H. L. Mencken
The German-American from Baltimore

Thank you, Nicholas Fessenden, and members of The Society for the History of Germans in Maryland, for inviting me to speak to your group this evening. Before I begin, you should know that the Baltimore journalist and writer Henry Louis Mencken was actually a loyal dues paying member to of this Society. He was invited to join during 1915 and 1916, when anti-German feeling was reaching new heights here in Baltimore. During that same period he was also invited to join the General German Orphan Asylum, the General German Aged People's Home, the German Society of Maryland, and the Goethe Society. He said he never attended a single meeting of any of them—but gladly contributed his $5 per year.[1]

H. L. Mencken was born in this city in 1880, of Baltimore born parents of German descent. Mencken never became so thoroughly Americanized that he forgot his ancestry. He was always conscious of his German origins, and it was for this reason that during his lifetime, especially during both World Wars, he was accused of being unpatriotic and his popularity sometimes suffered. Despite this, Mencken's reputation has not experienced any irreparable damage. In Europe, where Mencken's work is translated into French, Italian, Spanish, and German, he continues to be seen as a touchstone to all things American. As the author and contributor to 250 books and pamphlets, as a newspaperman for the Baltimore Sunpapers, as a literary critic and editor for *The Smart Set* and later, *The American Mercury*, Mencken helped shape and influence opinion. Among the authors he introduced to American readers included James Joyce, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, George Bernard Shaw, and Henrik Ibsen. His political writings and social criticism, along with his passionate opinions regarding the Bill of Rights, continue to be quoted in the United States and globally. His appeal resonates among all age groups. His iconoclastic wit is even quoted on Twitter, of which @HLMenckenBot has 10,000 followers.

One of the keys in understanding H. L. Mencken as a person, and, I would argue, one of his great strengths as a writer, was his ability to examine the United States from the outside looking in. That ability came, in large part, from his German background. As a second-generation

German, Henry Mencken was proud of the paternal side of his family, whose line of ancestry can be traced to the 1600s. For two centuries the Mencken family flourished in Leipzig. "Menckenstraße" is a major road leading to the city center. Henry Mencken felt a real kinship with his ancestor Johann Burkhard Mencke of Leipzig, whose satire *The Charlatanry of the Learned*, published in 1715, became a sensation in Europe. One of the Mencken ancestors gave birth to Otto von Bismarck, the first chancellor of the German Empire.[2]

Mencken's grandfather, Burkhardt Ludwig Mencken, migrated to Baltimore in 1848. Burkhardt assimiliated quickly and had little to do with the other Germans, who he saw were mostly of the petty trading class; he married an Englishwoman. His son, August (Henry Mencken's father) was born in Baltimore. He did not speak German, and did not understand it well. English was the main language spoken at home.

Many of August Mencken's best friends were first-generation Germans like himself. Their own fathers had come to the United States after the Franco-Prussian War and they owned factories and importing houses. In the early 1880s the United States was enjoying an economic boom, and they made money. August was the successful proprietor of the cigar factory that bore his name. By 1886, August Mencken & Brothers was considered one of the best cigar-makers in the southeast.

Despite his prosperity and ability to travel, August Mencken never went to Germany. While he was proud of his family, he did not know much about his ancestry, nor did he join the many German organizations in Baltimore, although he sent his son to a German grade school. He liked German cooking and going on Sundays to the local beer gardens in West Baltmore, of which there were many. He was often accompanied on these outings by his two young sons, Henry and Charlie, who especially admired the workmen in the breweries, "mainly because we heard that they were allowed to drink 25 free beers a day."[3]

Henry Mencken's mother, Anna Abhau, came from a pure German family who entered fully into the German life of Baltimore and attended the Zion church. Unlike her husband, Anna actually spoke German fluently and was able to read it.[4] Her kitchen was known for its servings of knockwurst and "kujen"; more importantly, it was she who encouraged Henry Mencken's interest in the family tree and in his ancestral home.

Mencken's sentimentality towards Germany was due to his mother's influence.

Mencken's colleagues at school were German-American boys whose fathers were prosperous businessmen like his own. As for Mencken's own knowledge of German, he always regretted that he had never had sufficient training in the language. He said his own difficulty in foreign languages was due to his poor memory, and his impatience with tedious and repetitious jobs.[5] He confessed that he could read German better than he spoke it, and he always hesitated to write it.[6] When it came time for him to translate and write his books on Nietzsche, his mother and a dictionary helped him out. Mencken sprinkled German phrases and words in his writing, but often made mistakes. "Now and then," Mencken confessed, "someone describes me as a German scholar. It always makes me snicker."[7]

Mencken grew up in a German-American neighborhood in West Baltimore. During the 1880s and '90s the neighborhood had stores all owned by Germans: the bakeries, the butcher shop, the harness shop, shoe stores, the toy shops. With the rise of German technology and science, many of the industries of Baltimore at that time were German; so were the factories; many of the owners lived in West Baltimore. "The immigrant Germans whom I saw at home as a boy all affected a certain aloof superiority towards Americans and everything American," Mencken wrote. "To say anything was American, in my family circle, was to hint that it was cheap and trashy. The Germans owned their own homes and paid their way. The Americans were renters and made a hollow show."[8]

The competence of German-Americans, Mencken wrote, was a byword in America. "Everyone knows that a German carpenter is likely to be better than any other carpenter, that a German farmer works harder than his American neighbors of other stocks and produces better crops, and the a German shop-keeper is to be relied upon for honest dealing."[9]

At an early age, Mencken began to acquire the sense that his family was different, separate from others. But the foundation for Mencken's ethnic ties and spiritual kinship with Germany did not fully gell when he was a boy. Instead, it deepened during 1911 and 1912, during his conversations with the literary critic, Percival Pollard, whose sympathy with Germany greatly widened Mencken's perspectives on the German char-

acter and ideas; and his reading of I.A.R. Wylie's book on *The Germans*. The descriptions of the country, with its emphasis on individuality and hard work, along with the values placed on freedom, learning and discipline, resonated with Mencken. Wylie's chapters on the German attitude toward music—theatres packed with men and women of all social strata, intensely enjoying Bach—reminded him of a conversation he overheard among salesmen at a hotel in Leipzig. He reflected that their American counterparts would have talked about sports. Not these Germans. For half an hour there was a lively discussion about how Beethoven's Pathetique in C Minor should be played, who played it best, whether it was Opus 22 or 13![10]

Mencken's admiration for Germany deepened with each visit he made to that country, first in 1908, then again in 1912, and subsequently in 1914, 1917, 1922, 1930, and in 1938. His fascination with Germany is described in his articles for the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, *The Smart Set*, and later in his book, *Europe After 8:15*.[11] With a glinting *seidel* of Spatenbräu before him in Munich's Hofbräuhaus, Mencken felt in his element. Every time Mencken returned to the United States he noticed the cultural difference between the two countries. The German love of music and culture was just one of the values that Mencken prized. There were others: self reliance; hard work; independence; free speech: the very same values that Mencken had appreciated in Thomas Jefferson and the Founding Fathers—old fashioned American values that Mencken felt were being abandoned in the United States.

Mencken's critical thoughts about the United States and what he saw as its narrow-minded provincialism culminated in a series of articles for *The Smart Set* that examined American life and character—their morals, their language, their freedom, their ideas of beauty. This became the basis for his books, among them *A Book of Prefaces*, *Notes on Democracy*, and *Prejudices*.[12]

But it was World War I that truly transformed Mencken in several ways. It not only bound him closer to Germany, it also crystallized for him the role of free speech and the free press in the United States. During 1914–1915, almost all of the news that was coming into the United States from Germany was filtered through London, which had a propaganda machine that was the envy of the world. As a newspaper columnist for the

Baltimore Evening Sun, Mencken became convinced that he had a responsibility to give balance to the newspaper reports and propaganda that were coming in from England.

As such, Mencken's columns provides a wealth of primary material for those interested in the history of journalism and the social history of Baltimore during that time. Mencken pointed out how editorials, headlines, cartoons, photographs, even methods of display were either incorrect, miscaptioned, or deliberatly exaggerated. Moreover, the reports were skewed in favor of the British. Mencken was not the only person calling attention to bias in the press. A local priest in Baltimore wrote to the Sunpapers, citing editorials and cartoons that were inflammatory and unfair.[13]

This period also heightened for Mencken his pride in Germany, and his disdain that the United States, while claiming neutrality, was adopting the British point of view."That the Germans are disliked in the world goes without saying," wrote Mencken. Why this hostility? It was because arrogance is a quality that is noticeable in all successful and efficient people, wrote Mencken. "The German attuitude towards the world is simple. He tells the world to go to the devil. This German arrogance, is an affront to Anglo Saxon pride."[14]

This kind of writing inflamed the gratitude of the Baltimore Germans, who insisted upon calling him a German patriot. Mencken later wrote: "I was, of course, no more a German patriot than I was an American patriot," but they refused to believe it, and kept coming into his office, "to suggest new and worse attacks upon England, and elected me an honorary member to all of their singing societies and invited me to many of their parties. Not infrequently I received presents of chocolate cakes and other such delicacies from appreciative German housewives."[15]

Mencken purposely kept away from German Americans, especially those that he thought might be German spies. When, in July, 1916, the German submarine, the *Deutschland*, arrived in Baltimore, Mencken refused to have anything to do with the welcome committee, especially with Paul Hilken, the Baltimore agent of the North German Lloyd ships. Mencken had known Paul's father, but thought the son "a rather suspicious character."[16] Years later Mencken learned that Hilken was one of

those who had met with the Germans at the Hansa House, and planned the sabotage and a huge explosion that took place at the piers of Black Tom island, in the New York harbor at the end of July 1916. The explosion at Black Tom remains one of the most fascinating and little known episodes of World War I, that was reexamined again after September 11.[17]

Nonetheless, it was clear to Mencken's readers that he was pro-German. After the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Mencken said the Germans were going to win. Readers at the Sunpapers became angry at the columnist; eventually Mencken was cut off from his newspaper, though he did convince management to let him travel to Berlin and record his impressions. Because of the recent Bismarck centennial, the country had been reminded that Bismarck's mother was a Mencken of Leipzig, so, Mencken said, "my name got me extra politeness," and he was duly seated to the highest ranking general, "despite my assaults upon his politeness with my execrable German." When readers complained that Mencken's articles from Germany were hardly impartial, management had to remind them that while Mencken was pro-German, at least they were getting an inside story.[18]

When Mencken returned to Baltimore in 1917, the United States declared war, and Mencken found himself the target of the super patriots. All of you know this depressing history. Attacks against German Americans were rampant. The teaching of German in public schools was eliminated. Street names were changed. The German newspapers of Baltimore were shut down. German-Americans were beaten in the streets. Food was renamed. Family names were changed, from Müller to Miller, Schmidt to Smith. At Baltimore's Goucher College, one of the most respected members of the faculty was forced to resign because he had expressed sympathy for the Germany people. Here in Baltimore, five boys who refused to sing "The Star Spangled Banner" were suspended from school. Mencken was placed under surveillance by the Department of Justice. His mail was opened. Tips reached him that his house was going to be searched. No one in America, wrote Mencken, seemed free from persecution.[19]

"There must be at least 100,000 detectives in the United States," Mencken wrote to a friend in Europe.[20] His assumption was actually an underestimate. The American Protective League alone boasted a mem-

bership of 250,000. Other private organizations included The Boy Spies of America. The American Defense Society, The Liberty League; The All-Allied Anti-German League, the Knights of Liberty. Volunteer spies sent in a flurry of breathless and excited letters to the Department of Justice. The National Archives has an entire file on H. L. Mencken. One of the best of the letters is from a Baltimore informer named "D. G. Smart" who apparently had spied upon Mencken and his group of pals enjoying their dinner and beer after a meeting of their musical group, the Saturday Night Club. The informer was horrified to hear the men—all of them Teutonic in appearance—were speaking German and English and,worst of all, communicating in sign language.[21]

Mencken later confessed he had great fun sending in his own fake letters about himself to the Department of Justice. But this period in history was no laughing matter. In an unpublished document, the writer James Cain wrote how angry Mencken was during this time. "He wouldn't have been human," wrote Cain, "if the whole thing didn't affect him the rest of his life."[22] Mencken actually flirted with the idea of moving to Munich, and never coming back to the United States again.[23]

Instead of moving away, Mencken stayed. And in doing so, he became identified as one of the key instigators of the artistic revolt during the 1920s. The excess and bigotry demonstrated during this period opened Mencken's eyes to the plight of another minority group in this country, the African Americans. Their civil rights were being impinged upon by the Wilson administration, which instituted segregation in government offices where it had not existed before. The Administration had also taken to silencing black dissidents, suppressing African American publications, and placing individuals under surveillance. It was at this time that Mencken began to meet with black intellectuals. He encouraged the writing of black Americans, and wrote against segregation and lynching. He would continue to champion their case for the rest of his life, even when such topics were hardly popular.[24]

With the Espionage Act in effect, Mencken could only write about neutral topics. It was during this period that Mencken wrote *A Book of Prefaces*, *In Defense of Women* and, even more importantly, *The American Language*, which went through several editions and which is still considered one of the most influential books ever published in this coun-

try. It helped foster a new confidence among American writers and their dialect, and helped marked a new stage in the development of American literature. The critic Edmund Wilson, who appreciated Mencken's dual heritage, wrote: "I do not see how how our literary colonialmisn could possibly have been blown up at that moment by men of Anglo-Saxon stock."[25]

After the war was over, the plight of Germany was never far from Mencken's mind. In 1922 Mencken went to Germany and visited the German Crown Prince. Mencken was amazed at how insensitive the rest of the world, especially the United States, seemed to be about the burden of reparation payments. Mencken corresponded with the German Ambassador to the United States and offered to distribute pamphlets about the situation to journalists and authors, where it would have the most effect.[26]

Throughout Mencken's life his German background was constantly being dredged up and his patriotism questioned. It was questioned again during the 1930s, when Mencken's popularity sunk to a new low.

Baltimore readers began writing to the Sunpapers why Mencken was not speaking out against Hitler.[27] Mencken had actually reviewed *Mein Kampf* for his magazine, *The American Mercury*, but the edition he read for his review was the translated, sanitized and abridged version not the original German version. By relying on this abridged edition, Mencken's review was bound to be distorted. At this early stage, Mencken, like others at the time, failed to recognize Hitler's anti-Semitism was the fundamental tenant of Naziism. Many Americans during 1933 and 1934 admired the way Hitler had boosted Germany's economy in a way that they felt Roosevelt had not done here at home, and Mencken was no exception. Instead of seeing Hitler as a menace, Mencken dismissed him as an "absurd " figure, on par with another mob orator, the American fundamentalist, William Jennings Bryan.[28]

But one would be wrong to think that Mencken was ever pro-Hitler. When one of the first pro-Nazi societies in the United States tried to give Mencken an honorary membership, he rejected it. "Hitler and his associates have thrown away the German case and given the enemies of their country enough ammunition to last for years,"[29] he wrote. He told a correspondent that he thought Hitler "a lunatic."[30] As he said, "It seems to

me that the gross brutality to harmless individuals must needs revolt every decent man."[31]

Mencken made his last trip to Germany during the summer of 1938. He wanted to see for himself what exactly was going on. But it was the Germany of his ancestors, not Hitler's Berlin, that Mencken had gone to see. So although Mencken saw some instances of anti-Semitism during the summer of 1938, he spent most of his time traveling thousands of miles by train and car, rejoicing in the Christmas card prettiness of the Black Forest, and the churchyards where his ancestors lay buried.[32]

And here is where considering Mencken's legacy gets to be so difficult, even among his staunchest fans. How could Mencken, the courageous journalist, the man who had always battled for civil rights, not write about his impressions after his trip to Germany? The Germany Mencken loved was the land of his grandfather and mother, a country to which he had pledged his soul and no despot could destroy.

Mencken's silence was entirely consistent with his demeanor during the years of the First World War. Few Americans not of German heritage would have understood the trauma German Americans had undergone during that period, described in memoirs and interviews published long after the war. Since that time the quiet submersion of German America had proceeded virtually unchecked.

On the other hand, shortly after *Kristallnacht* in November of that year, Mencken wrote a column advising Roosevelt to open the gates to this country, so Germany's Jewish population could emigrate to these shores, and was doing so when other newspapers and columnists were notoriously quiet. Perhaps even more telling, privately Mencken sponsored a Jewish family to emigrate to the United States.[33]

But there was another reason why Mencken did not speak out against Germany at this time. Mencken was not an isolationist like Charles Lindbergh and his America First campaign. But like many Americans in 1939, Mencken did not want to see another war; he was convinced that American security depended upon abstention. Moreover, he remembered the excesses of World War I and was convinced a new form of the Espionage Act would come into effect, and free discussion in the newspapers would cease. Franklin Roosevelt, said Mencken, was a far

more popular President and much more saavy about censorship than Wilson had ever been. Any kind of press censorship infuriated Mencken. In the days following Pearl Harbor, the unity of Americans clicked into place. In 1941, Mencken quit writing for his newspaper.

Mencken was convinced that once again the United States had been duped into declaring war against Germany by the Brtitish. World War I had only produced debt, said Mencken, and had led to the rise of Hitler. He did not believe that any Germany's bombs would reach American shores. And when Mencken's brother, August, thought maybe a bomb-proof shelter shoud be built at their home in Hollins Street, Mencken told him not to even bother—that he would take refuge in the deep cellars of Schellhase's—though he did wonder how long their barrells of beer would last.[34]

It is difficult for anyone in this century to comprehend the skepticism when the first reports started tricking in about the concentration camps in 1945. The stories seemed unbelieveable. Many, including Mencken, thought they were on par with the British propaganda atrocity stories that had circulated during World War I. It was only when the photographs were published in the pages of the Baltimore Sunpapers, and newsreels about the liberation of the camps were being shown at the local movie theaters here in Baltimore and across the country that there could be no more denial of the fact.[35]

How did Mencken react? In interviews for my biography, *Mencken: The American Iconoclast*, every remaining contemporary then alive that I asked, including Alistair Cooke, told me that Mencken never spoke of it.[36] His characteristic reaction to subjects that he found too disturbing, and too painful, was silence. Nonetheless, in 1945, in a revision of his book, *Treatise on the Gods*, he eliminated statements that would seem anti-Semitic. "Better than the rest of us," Mencken admitted, "the Jews sensed what was ahead for their people."[37]

Mencken remained convinced that when it came to the atrocities of World War II, the United States had its share of the blame. He thought the use of the atom bomb on Japan had been barbaric, and he was against the looting going on in Germany and Japan. His thoughts were with the fate of those he knew in Germany. During World War II, eleven family members had died, including one with the bombing of Berlin; another, a young

German soldier who bore the name of his own grandfather, Burkhardt Mencken, had been taken prisoner. After World War II was over, Mencken read about Germany's food shortages and swung into action. He began mailing packages to Germany of oatmeal, rice, powdered milk, chocolate, coffee, tins of meat and fish, shoes. He now had a new nickname: Santa Claus.[38]

He even tried mailing a copy of his book, *The American Language*, to his academic German friends in Berlin who taught English. They were returned by the US Post Office. Not one to be defeated, he continued the attempt—for six months. Nothing. As he wrote his friends in Germany: "The bureaucrat is a natural imbecile. When he is put in a position to afflict and annoy his betters he leaps to it like a trout swimming upstream."[39]

Mencken's German-American Baltimore did not outlive World War II. German-Americans were not bothered to the extent that they had been during World War I, but by the same token a lot of the culture and traditional celebrations, such as German Day, were being quietly shelved. According to Dieter Cunz, in his book on *The Maryland Germans*, "the strongest German American institution in Baltimore City that seemed to weather World War II in undiminished strength" was the institution where we are all sitting in now—the Zion Church of Baltimore.[40]

By this time, even before World War II was over, Mencken had begun his retreat to the past, by writing his trilogy of memoirs, *Happy Days*, *Newspaper Days* and *Heathen Days*, which The Library of America reissued in 2014.[41] The running theme throughout Mencken's unpublished notes for these volumes is one of loss. One cannot help but read these notes with a sense of sadness, a yearning to recapture the European flavor Baltimore city retained during the 1880s and 90s, when German-Americanism was at its height. Mencken writes about the German-American newspapers that existed in Baltimore at that time; the German school he attended; German customs and German food. In Baltimore, in 1880, when the entire population numbered about 332,000, Mencken records that there existed forty-six breweries, most of them German owned. By 1943, there were only five.[42]

As Mencken observed, the Baltimore of the 1880s was a town now long gone and forgotten. That loss, and the submergence of a proud cul-

ture, remains the tragedy of German America, although some would argue that the traces of that America not only remain, but are beginning to thrive.[43]

As I mentioned at the outset of my speech, one of Mencken's strengths was his ability to examine United States from the outside looking in. In Europe, Mencken continues to have contemporary relevance—as a testament, wrote a critic in *The Irish Times*, "to the necessity of reasoned dissent at a time of crisis and self-doubt."[44] That kind of independence is not often understood or embraced; today in this country there are many people who still continue to label Mencken as being un-American. [45]

Mencken recognized that his independence made him incomprehensible to most. He was an observer of the American scene, not a reformer. "The first passion of a good Americano, " he wrote, "is to make his fellow primates do something that they don't want to do. His second is to convince them that doing it will improve the world and please God."[46] Here, Mencken said, "I lie outside the stream." What kept Mencken going was his curiosity and an endless interest in what he called "the stupendous farce of human existence."

Imagine what a field day he would have had with the current state of affairs in Washington! I believe Mencken would have handled these times with his usual optimism. As Mencken once wrote: "I have witnessed, in my day, the discovery, enthronement and subsequent collapse of a vast army of uplifters and world-savers, and am firmly convinced that all of them were mountebanks. We produce such mountebanks in greater number than any other country, and they climb to heights seldom equalled elsewhere. Nevertheless, we survive, and not only survive, but flourish." [47]

That kind of unflinching optimism is especially warranted right now as we enter a new cycle of political elections, as we witness the presidential candidates, from Donald Trump to Hilary Clinton, all strutting their stuff, full of sound and fury. Mencken has an answer for that, too. He was once asked, "If you find so much that is unworthy of reverence in the United States, then why do you live here?"

As he said: "Why do men go to zoos?"[48]

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— Marion Elizabeth Rodgers
Washington, D.C.

NOTES

1. H. L. Mencken, *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work*, edited by Fred Hobson, Vincent Fitzpatrick, Bradford Jacobs (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 55.
2. For a discussion of H. L. Mencken's ancestry, see: Isaac Goldberg, *The Man Mencken* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1925), pp. 32–49, 50–61; Fred Hobson, *Mencken: A Life* (New York: Random House, 1994), pp. 3–18. Mencken reissued his ancestor's book in an American edition: Johann Burkhard Mencke, *The Charlatanry of the Learned*, Translated from Latin by Francis E. Litz, with notes and an Introduction by H. L. Mencken (New York: Knopf, 1937). Henry Mencken, not his father, traveled to Leipzig and acquired copies of Mencken family portraits in oil and hung them up at the house at 1524 Hollins Street in West Baltimore.
3. H. L. Mencken, "Happy Days: Additions, Corrections, and Explanatory Notes," p. 44, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
4. H. L. Mencken to Dieter Cunz, December 15, 1944, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
5. H. L. Mencken to James M. Bowcock, December 11, 1947, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The New York Public Library.
6. H. L. Mencken to Herr Mencke, October 9, 1937, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
7. H. L. Mencken to Edgar R. Dawson, December 27, 1938, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
8. H. L. Mencken, "Autobiographical Notes 1925," page 182, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
9. H. L. Mencken, "The German-Americans," originally published as "Die Deutschamerikaner" which appeared in *Die Neue Rundschau* (Berlin and Leipzig) for November 1928. See Mencken's carbon copy in "H. L. Mencken, Magazine Articles: Volume I (1922–1936)," The H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
10. H. L. Mencken, *My Life as Author and Editor*, edited and with an introduction by Jonathan Yardley (New York: Knopf, 1993), p. 173; I.A.R. Wylie, *The Germans* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1911); H. L. Mencken, "The Prophet and the Superman," *The Smart Set*, March 1912, 156–58.

    For another perspective on Mencken's European point of view, see: Carin Freywald, "H. L. Mencken: How German Was He?" in Peter Freese, editor, *Germany and German Thought in American Literature and Cultural Criticism, Proceedings of the German-American Conference in Paderborn May 16–19, 1990* (Normal: Illinois State University Press, 1990), pp. 170–189.

11. H. L. Mencken with George Jean Nathan and Willard Huntington Wright with decorations by Thomas Hart Benton. *Europe After 8:15* (New York: Lane; Toronto, Bell & Cockburn, 1914), see Mencken's chapter on Munich, also printed in *The Smart Set* for April 1913, 103–111.
12. H. L. Mencken, *A Book of Prefaces* (New York: Knopf, 1917). Mencken's self-admitted "headlong and uncompromising attack upon American Kultur" was his eighty-five-page discussion of "Puritanism as a Literary Force," caused a lash of criticism, wherein his German-American background was denigrated. H. L. Mencken, *Notes on Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1926), reprinted again with an Introduction and annotations by Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, with an Afterword by Anthony Lewis (New York: Dissident Books, 2009); H. L. Mencken, *Prejudices* was a series of books published by Knopf in six editions, dating from 1919 to 1927. They were reprinted by The Library of America with annotations by Marion Elizabeth Rodgers in 2010.
13. For a discussion on how war is packaged and promoted to a gullible public, and Mencken's observations, see: Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, Mencken: *The American Iconoclast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 141–144; especially footnotes for this chapter, 581–582. The local priest was William T. Russell, "Letters to the Editor," *Baltimore Sun*, September 5 and 13, 1914.
14. H. L. Mencken, "The Free Lance," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, September 28, 1914.
15. H. L. Mencken, *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work*, 54.
16. ibid., 57–58.
17. ibid. See Michael Pohuski, "A U-Boat in Baltimore's Harbor, The Deutschland, 1916–1921," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 87, 1 (Spring 1982), 42–58; Jules Witcover, *Sabotage at Black Tom: Imperial Germany's Secret War in America, 1914–1917* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1989).
18. Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, *Mencken: The American Iconoclast*, 143–144; 162–174; H. L. Mencken, "The Free Lance," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, May 2, 1915 and October 8, 1915; "Mencken Is Not Neutral," *Baltimore Sun*, January 21, 1917.
19. Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, Mencken: *The American Iconoclast*, 175–189, see footnotes for this chapter 585–587, especially footnote 2.
20. H. L. Mencken to Ernest Boyd, July 23, 1918, H. L. Mencken Collection, The Firestone Library, Princeton University.
21. The July and August 1918 letters from a self-styled patriot named D. G. Smart can be found in "Federal Bureau of Investigation Investigative Case Files 1908–1922. Subject: H. L. Mencken," The National Archives.
22. James Cain, unpublished handwritten essay titled "Mr. M," James Cain papers, The Library of Congress.
23. H. L. Mencken to Ernest Boyd, September 26, 1919 and July 16, 1919, H. L. Mencken Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton Univer-

sity; Herman George Scheffauer to H. L. Mencken, September 22, 1919, H. L. Mencken Collection, The New York Public Library. Part of Mencken's disgust with his fellow Baltimoreans during this time was witnessing the actions of the children of German-American immigrants during 1917–1918. He wrote: "Some of the most violent Hunnenfresser of 1917 and 1918 were immigrants' sons and grandsons who had made money, and so reached a social dignity above that of their German forbears. There were among them some grotesque examples of peasants and proletarians who, by the route of wealth, had forced their way into what passes for fashionable society in the United States. They howled against the Kaiser with vast ferocity, and were loud in their denunciation of those German-Americans of better origin who refused to follow the mountebank Wilson. Such knavish Germans, to be sure, are best lost to the German race." H. L. Mencken, "Die Deutschamerikaner," *Die Neue Rundschau*, November 1928. "H. L. Mencken, *Magazine Articles: Volume I* (1922–1936), The H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.

24. Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, *Mencken: The American Iconoclast*, 179–80; for further discussion, see: Charles Scruggs, *The Sage in Harlem: H. L. Mencken and the Black Writers of the 1920s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).
25. H. L. Mencken, *A Book of Prefaces* (New York: Knopf, 1917); *In Defense of Women* (New York: Philip Goodman, 1918); *The American Language, a Preliminary Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States* (Knopf, 1919). This book was written during 1915–1916, from an article Mencken had written for *The Smart Set* ("The American: His Language," August 1913, pp. 89–96). Subsequent editions of *The American Language* were printed in 1921, 1923, and 1936, with two supplements published in 1945 and 1948. Edmund Wilson, "Mencken Through the Wrong End of the Telescope," *The New Yorker*, May 6, 1950, 113.
26. Henry Wood to Foreign Minister Herrn von Rosenberg, June 22, 1923, and H. L. Mencken to Henry Wood, June 3, 1923, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Germany.
27. "A Request to Mr. Mencken to discuss Hitlerism," in "Letters," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, July 24, 1933.
28. H. L. Mencken, "The Library," *The American Mercury*, December 1933, 506–10. Alarmed that the American public was not getting the full picture, Senator Alan Cranston later translated and published the unexpurgated version of the work. See: Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (New York: Free Press, 1986), pp. 34, 102.
29. H. L. Mencken to Col. Edwin Emerson, May 12, 1933, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The New York Public Library.
30. Fred Hobson, *Mencken: A Life*, 402–3.
31. H. L. Mencken to Ewald Netzer, January 6, 1936, The Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.

32. Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, *Mencken: The American Iconoclast*, for the chapter "Berlin, 1938," 448–455.
33. John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German America: The Germans in the United States of America During the Nineteenth Century and After* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), 42; Marion Eliabeth Rodgers, Mencken: The American Iconoclast, pp. 456–457.
34. H. L. Mencken to P.E. Cleator, August 28, 1942 and September 2, 1943, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The New York Public Library.
35. For a discussion on this issue, see: Deborah E. Libstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 240–78; The Century Theater in Baltimore ran a ten-minute documentary made by the Army Signal Corps, R.P. Harriss, Diary, May 2, 1945, private collection.
36. Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, *Mencken: The American Iconoclast*, page 626 footnote 2; author interview with Elise Cheslock January 21, 1994, and Alistair Cooke, April 15 and May 19, 1992.
37. Fred Hobson, *Mencken: A Life*, 477.
38. H. L. Mencken to Dr. F.E. Chidester, February 14, 1947, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The New York Public Library; Fred Hobson, Mencken: A Life, p. 490; Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, Mencken: *The American Iconoclast*, p. 508.
39. H. L. Mencken to Georg Kartzke, May 5, 1947, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The New York Public Library.
40. Dieter Cunz, *The Maryland Germans: A History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1948), 417.
41. H L. Mencken, *The Days Trilogy, Expanded Edition*, Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, editor (New York: The Library of America, 2014).
42. H. L. Mencken, "Happy Days: Additions, Corrections, and Explanatory Notes," 44, The H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
43. In his Afterword to Erik Kirschbaum's *Burning Beethoven: The Eradication of German Culture in the United States During World War I* (New York: Berlinica, 2015), 155–161, author Herbert W. Stupp gives an upbeat and positive portrait of "German Life in America Today," arguing that the American affinity for German products, food, beer, Oktoberfests, German-American organizations continues unabated.
44. Conor Brady, "Warrior Armed with Words," *Irish Times*, April 8, 2006.
45. Fred Siegel, "Mencken the Teuton," *The Weekly Standard*, January 30, 2006, p. 41.
46. H. L. Mencken, "Off the Grand Banks," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, September 7, 1925. Reprinted in *The Impossible H. L. Mencken: A Selection of His Best Newspaper Stories*, edited by Marion Elizabeth Rodgers (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 680–683.
47. H. L. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy* (New York: Knopf, 1949), vii.
48. ibid., 627.