well known Mafia bosses, Johnny Torrio or Al Capone.⁷⁷

5.5.1 Johnny Torrio

Johnny Torrio was born in an Italian town Orsara in 1882. He moved to the United States in 1884 with his family, and from his early years he built a reputation of a bad boy. However, as a Mafioso he had a reputation of a peace maker and an intelligent man, so he took advantage of Prohibition law, and took business after La Mano Nera boss in Chicago “Big Jim” Colosimo, who was shot in 1920. Johnny Torrio became the don and operated in three most desired and prosperous areas – gambling, drinking and sex. After a series of struggles with other organizations he left the Chicago Mafia and worked as an advisor in New York and Chicago underworld. However, Chicago Mafia needed a new don.⁷⁸

5.5.2 Al Capone “Scarface”

Al Capone became the most famous Mafioso during Prohibition. He was born on January 17, 1899 in Brooklyn, New York and was of Neapolitan origin. He became Johnny

⁷⁶ K. Polkehn and H. Szeponik, *Mafie* (Prague: Orbis, 1975), 26-32.

⁷⁷ Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 124-29.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 125-129.

Torrio's successor and they cooperated together since 1915. After Johnny Torrio left Chicago Mafia, Alphonso Capone became the don in 1925. Capone realized that he can make a huge profit from prohibition of alcohol. He knew people would still desire alcohol and pay anything for it. His first big challenge was to take control over the city and an opportunity occurred with the elections of the Mayor in 1924. The Democrat Rudolph Hurt and Republican Joseph Z. Klenka were the candidates. Two hundred Capone's men supported the election of Joseph Klenka by violence. No one could elect and Capone's men filled the boxes with voices for their candidate. Seventy policemen were sent to take control over the elections, however they failed and Capone's brother Frank was accidentally killed in a struggle. Al Capone via Joseph Klenka won the elections, and for following six years became the most powerful and influential man in Chicago.⁷⁹

At the beginning Al Capone used approved experience from La Mano Nera and established a large network of organized extortion – called racketeering. His men went through hundreds of laundries and brothels in Chicago and announced they will collect charges for protection. This dirty money allowed Al Capone to evade law and rule the city. Corruption of policemen and politicians rose rapidly.⁸⁰

However, he had to face many struggles with traitors, Mafia enemies and police. Al Capone was not the only man who saw a profit in prohibited alcohol. He had several struggles with other Mafia organizations which wanted to rule the city. Prohibition conflict between Irish American North Side Gang and Capone's South Side Italian Gang is known as the St. Valentine's Massacre. It took place on February 14, 1929 and Capone destroyed the whole North Side Gang by killing its seven members.⁸¹

Al Capone's behaviour became a problem for Mafia bosses in New York and other states. They easily prospered from the Prohibition era and Al Capone became a problem. In 1929 a conference for criminal leaders took place in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Many famous criminals participated: Jack Guzik and Nig Rosen – Philadelphia, Abe Bernstein – Detroit, Leo Berkowitz and Moe Dalitz for Cleveland, John Lazia – Kansas City and the prestigious New York names – Lansky, Luciano, Albert Anastasia, Ben Siegel, Frank Costello or Johnny Torrio. They all agreed to get rid of Al Capone by sending him to prison. Due to Prohibition period Chicago was the most corrupt city in the United States

⁷⁹ Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 128-130.

⁸⁰ K. Polkehn and H. Szeponik, *Mafie* (Prague: Orbis, 1975), 38-40.

⁸¹ Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 128-140.

and Al Capone was sent to prison within sixteen hours. However, Capone still commanded the city via his brother Ralph. After ten months in jail Al Capone was released in March 1930. In 1930 Al Capone was on the top. There was no one to stop him and he ruled the city of Chicago again. The stock market crashed on 29 October, 1929 and the American economy collapsed. Thousands of unemployed people were walking through the streets. Al Capone opened a public eating room and gave meal to thousands of hungry people.⁸²

Dirty money which Al Capone got from Prohibition allowed him to help them in hard times.

Nevertheless, his time came in 1931. He was never indicted for murder or racketeering but his business failed on a law called taxation of illegal incomes, which was enacted in May 1927. Various accounts were studied, and it was finally determined that Capone owed the state about two hundred thousand dollars. Al Capone was sentenced in October 1931 to eleven years in prison for tax evasion. In 1934 he was transported to Alcatraz. In 1939 he got syphilis and in the same year was confided to the care of his family. Al Capone died in Miami on January 25, 1947 of a heart attack.⁸³

However the Mafia in Chicago did not end with Al Capone. He was simply a forefather.

5.6 Mafia in New York

Prohibition caused the rise of Mafia around the whole United States and its members wanted to obtain wealth and power. Chicago was not the only place where Mafia took control of the city. New York saw the most important and bloody event in Mafia history – the Castellammare War.

It was named after a town in Sicily Castellammare del Golfo. The Sicilian boss Vito Cascio Ferro sent Salvator Maranzano to the United States. His task was to overrule main American criminal groups and his boss would become the boss of the whole international imperium. However, Maranzano did not share Ferro's ideas and he let Ferro in his unrealistic dreaming. In 1927, he settled in Brooklyn and joined his Sicilian equals Joe Profaci in Brooklyn, Joe Bonnano and Stefano Magaddino in Buffalo, Gaspar Miliazzo in Detroit and Al Capone's enemy Joe Aiello.⁸⁴

⁸² Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 128-150.

⁸³ Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 140-150.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 128-130.

The Castellammare war was between Salvator Maranzano and Mafia don in New York, Giuseppe Masseria. The war began in 1929. Maranzano's side won, however their men were tired of struggles between their bosses and Masseria's right hand Luciano decided to get rid of both of them. In April 1931, Masseria was killed by his own men – Siegel, Anastasia, Adonis and Genovese. Maranzano announced at a conference that New York will be divided among five families and he will become “capo di tutti capi” and his empire will be called “Cosa Nostra”. However four months later he was killed by Luciano, who was named the successor of Maranzano and became the boss. Later new Mafia Commission was established. New York was divided into five families and a new structure in hierarchy was made. No more the capo di tutti capi or boss of bosses.⁸⁵

5.7 Gangster Culture

5.7.1 Hierarchy

Mafia lived in luxury, because of the large sums of money from illegal business of Prohibition period were used to pay the members of Mafia. They offered graft to police, politics and lawyers to decrease the prohibition enforcement. Many Americans who were honest before Prohibition was enacted turned to criminals.

It is not accidental that this kind of crime is called organized. In Mafia everyone has its given position. On the top of the Mafia organization is the boss, or so called don. His advisor and a close friend is the consigliere. Directly under the boss is the underboss. The second most powerful position occupied usually by a family member – such as son, who will one day assume the throne. Capo is subordinated to the underboss. He is the leader of soldiers. A soldier, also called a “made man”, has to take omerta, or in some families they have to kill a person. The soldier is superior to associates and he affords them orders or protection in the criminal business. Their share then goes straight to the made.⁸⁶

5.7.2 Mafia Code

Mafia Code represents conditions under which a man can enter the Mafia. First condition is the Omerta Code, known as the code of silence. Members do not have the direct relation with the authorities; they simply do not know anything. There is not only omerta. In some

⁸⁵ Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 128-130.

⁸⁶ Scott M. Deitche, *The Everything Mafia Book: True-life accounts of legendary figures, infamous crime families, and nefarious deeds (Everything (Reference))*, 2 ed. (Avon: Adams Media, 2009), IX.

families before entering the secrets of Mafia the man has to commit a murder. Then the future member has to promise loyalty and allegiance to the boss and is obliged to help anybody in the clan.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, the code of silence was also established within the society. People were blind and deaf to what was happening around. They realized how powerful Mafia was and although they were afraid of their lives, Mafia was the only one to provide them spirits in time of Prohibition.

5.7.3 Thomson.42

The 20th century gangster is characterized by one significant thing – his weapon. Mafia members used this gun against policemen and it became a symbol of the Prohibition era.

The machine gun Thomson, also called Tommy Gun and sometimes Chicago's piano had fifty bullets and was effective only for short distances. The price during the Noble Experiment was about two thousand dollars. Later it was used by Chicago police or the American Army in the World War II.⁸⁸

5.7.4 Speakeasy

The Noble Experiment banned drinking of alcohol and as a consequence bars and pubs were closing. As a result, Mafia opened its new business - secret bars, where people were allowed to drink illegal alcohol.

Speakeasy was called a secret place where people spoke quietly and ordered at the waiter a cup of tea instead of which they found spirit in it. In New York were about thirty two thousand and in Chicago twenty thousand of these speakeasies. Politicians, lawyers or policemen mingled with artists and gangsters there.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ James Mannion, *The Everything Mafia Book: True Life Accounts of Legendary Figures, Infamous Crime Families, and Chilling Events (Everything Series)* (Avon: Adams Media, 2003), 13.

⁸⁸ Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 149.

⁸⁹ K. Polkehn and H. Szeponik, *Mafie* (Prague: Orbis, 1975), 35; Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 130.

6 REPEAL OF PROHIBITION

The Eighteenth Amendment was the only repealed amendment in American history. Many important facts contributed to the end of this unsuccessful era.⁹⁰

People were aware of a daily picture of Prohibition in newspapers. They wrote about police raids on speakeasies and other interventions. The enforcement of Prohibition could not be done effectively because some people, who were supposed to enforce it, did not obey the law and drank too. The responsibility to enforce Prohibition was given to the Internal Revenue Bureau. They had a lack of qualification and some of them were criminals. The Congress contributed financially to the enforcement but it was not enough.⁹¹

Prohibition was also a seed to the growth of corruption. Policemen, doctors, lawyers or politicians took bribes to forget the spreading of criminality. Since 1910 number of crimes increased with the top in 1933 to 1935.⁹²

Prohibition was established to stop the spreading of alcohol in the United States; actually it happened all the way round. In 1920 to 1930 about 550 criminals were killed, the policemen killed a hundred more and gangs over one thousand people. According to American politician Harry Browne: “Almost no one wants to go back to alcohol Prohibition — with the black markets in liquor run by criminal gangs, drive-by shootings that killed innocent children, innocent people dying from drinking contaminated liquor, over-worked law enforcement agencies, and widespread corruption.”⁹³

6.1 The Great Depression

In 1929, Wall Street in New York was the most watched place in the whole world. Companies started to ask their money back from the stock investors. The investors were not able to give them the required money, because they did not have it. They had to sell the stocks, however the value fell down. This happened on October 29, 1929 and the day is

⁹⁰ Robert Vance, Jr., “The Demise of Prohibition,” The Concord Review, Inc., http://www.tcr.org/tcr/essays/EPrize_Prohibition.pdf (accessed April 26, 2011).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Mark Thornton, “Alcohol Prohibition Was a Failure,” Cato Institute, http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=1017 (accessed April 29, 2011).

⁹³ Harry Browne, *The Great Libertarian Offer* (n.p.: Liamworks, 2000), 92; Robert Vance, Jr., “The Demise of Prohibition,” The Concord Review, Inc., http://www.tcr.org/tcr/essays/EPrize_Prohibition.pdf (accessed April 26, 2011).

known as the Black Tuesday. What started in the United States spread into a worldwide crisis which lasted until 1940s.⁹⁴

During the Great Depression people were confused of their future. They lost their jobs and could not pay for alcohol. Thousands of people were unemployed. They started to think of themselves and of the state, laws, prohibition and started to deal with problems. Maybe this contributed to the end of Prohibition. Alcohol became legal again and people forgot their problems.

6.2 Alcohol legal again

People were dissatisfied and frustrated with the current situation in the United States. In late 1920s a number of repeal organizations increased. The most powerful organizations were the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment, Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform, United Repeal Council or Women's Moderation Union. These organizations propagated pamphlets against Prohibition and helped end this unlucky era. In 1932 elections the Democratic Party along with Franklin D. Roosevelt, as a presidential candidate, led an anti-Prohibition campaign promising repeal. They finally won the elections and kept their promise.⁹⁵

The majority of votes in Congress were achieved and Utah became the thirty sixth state to ratify the Twenty First Amendment repealing the Eighteenth Amendment and finally ending Prohibition era. This happened on December 5, 1933. The proclamation was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt which officially ended Prohibition.⁹⁶

6.2.1 The Twenty-First Amendment states:

“Section 1: The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the USA is hereby repealed.

⁹⁴ Michael Burgan, *The Great Depression: An Interactive History Adventure (You Choose: Historical Eras)* (Mankato: Capstone Press, 2011), 8-9.

⁹⁵ David J. Hanson, “Repeal of Prohibition,” Alcohol: Problems and Solutions, <http://www2.potsdam.edu/hansondj/Controversies/1131637220.html> (accessed May 1, 2011).

⁹⁶ Robert Vance, Jr., “The Demise of Prohibition,” The Concord Review, Inc., http://www.tcr.org/tcr/essays/EPrize_Prohibition.pdf (accessed April 26, 2011); “Document for December 5th: Presidential Proclamation 2065 of December 5, 1933, in which President Franklin D. Roosevelt announces the Repeal of Prohibition.” The U.S. National Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/index.html?dod-date=1205> (accessed April 27, 2011).

Section 2: The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or Possession of the USA for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.”⁹⁷

Section one made alcohol legal again and section two allowed individual states authority to regulate alcohol.

⁹⁷ C. Michael Hall and Richard Mitchell, *Wine Marketing: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2007), 21.

7 PROHIBITION AND ORGANIZED CRIME NOWADAYS

7.1 Alcohol prohibition

People should learn from history and not repeat the same mistakes again. Prohibition did not end in 1933, but was effective in some states at the state level until 1966, when the last state repealed it. Still almost thirty eight percent of Americans lived under state or local restrictions and nowadays several American counties are dry. Many people still support the ideas of illegal alcohol.⁹⁸

In 2005, Sweden wanted to prohibit alcohol in the whole European Union. I do not drink alcohol that much but I think this is a step back, and I am convinced that it would not take the majority of votes. The most significant reason is that the underworld and black market would rise again and the economy of each state would lose the majority of earnings which float from the excise tax into the state budget.

7.1.1 Drug prohibition

Drug prohibition is closely related to prohibition of alcohol because after making alcohol legal again in America, many criminals turned their business to drugs. It began in the 1920s and is considered as continuation of alcohol prohibition. The use of drugs increased in the second half of the nineteenth century and became a worldwide problem. Many organizations, such as the Drug Enforcement Administration in the United States, were established to deal with this problem. However, drug prohibition is hard to control nowadays and is in crisis. It is speculated, whether to make drugs legal.⁹⁹

7.2 Organized crime nowadays

Organized crime spread into worldwide organized net and today the most powerful Mafia organizations include Italian and Sicilian Mafia, Russians, Chinese Tongs, Japanese Yakuza, African groups, Mexican Cartels or Motor gangs such as Hells Angels.¹⁰⁰

Organized crime influenced the twentieth and twentieth first century, and even if many organizations fight against it, this unsuccessful consequence of Prohibition will continue.

⁹⁸ David J. Hanson, "Repeal of Prohibition," *Alcohol: Problems and Solutions*, <http://www2.potsdam.edu/hansondj/Controversies/1131637220.html> (accessed May 1, 2011).

⁹⁹ Harry G. Levine and Craig Reinerman, "Alcohol Prohibition and Drug Prohibition," *CEDRO - centrum voor drugsonderzoek*, <http://www.cedro-uva.org/lib/levine.alcohol.html> (accessed May 3, 2011).

¹⁰⁰ Paul Lunde, *Organizovaný zločin* (Prague: Mlada fronta a.s., 2009), 5.

CONCLUSION

Jack the Ripper was never caught and also Prohibition did not end with the Twenty-First Amendment, but its consequences are visible nowadays. The United States saw the large expansion of industry and immigration in the late nineteenth and twentieth century and several various nations mingled together and sought stability in the land of freedom, as America was considered. Within thirty years America completely changed.

Mainly religious people and women fought for centuries for making alcohol illegal in the United States. Most of their efforts failed, however, in 1920 they finally won. After participation in WWI, Americans were confused and sought stability as was before the war. Republicans promised them a “Return to Normalcy” and Americans started to believe in government. Prohibition in the whole United States was enacted on January 17, 1920.

The Noble Experiment gave rise to organized crime and the Mafia. The United States suffered from corruption, bribery, burglary, murder or slaughter. It was a period of fear, little social stability and even less police prevention. Americans were losing their values and finally realized that Prohibition was destroying their nation. The Twenty-First Amendment repealing the Eighteenth Amendment was enacted on December 5, 1933. People should learn from history and not allow this to happen again. The negatives much overreach the would-be positives and Prohibition of alcohol is now considered a failure.

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