

**JOHN F. KENNEDY-INSTITUT  
FÜR NORDAMERIKASTUDIEN**

**ABTEILUNG FÜR GESCHICHTE**

**Working Paper No. 88/1996**

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**ETHNIC LEADERSHIP AND THE  
GERMAN-BORN MEMBERS OF THE  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
1862 - 1945**

**A REPORT ON RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

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**ISSN 0948-9436**

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"The German-Americans as a group are in the process of rapid disintegration. The disintegration began long before the war. The war even interrupted it for a while ... German culture in America became a toy for third-rate 'leaders', most of whom had something to sell; except for them, it was dead. ... The melting pot has devoured [the German-Americans] as it has no other group, not even the Irish."

--- H. L. Mencken, 1928

### Introduction

All politics is local, and all ethnic politics is intensely personal as well. Any investigation of ethnic leadership as part of the American experience with ethnic politics and the integration of immigrants has to deal with individual politicians and with their more or less ethnic constituencies. The following data on the 43 German-born men who happened to be elected to the House of Representatives of the United States before 1945 are a first report on an ongoing project. Its goal is to enhance our understanding of the democratic political process as the most effective activity allowing immigrants to become citizens and to feel fully integrated into American "civic culture", as Lawrence H. Fuchs described it in his masterly survey *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity, and the Civic Culture* (Wesleyan University Press, 1990).

Further findings have so far been published in my articles "Ethnic Leadership and the German Americans", *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, eds. Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), vol.2, pp.148-159, and "Ethnic Politicians and American Nationalism during the First World War: Four German-born Members of the U.S. House of Representatives", *American Studies International*, vol.29 (April 1991), pp.20-34.

The rise, defense, and disintegration of the German-Americans as an ethnic group should not be misunderstood as the one-way street or one-directional process as which it is usually described. The older filiopietistic and/or chauvinistic historiography from a German point of view deplored the loss of Deutschtum, of its invaluable cultural and/or racial substance. The older nationalistic Anglo-American view of the matter also took the metaphor of the melting pot too literally and saw only the giving up of one language for another, the replacement of one set of values and patterns of behavior for another. This simplification overlooks the mutual influences and unintended consequences which accompanied the process. Nativists not only intimidated immigrants, they also made many of them aware of their common background, "ethnicized" them, and stiffened their resistance. The evolution of American political and cultural nationalism itself was influenced not only by its competition with the various nationalistic illusions of nineteenth-century Europe, but also by the presence of immigrants from Europe who were an integral part of the American economy without, however, sharing in the Anglo-American part of its culture. The endurance of immigrant groups as ethnic groups over several generations forced the proponents of pure and simple "American" nationalism to tolerate a large measure of variety or deviance--in the 1920s it came to be called "cultural pluralism"--just as in the eighteenth century the very existence of a wide variety of religious groups had forced the American Founders to acknowledge the principle of religious toleration.<sup>1</sup>

All the recent interest in history "from the bottom up" notwithstanding, leadership functions and elite behavior played a crucial role in the formation and disintegration of ethnic groups, as well as in the "host" society's reaction and adjustment to "the immigration problem." On both sides individuals with an interest in and capacity for dealing with more than their own daily tasks took the lead by speaking out, influencing their fellow immigrants' or their fellow native-born Americans' opinions about their situation and by advocating and organizing measures they considered necessary to improve it. From the local singing society's and Turnverein's organizing committee to the priest saying more than mass, the editor reflecting on the nativists' or the immigrants' threat to American liberties, and the lawyer or merchant standing for election to the school board, the city council, the state legislature or a judgeship, there were many men (and very few women) whose activities brought about and gave meaning and direction to what is abstractly called a society's development.

In order to arrive at a fuller understanding of this process in the case of the German-Americans, the project combines a number of community studies with individual and group biographies and content analyses of selected German-language and English-language American newspapers and other pertinent publications. The selected groups of political and cultural leaders are journalists who achieved more than local influence in the lively German-American press, activists at the head of national organizations (the local type of community and club leaders will be picked up in the

community studies), and the 43 German-born members of the U.S. House of Representatives who served between 1830 and 1945.

It is the question of ethnic leadership and some findings about the German-born congressmen on which I would like to focus this report.



## I. Ethnic Leadership

Sociologists, social workers, and social psychologists began discussing the role of leaders in and of ethnic groups before historians of immigration did so. Their concern for solving social problems, especially those of minority groups, led them to see the special contribution which active members of these groups could make to social reform. In the early phase of this discussion much attention was paid to leadership among black Americans. The more or less explicit message was that black leaders should do for their group what other minority group leaders had done for theirs. An early and concise statement of the issue was made at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Society at Minneapolis in 1913. Robert A. Woods, director of South End House in Boston, declared in a discussion of how the lot of the black population could be bettered: <sup>1</sup>

The lesson of the progress of the different racial groups in the American population is that they gain strength first by a very strong offensive and defensive inner loyalty. The most capable members of each group develop the power of leadership in intimate relation with this clannish coherence. In due time a sufficient power of leadership, political, economic, and even intellectual, is gained, so that the group leaders begin to qualify as leaders of the general community. By that time the group so represented begins to have general social power and general social respect.

The underlying assumptions were simple: American society is a conglomeration of competing interest groups, and the more cohesive, better organized and well-led a group is, the more gains it will make. The upward mobility of the group and the growth in experience of its leaders will then be rewarded by the rest of society, "the general community" and formerly ethnic leaders will become

leaders without the restrictive adjective. Since Woods was concerned with the future of American blacks and did not anticipate their disappearance by assimilation as a minority group, he felt no need to think about what happened to the ethnic leaders when their group not only enjoyed "general social power" and "general social respect" but began to disintegrate because of its very success.

Black leadership was also Gunnar Myrdal's concern in his comprehensive study of "The Negro Problem and Democracy". He emphasized two consequences arising from the particular "caste" conditions of Afro-Americans: Black leaders played a very important role as liaison agents between the caste and white society, and they had only a narrow spectrum of options between accommodationist and protest styles of leadership.<sup>2</sup> Social psychologist Kurt Lewin in his 1941 essay on self-hatred among Jews briefly discussed some aspects of leadership in connection with the opposite phenomenon: the fear of American Jews that their group might disintegrate, or at least be severely weakened, because more and more of its members were pulled away from the confined life as group-conscious practitioners of Judaism. It was in this context that Lewin pointed out a dilemma that applies not only to leadership among Jews. Among minority groups, as in society at large, persons who have distinguished themselves through some kind of professional or economic achievement are usually expected and called upon to fill leadership positions. Quite frequently, however, these individuals are culturally marginal to the group because they are not eager to cultivate

the values and behavior that define the group's identity. They become leaders "from the periphery." This trend is strongly reinforced by the fact that the majority group tends to prefer dealing with them instead of others who are closer to the cultural core of their group, and because they seek these leadership roles as part of their striving for acceptance by the majority.<sup>3</sup> In this context Lewin also employed the helpful metaphor of concentric circles or zones with the minority or ethnic group's defining cultural traits forming the core and increasingly peripheral strata of "belonging" surrounding it.

The intellectual part of the struggle against Fascism and for social justice for minority groups in democratic America also triggered the massive anthology of leadership studies edited by sociologist Alvin Gouldner in 1950. In addition to contrasting authoritarian and democratic leadership, bureaucratized and informal leadership, management and trade union leadership, Gouldner presented three ethnic case studies, which, however, contributed little to the conceptualization of the problem. The attitudes of black leaders throughout American history were categorized by five labels close to Myrdal's: "protest," "conservatism," "compromise," "nationalism" (i.e., mainly Garveyism) and "revolt."<sup>4</sup> The essay on Jewish community leadership in a Midwestern city deplored the undemocratic nature of the recruitment of leaders by power cliques. The author basically agreed with Lewin's observation on leadership from the periphery but added an important dynamic component. The activities of these leaders gradually change the ethnic core of the group in the direction

of assimilation and make moving to the periphery or even leaving the group less and less necessary for success-oriented group members.<sup>5</sup> The note on leadership in an Italian-American slum dealt only with the difficulties of social workers to recognize and work with the real leaders.<sup>6</sup>

The next authoritative summary of the state of leadership studies in 1968 focussed completely on the dimensions of power, authority, personality, organization and participation and ignored the special questions of ethnic leadership. Its treatment of the active role of followers and the multiplicity of interactions and interdependencies of leaders and followers contains a number of stimulating abstract observations that the historian of migration and ethnicity may find fruitful to apply and to test in concrete situations. An example is the particularly far-reaching statement: "Leadership defines, initiates, and maintains social structure. The social system is, so to speak, 'programmed' through leadership."<sup>7</sup>

It was left to immigration historians themselves to focus attention on ethnic leadership. They did so in the second half of the 1970s under the leadership of John Higham, whose Johns Hopkins Symposium in Comparative History in 1976 became the starting point of the current discussion of that issue. It must have been his efforts that convinced the editors of the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups (1980) to include an extensive entry on leadership, written by Higham, parallel to articles on such established topics as "Americanization," "Intermarriage," "Language Maintenance," and "Pluralism."

The context in which ethnic leadership thus became a serious topic was no longer the engagement of the social workers or that of the sociologist of minority groups in general and Afro-Americans in particular. The new context was a resurgence--at least in print--of ethnic awareness among Americans of East and Southern European background, the "new ethnicity" of the 1960s and 1970s, which in its trivialized popular form contributed among other things to a romanticized view of some European ethnic groups as more stable and more vital than the melting pot myth had led us to believe, and as more satisfying to the need for "belonging" than nonethnic America. And there was another unrealistic element in the ongoing popular and scholarly debate which would be counteracted by a realistic view of ethnic leadership and the fluid state of ethnic groups in American history: The articulation of alleged working class sentiments by academic opinion leaders, Higham sensed, was accompanied by "a general distrust of elites."<sup>8</sup> Ethnic romanticism as well as the restricted perspective on the past "from the bottom up" needed correction. The essays on a dozen ethnic groups which Higham brought together amply document the active role of leaders, not only in articulating and organizing existing interests, but also in projecting a sense of common values and interests and thereby defining and strengthening the group's very identity. He summed up his understanding of the process in a metaphor more suitable than the melting pot to our stage of technological development: An ethnic group is like a magnetic field that fades at the periphery; and leaders provide its core.<sup>9</sup>

Higham's typology of ethnic leaders contains a number of observations, concepts and questions that can serve as fruitful guides to the more detailed case studies of individual leaders and their communities or constituencies, which are now called for. The most important ones for examining the German-American case are the following:

1. "Effective central leadership,"<sup>10</sup> meaning nationwide organization or at least coordination of group activities, became a real concern for few German-Americans, and then only in the decade leading up to and during the First World War. Much activity on the national level was a media event whose actors such as Hugo Münsterberg and George Sylvester Viereck hoped to be speaking for many but may have been speaking for few like-minded intellectuals.<sup>11</sup>

2. The type of "received leadership," by which Higham means the pastor, merchant or consul, whose authority was originally established in the home country and was transferred to America, played a much smaller role in the case of nineteenth- and twentieth-century German-Americans than in the Chinese and Japanese case. The extent to which the various Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious leaders actually leaned upon approval and support from Germany and how much that was worth in a conflict with their followers in America, needs critical examination. Political leaders, in any case, could not count on any authority borrowed from power positions held in Germany. Political leadership roles could not be transferred but had to be acquired anew, as several Forty-Eighters were to experience. (See the case study of Lorenz

Brentano below.) Even the Nazi movement in the United States, the clearest case of attempted transfer of party leadership positions, ended in failure when in 1935 the Foreign Ministry demanded the resignation of German citizens from the Bund.<sup>12</sup>

3. The first phase of "internal leadership" can well be examined in pioneering and city founding situations such as Milwaukee in the 1840s, where Conzen found clear evidence that German immigrants participated in politics from early on, but only "a small group of persons took on the tasks of political leadership"; (nearly half of the forty activists turned out to be tavern keepers and grocers.) She also found from the beginning signs of a German-Irish rivalry in filling municipal offices.<sup>13</sup> The biographical study of Congressman Henry Poehler of Henderson County, Minnesota, will provide more information for the same founding phase in a rural frontier environment. More local and biographical case studies are needed before valid generalizations about political, religious and cultural leadership among German-Americans in typical founding situations can be made.

4. "Intermediaries" or middlemen such as railroad agents, managers of employment bureaus, realtors and bankers played an important role in the most helpless starting phase of many immigrants. They provided essential services for a more or less honestly earned profit--they also were immigrants trying to make good--but their role has been slighted in the laudatory and filio-pietistic group portraits such as Ruetenik's Berühmte deutsche Vorkämpfer (1888), Heinrici's Das Buch der Deutschen in Amerika (1909), and even in Faust's scholarly treatise. Only the rare

ticket agent who with the help of Tammany Hall became a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, as Nikolaus Müller did, entered the lists of the successful and exemplary.

5. Ethnic associations in need of leaders, and leaders in need of organizations is by no means an exhausted topic, especially for the German-Americans with their multitude of associations ranging from the neighborhood men's choir to usually shortlived attempts at making nationwide umbrella organizations effective. As Conzen showed in the case of early Milwaukee, "it is difficult to view the rich associational life...as an innovative response to the immigrant situation."<sup>14</sup> A far greater part of the much discussed German-American Vereinswesen than is often assumed was cultural baggage brought over in a stage of full development. Their alien origins did not make them less useful even in very American situations like the outbreak of the Civil War. The Turnvereine of St. Louis easily<sup>be</sup> turned into companies of volunteers and naturally provided officers and political leaders. (See the biographical sketch of Gustav Finkelnburg below.)

6. The importance of church leaders, from priest to bishop, and of churches and sects as an essential part of associational life is obvious. The German immigration was not identified with any one church, such as the Irish, Swedish, Italian, Polish, etc., immigration was. Germans came as Catholics, various sorts of Protestants, (mostly reform-minded) Jews, and as Freethinkers, if they were not religiously indifferent. Although it was easier for tightly organized German Lutheran communities in the Midwest to preserve the language and other German characteristics, the lack



of any one church that could serve as a nationwide rallying point for ethnic identity certainly contributed to the fragmentation of German-American cultural life and weakened the impact the German-Americans might have developed as a pressure group on the national level.

6. Leadership in and through the press is an equally applicable and varied category of leadership among German-Americans. Because of the full development of the German-language press, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, the mass circulation dailies and weeklies in the scores of cities with a German readership from a thousand on upwards, assumed a role above that of any other single ethnic organization or institution. They became the media of communication for all the others, among each other and with the rest of American society. Their publishers and editors became intricately involved not only in intra-group politics but in the full range of American politics, from nominating the next coroner to assessing presidential timber. German-Americans who ran for Congress were at their mercy, and it is easy to understand why it would make sense for the editor himself to be the candidate. (Four of the 43 German-born congressmen were newspaper editors; see below.) A small part of the dense web of interrelationships between the German-American elites in publishing, business (commerce, manufacturing and farming), lawyering and politics becomes visible in the biographical studies of the congressmen and their constituencies. In addition, as has been mentioned earlier, the German-language press provided the forum for the less action-oriented opinion leaders who reflected

upon the immigrant experience and American society at large.

7. "Defense of the homeland" as a task for ethnic leaders took on a tragic dimension in the German-American case. With the exception of Mexican-Americans only Japanese- and German-Americans had to cope with the temptations and divided loyalties, the hysteria, hatred and suppression that were aroused by war between the new and the old homelands. (In German, neue Heimat is no contradiction in terms.) The increasing tensions between the rising world power and the continental Empire afflicted by leaders with illusions of power and greatness demanded responsible leadership of the highest quality on the part of German-Americans. Its lack on the national level cannot fully be explained with personal shortcomings. The decreasing quality of leadership on the national level in the two decades preceding the American entry into the First World War was one of the consequences of the disintegration of the German-American ethnic group as a nationwide entity. Representation of German-American interests on the national level had been allowed to become "a toy for third-rate 'leaders'," to vary Mencken's colorful language slightly.<sup>15</sup>

8. "Pursuit of status" for the group, "attaining recognition and visibility," was certainly a preoccupation of German-American leaders on all levels of prominence. The study of the German-born congressmen furnishes several striking examples, such as the counting of the number of districts represented by German-born congressmen and the number of U.S. consulates in Germany given to German-Americans (see the biographical sketch of Brentano below). The opinion leaders appealed to the ideals of equality and

justice to justify the group's claims. "German intelligence is finally making progress towards equal status ( Gleichberechtigung ) with the Yankees ( Yankeethum )," commented the Chicago correspondent of the Badische Landeszeitung after describing Lorenz Brentano's success as a publisher and politician.<sup>16</sup> The Yankees were, of course, only one reference group in measuring status. The Irish, as can be demonstrated by many instances, were the next competing immigrant group, especially for political offices. The exaltation of German culture, so irritating to majority opinion leaders who were trying to establish an American cultural identity, needs to be interpreted in the context of status seeking.

9. Material group advancement, providing basic necessities and services such as housing, employment and health care was perhaps the primary task for ethnic leaders generally. The German-Americans also had their benevolent societies and insurance schemes, and there were the strongly German-influenced labor unions. But material advancement of the group as a whole does not seem to have been an expectation ethnic leaders were believed to be able to fulfill.

Higham's observation that "modern welfare politics also offers an escape from ethnicity" finds a rough analogy in the numerous schemes for improvement, the enthusiasm for public and private local development in nineteenth-century state politics. Editors, state legislators, congressmen and senators were deeply involved in allocating state and federal resources to dredging rivers and harbors, building bridges, post offices, courthouses

and army installations and routing railroads. The "ethnic" politician who joined the process and wanted to be an effective servant of his constituency could not limit himself to act as ambassador of the ethnic group that voted him into office. He had to participate fully in the all-American political game, and he was likely to be forced by his hometown newspapers to explain his moves to his constituents, and by doing so he educated them in American ways. By achieving the ultimate, getting a world's fair to your hometown, as St. Louis congressman Richard Bertholdt did in 1904, you scored many a point for your group by doing something for the whole community.<sup>17</sup>

10. The assimilation dilemma, the apparent incompatibility of economic success and ethnic identity, became the existential issue of German-American leaders. The successful practitioners among them tried to ignore it. Carl Schurz put up a sign in his living room saying "Hier wird Deutsch gesprochen," and as late as 1897 he cheerfully explained to the celebrants of the New York Liederkrantz golden jubilee that, of course, a good German-American had to learn English, but he should not give up German and should not become completely de-Germanized ("Entdeutschung"). By melting into one the best traits of America ("des amerikanischen Wesens") and the best traits of Germany, German-Americans would make a most valuable contribution to the American national character and American civilization.<sup>18</sup> Why Schurz wanted to continue to speak German with Gretel is not difficult to understand. Bicultural life for the first generation came natural. But Schurz refused to consider the consequences for his son and

daughters. The normal conflict between generations obviously took on an additional dimension in immigrant families. The intruding social environment was not only largely beyond the parents' control, as is normal; it was also offering the children a degree of acceptance, a feeling of belonging and a mastery of the cultural tools necessary for social and economic success, which the immigrant parents could usually not hope to achieve. Many knew this second- and third-generation experience; how many German-Americans faced the issue more realistically than Schurz and the other successful German-American politicians did, remains to be seen. What to them was a dilemma, was nature's way to Americans concerned about the immigrant nation's future.

11. Professionalized and institutionalized ethnic leadership:

This twentieth-century development, characterized by the National Urban League in the case of black Americans, provides another useful measure for the completeness of the disintegration of German-Americans. The Steuben Society, founded in 1919, theoretically might have become the institutional center for professionally cool interest-group politics. It did not.<sup>19</sup>

12. "Culture-heroes" of an ethnic group may be mythologized dead or no longer active leaders or individuals whose personal achievement gained wide recognition beyond their ethnic group. They may never have aspired to leadership and may never have wanted to be regarded as members of the ethnic group. With or without their approval they are claimed by the group and held up to American society as proof of the group's collective ability, its contribution to the building of America; to members of the

group they are held up as role models or, since not everybody can become a millionaire or a senator, as inspiration for group pride and individual exertion. General v. Steuben, John Jacob Astor and Carl Schurz are prime examples of German-American culture-heroes. Tomes with titles such as "famous German pioneers of progress, peace and freedom"<sup>20</sup> and much of filiopietistic historiography were meant to establish or re-establish culture-heroes and many lesser figures in the group's collective memory. How the gradual acceptance of some and rejection of others in that capacity actually took place and what it meant for the groups' problems and ethnic consciousness at a given time has not yet been studied in the German-American case. There is no question, however, that the German-language press between 1880 and 1914 abounds with references to German generals in the American Revolution and the Civil War and other culture-heroes, probably as part of the attempt to unify and strengthen the waning group spirit. Monument building served the same purpose. No chapter in Congressman Bartholdt's memoirs conveys a deeper sense of satisfaction than the account of how in 1910 he got the Steuben statue erected across from the White House, next to Lafayette and Rochambeau: "France being thus honored, why, I asked myself, should not the present as well as future generations also be reminded of what the men of German blood had contributed to the cause of American independence?"<sup>21</sup>

Higham in his typology subsumes the culture-heroes in a somewhat broader category he calls "projective leadership," which he defines as "leadership from an ethnic group, whereby an

individual acquires a following outside of the group with which he or she is identified and thus affects its reputation without being directly subject to its control." The examples Higham lists include Pocahontas, James Cardinal Gibbons, Duke Ellington and Albert Einstein.<sup>22</sup> In attempting to apply the category to the German-American case I found it too broad. The crucial distinction, it seems to me, is between the two opposing functions that a culture hero of an ethnic group can be made to serve. Invoking his or her image can strengthen the resolve toward accommodation and integration (Pocahontas, Schurz) or rouse the group's spirits to fight for its rights (Muhammed Ali). Once an individual has achieved universal recognition in a field essentially indifferent to ethnic dimensions (Einstein), attempts by an ethnic group to hitch its wagon to the star no longer seem convincing.

I would like to suggest two further modifications of Higham's typology. "Defense of life-style" should be added to the major tasks of ethnic leaders, supplementary to "material advancement" and "pursuit of status." The German-American case demonstrates that questions of life-style such as freedom to do on a Sunday what one may do on a weekday and to drink what one likes best, did in fact assume importance for an ethnic group's self-definition and, consequently, for its politics.<sup>23</sup> The categories "received" and "professionalized" leadership should be supplemented by one that designates the ethnic leader who is so certain of his personal status and the economic advancement of his ethnic constituency that he no longer acts as the representative of an underprivileged minority. For want of a better term I suggest

"no-longer-minority-minded" ethnic leadership. An example of this type of leader would be the millionaire Republican congressman with a German accent who represents a largely German, growing, medium-sized city in the Ohio valley.

In our search for a fuller understanding of leadership in ethnic groups we need concepts, classificatory labels and generalizations which allow us to make sense and to explain. Without them, historiography would not enhance understanding but satisfy antiquarian curiosity only. The explanatory power of abstractions, obviously, depends on how well they "fit" reality. To make them fit better and better, they need adjustment according to insights produced by their application to historical reality. In the case at hand, biographical case studies of potential ethnic leaders are one possibility to do so.

## II. The 43 German-born Congressmen

As may already have become clear in the preceding discussion of the applicability of Higham's leadership typology, some of the German-born congressmen were ethnic leaders, and detailed study of their careers enhances our understanding of ethnic leadership as well as that of the assimilation of immigrants. To avoid misunderstanding, I do not claim that all of them were ethnic leaders. I do not even claim that they are in the technical sense a representative sample of German-American political activists. They constitute the universe of German-born congressmen. Because of their German birth and because of their personality traits which allowed them to achieve a formal high leadership position, all of them were potential German-American ethnic leaders. By pursuing



the question why not all of them became such, we learn more about the assimilation of German immigrants as well as about their ethnic leaders. Their biographies provide a random sample of the wide variety of economic, sociocultural, religious, political and regional characteristics of German immigrants. Their political careers in 16 states provide insights into a wide variety of (ethnic) politics from the community to the national level. Their distribution over time--the first one was elected in 1862--makes it possible to observe change over seven decades.

1. The regional distribution of the German-born congressmen who served between 1862 and 1945 is not totally unrelated to the distribution of German immigrants among the states. The distribution is as follows (more detailed information in Appendix I):

Wisconsin	7
Pennsylvania	5
New York	5
Missouri	4
Illinois	3
Minnesota	3
Indiana	2
Ohio	2
Iowa	2
Louisiana	2
Michigan	2
Texas	2
Massachusetts	1
New Jersey	1
New Mexico	1

Approximately half of them were elected in urban districts:

New York City	5
St. Louis	4
Philadelphia	2
Chicago	2
New Orleans	2
Boston	1
Newark	1
Toledo	1
Milwaukee	1

St. Paul	1
San Francisco	1
Grand Rapids	1
San Antonio	1
Santa Fe	1

The remaining 19 were elected in country towns and rural districts.

2. The distribution over time is also not accidental. It reflects the fact that participation on the victorious side of the Civil War brought the German-Americans into American state and national politics. There were, of course, members of the House of Representatives before 1860 who were identified with the vote of German-Americans because of a large German contingent among their constituency. Lancaster County's Frederick A. C. Mühlenberg, who served from 1789-1797, was an early example. He was born in Pennsylvania, spent seven formative years at Halle and was part of the then thriving Pennsylvania-German culture, being the son of the patriarch of the German Lutheran church in America. But among Mühlenberg's successors only William Hiester (1831-1837) and John Strohm (1845-1849) can be said to have had a recognizable German connection. Being pro- or anti-Masonic clearly was more important for getting elected in Lancaster county than being of German background.<sup>24</sup>

Only from the election of 1876 on were several German-born representatives sent to Washington. (See Appendixes II and III.) This fact was well noted. (See the biographical sketch of one of those elected, Lorenz Brentano, below.) The maximum of seven German-born congressmen serving at the same time was reached in 1883-1885. 1903 was the last year in which five German-born representatives served together; after 1915 it was mostly two. (See Appendix III.)

### 3. Other characteristics

Almost half of them served only one term (19), 11 served two terms, 4 served three and four terms, one each served 5, 6, 7, 11 and twelve terms. How typical this pattern is for congressmen in general is difficult to say because of the dearth of historical studies of the House of Representatives. A few more of them were Republicans (23) than Democrats (18). Among those whose religious affiliation we know, twice as many were Protestants (13) than Catholics (7). Five were Jewish. None of the Catholics and only one of the Jews was a Republican. Clearly, not any one party or any one religious group can claim the German-born congressmen.

Table: Party Affiliation and Religion

Religion		Democrat	Republican	Progressive Farmer-Labor
Protestant:	13	5	8	-
Catholic	7	5	-	2
Jewish	5	4	1	-
Freethinker	1	-	1	-

Note: Of the 17 congressmen whose religious affiliation could not be determined, 13 were Republicans, 4 were Democrats.

One might expect the German-born congressmen to have come to America as babies. That was not at all the case. On the average they were 13 years old.

Table: Age at Emigration from Germany

Years	Number of Persons
1-5	5
6-14	16
15-20	16
21 and over	4

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Average age: 12.9 years

Most frequent ages: 16 and 18 years

Three oldest persons: 24, 37, and 41 years. In 2 of the 43 cases, the age at the time of emigration is not known.

There is not any one career pattern or any one type of occupation characteristic of all German-born congressmen. A few crossed the Atlantic with some capital ready to invest. But most of them could serve, as the obituaries frequently pointed out, as models for American success stories entitled "From Poor Immigrant Boy to Lawmaker." The way to success varied. 22 of them had acquired their wealth (in several cases considerable wealth) in manufacturing and commerce. The next largest groups were the 8 lawyers, the 6 bankers, engineers and managers, and the 4 newspaper editors. Only 3 of them were farmers.

Almost all of them had occupied several public offices in their community or state before they were sent to Washington. 17 had been members of their state house of representatives, 8 had been state senators, 6 had been mayors of their hometown, 6 postmaster, 6 a member of the board of education, 5 a member of the city council, 2 governor or lieutenant governor of their state, and 1 each a U.S. marshal, treasurer of their state, a judge, and a coroner. The seven exceptions were business magnates

with an established reputation as donors, who were drafted by the local (mostly republican) nominating committee. Clearly, municipal and state politics were the future congressmen's training school. Not one of them can be said to have been a professional organizer of and worker for German-American institutions or organizations. The entrance to the American political system was on the ground floor, and those who were asked in at an elevated level had reached the height in the adjoining and interconnected building, the economic structure.

4. Identification with German-Americans. But which of these men can actually be described as leaders in whose career and political work the ethnic dimension played a recognizable role? Examination of (1) their constituency (number of German-borns in electoral district and other information about the strength of the German-American community), (2) their political career (involvement in German-American issues), (3) their intellectual life (concern with German and German-American historical or current questions), and (4) their personal and family life (use of German, socializing with German-Americans, etc.) shows that of the 43 only 7 can be said to have been German-American ethnic leaders in a not too loose sense of the word. (Degener and Schleicher in San Antonio, Brentano and Barthold in St. Louis, Kiefer in St. Paul, Deuster in Milwaukee, and Küstermann in Brown County, Wisconsin). The following two case studies illustrate the considerations which led me to define one as an ethnic leader (Brentano) and <sup>the other</sup> one not (Finkelnburg of St. Louis).

### III. Finkelnburg of St. Louis, 1869-1873

St. Louis elected its first German-born congressman in 1868: Gustavus A. Finkelnburg, the Republican speaker pro tempore of the Missouri state house of representatives.

Emigration, Family: Gustav Adolph was born near Cologne on April 6, 1837. When he was eleven years old, his family emigrated probably for purely economic reasons to Missouri and settled near the small town of St. Charles, twenty miles northwest of St. Louis on the northern bank of the Missouri. St. Charles was a thriving county seat with a population of about five thousand by 1870, which was known for its attractiveness to German immigrants and formed part of the German belt on both sides of the Missouri River.<sup>1</sup> The German-language weekly St. Charles Demokrat was successful from the beginning of its publication in 1852 on and enjoyed a circulation of 720 copies by 1870.<sup>2</sup>

One obituary piously describes the Finkelnburg family in Germany as "belonging to the office-holding class in the civil service of the government. This is equivalent to saying that they were educated people of integrity and worth."<sup>3</sup> Worthy or not, they arrived poor and remained poor, and after a few years father Finkelnburg returned to Germany with one son, leaving three older ones behind to shift for themselves. (The mother is not mentioned in this context.)

Education and early employment: Gustav had attended the public elementary school in Germany. In St. Charles he worked as a clerk in a store and "picked up such fragmentary education as the schools of that locality afforded . . . .He never received

any classical education, but supplied [sic] that defect, if any, by careful and extensive reading."<sup>4</sup> The graduation from St. Charles College which some obituaries claim was an embellishment of the harsh realities of what does not seem to have been a happy childhood and youth.

Gustav's next job took him to Kimmswick in Jefferson County, where he did clerical work for that village's founder, Mr. Kimm. In 1856, now 18 or 19 years old, Finkelnburg moved to St. Louis, first to work briefly for the German Savings Institution--a one-man operation--and then for the law office of Britton A. Hill, a firm whose name "Hill, Grover, and Hill" did not suggest any other than an Anglo-American identity. This step turned out to be a decisive one in Finkelnburg's life. The law firm or an unknown beneficiary made it possible for the 21 year old to attend Cincinnati Law School for a year. He graduated with high honors, returned to St. Louis in 1860, was admitted to the bar, and was set on the professional tracks he was to follow to the end. From now on, he was successively a partner in six law firms, all of them in St. Louis.<sup>5</sup>

Club membership, military service: In addition to moving in the Anglo-American lawyers' world, Finkelnburg associated with the members of at least one ethnic organization, the St. Louis Turnverein. The Turnverein took an active part on the side of the Union in the beginning phase of the Civil War by forming companies and preventing the U.S. Arsenal in St. Louis from falling into the hands of the "Secessionists." Finkelnburg took part in that action and later served in the First Regiment of Missouri Volunteers.<sup>6</sup>

Public offices before election to Congress: We know few details about Finkelnburg's rapid rise to political influence in local and state politics. The war and postwar years obviously provided opportunities for ambitious Republican lawyers in St. Louis. In 1864 Finkelnburg was back in St. Louis in time to be nominated as a Republican candidate for the Missouri House of Representatives, to which he was elected and re-elected in 1866. The young legislator soon won the confidence of his colleagues and headed the Judiciary Committee with impartiality in a particularly tense period of Missouri politics. Strict adherence to the fundamentals of democratic government led him to oppose the 1865 Missouri Constitution which dis-franchised men who had served in the Confederate army. He advocated repeal of that clause although he knew it would put his party in a minority position, as it actually did from 1870 on.<sup>7</sup> Finkelnburg joined in the St. Louis booster-spirit and as state legislator proposed a bill that would have authorized St. Louis to cede 90 square miles to the Federal government to build the new national capitol where it really belonged: on the banks of the Mississippi.<sup>8</sup> He ended his service in the state house of representatives as president pro tempore of that body.

Election to U.S. House of Representatives: Finkelnburg was 31 when in 1868 he was elected to represent the Second district of Missouri in the U.S. House of Representatives. (In the same election Carl Schurz won his Senate seat). As the Radical Republican candidate Finkelnburg received 13,383 votes, 3,095 more than his Democratic opponent. His district consisted of



wards 1 to 4 of St. Louis, the Southern part of St. Louis county, and Crawford, Franklin, Gasconade, Jefferson, Maries, Osage, Phelps, and Pulaski counties.

[Here: Ethnic composition of population of St. Louis and above named counties.]

Activities as congressman: In Congress, Finkelnburg became known for his articulate opposition to high import duties. He laid out his arguments in the majority report of the Committee on Ways and Means and in his speech on April 26, 1872, in which he pointed out that the time had come to reduce the war tariff of 1862 in the interest of consumers. Especially woolen and cotton goods, leather, iron ware, and other necessities of life, he argued, were sold at artificially high prices with extraordinary profit because their producers no longer paid the internal revenues placed on these goods during the war. At the same time producers continued to be protected from European competition. No trace of an "ethnic" argument or appeal is to be found in the whole speech.<sup>9</sup>

In 1870 Finkelnburg voted in favor of granting Mrs. Lincoln a pension of 3,000 dollars--a question which sharply divided the 9 Missouri congressmen.<sup>10</sup> Finkelnburg asserted his rigid ethical standards by voting against a salary increase for members of the House of Representatives and then refusing to accept the money.<sup>11</sup> On account of decisions like this, one of the memorial tributes attested him "a determination akin to stubbornness," and "a most zealous devotion to the common cause."<sup>12</sup>

He ended his second term as vice-chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means.

Career after Service in Congress: After two terms in Congress, Finkelnburg decided not to be a candidate for any public office in 1872, including the governorship, for which he had been mentioned as a candidate of the Radical Republicans.<sup>13</sup> He wanted to return to practicing law, it seems, mainly for financial reasons. He had to "make provision for an honorable maintenance during the latter years of his life."<sup>14</sup> He specialized in property rights and acquired the reputation of an effective practitioner in court as well as that of a scholar. Without any financial compensation he instructed students at the St. Louis Law School for many years.<sup>15</sup> He published two compilations concerning promissory notes and appellate proceedings in Missouri, and an article on price regulation. At the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 he represented American legal learning before the Universal Congress of Lawyers and Jurists by reading a paper on a classical American concern: the protection of private property of neutrals on the high seas in times of war.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout his professional life, Finkelnburg was active in the local, state and national bar associations. In 1905 President Roosevelt, following the unanimous recommendation of the Bar Association, rewarded the life-long Republican activist by appointing him judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Political activities after service in Congress:

In 1876 the Republican State Central Committee wanted Finkelnburg to be the pro forma Republican candidate for governor. His few speeches were characterized in the press as serving "just

to keep up appearances." Still, he attracted more votes than had ever before been cast in Missouri for a state-wide Republican candidate.<sup>17</sup> When President Grant aimed at a third term, Finkelnburg actively supported the antithird term movement, which held its national convention in St. Louis.<sup>18</sup>

In 1878 Finkelnburg served as chairman of the platform committee of the Missouri Republican State Convention, and he was elected delegate at large to the National Convention.<sup>19</sup> In 1898 he was an unsuccessful candidate for a judgeship on the highest state court.<sup>20</sup>

Family Life, Death: We know almost nothing about Finkelnburg's private life. His first wife was Emma Rombauer, obviously of German background, his second wife, Ida Jorgensen, who survived him, may have been.

In 1907, when his strength failed and he could no longer devote enough energy to the rising number of cases to satisfy his conscientiousness, Finkelnburg resigned. He died the following year at the age of 71.<sup>21</sup>

Assimilation, ethnicity, and Finkelnburg's leadership roles:

In the surviving source material about Finkelnburg's public life and even in the obituaries and memorial addresses the immigrant motif rarely occurred, except in factual references to his place of birth and his disadvantaged start in life. The memorial tribute of his brethren on the bench referred in only one sentence to "the patriotic devotion of the adopted citizen, keen in his appreciation of the privilege of political liberty."<sup>22</sup> Since no personal records such as letters and diaries survive, we have

no knowledge of how Finkelburg experienced his thoroughgoing assimilation. He overcame the language barrier in his early teens and lived in both German and Anglo-American circles of St. Louis (and possibly of Cincinnati) in his twenties. To what degree he moved further away from German-American circles later in his private and public life is difficult to establish. The legal profession was not only his avenue to Anglo-American life, to his income and his social status, it also became the center of his intellectual life. Success as a lawyer seems to have removed him from those who advocated mainly German-American interests.

The few notices in St. Louis newspapers regarding Finkelburg's political activities which have been found so far do not identify, criticize or praise him as a "German" politician. (Not all extant St. Louis newspapers have, however, been examined.)

In his election campaigns he does not seem to have appealed directly to the German vote by promising to satisfy particular group interests, and his activities in Congress do not show him to be an advocate of German-American interests. Ethnic affiliation seems to have been of secondary, party affiliation of primary importance. (There is no record of any religious affiliation.)

He owed his rise from the drudgery of life as a poor and lonely immigrant boy to the satisfying life as an adult who "belonged", was listened to and even provided leadership in a prominent way, not to the ethnic group he came from but to the wider Anglo-American society he joined.

#### IV. Brentano of Chicago, 1877-1879

German migration to the Chicago area had assumed massive proportions in the 1840s and had led to the successful publication of the Illinois Staats-Zeitung from 1848 on.<sup>1</sup> But only in 1877 was the first German-born congressman from Illinois elected in the heavily German electoral district consisting of the North sides of Chicago, suburban parts of Cook County and Lake County. The successful candidate was Lorenz Brentano, a genuine Forty-Eighter and prominent Republican publisher.

Life in Germany, Emigration: Brentano was born on November 14, 1813, in Mannheim, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Baden, into a bourgeois family which was related to the more prominent Frankfurt Brentanos of literary fame. He acquired his law degree at the universities of Freiburg and Heidelberg, practiced law in Rastatt, Bruchsal and finally in his hometown, joined the more liberal one of Baden's Liberal parties, and was twice elected mayor of Mannheim. Each time, the Grand Duke's government refused to recognize the legality of the election.<sup>2</sup>

In 1845 Brentano was elected to the Baden chamber of deputies and in 1848 to the national parliament in Frankfurt. When the Grand Duke fled revolutionary Baden, Brentano was drafted to be the president of the provisional republican government. When the radical Radicals found him to be more occupied with maintaining public order and saving lives than spreading the revolution, they accused him of treason and forced him into exile in Switzerland. After Prussian arms restored the Grand Duke's regime, Brentano was sentenced to imprisonment for life and loss of his property.

Emigration, employment: Unable to return home in the foreseeable future, Brentano and his wife Caroline, nee Leutz, decided in 1850 to take the step from emigre to emigrant and to leave Switzerland for the United States.<sup>3</sup> His first attempt to earn a living as co-editor and co-publisher of the weekly Der Leuchtturm in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, failed. His antislavery articles antagonized the oldtime German Democrats of the area and threats of violence seem to have affected his decision to leave Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

In 1851 he bought a farm near Kalamazoo, Michigan, which he worked himself until in 1859 he returned to city life and attempted to take up his old profession as attorney in Chicago. He was admitted to the bar in the same year. His lack of success as a lawyer may have been due to his lack of training in U.S. and Illinois state law.

His second attempt as a journalist was highly successful. He joined the thriving Republican daily Illinois Staats-Zeitung as a reporter and worked his way up as city-editor, editor, co-proprietor, and finally the principal proprietor. Within a few years he made the Illinois Staats-Zeitung the leading German-language daily in the Midwest. Circulation increased from 3,500 in 1861 to 12,000 in 1870.<sup>5</sup> When Brentano sold his half of the newspaper in 1867 for close to \$100,000, which he invested in real estate, he was an independently wealthy man.<sup>6</sup> Some of his money he invested in the Spading, Pulverising & Seeding Machine Company, which was incorporated by the State of Illinois and of which he was president.<sup>7</sup> He could now afford to spend over three

years (1868-72) as a rentier in Zurich.

Public offices before election to Congress: Brentano's active role in the Republican party began shortly after the call for the first Republican convention in Jackson, Michigan, in 1854 had been published. An article of his explaining the new party's goals and appealing to German-Americans to support them seems to have received nationwide attention and was later said to have played an important role in winning over a substantial segment of the German-American electorate.<sup>9</sup>

At the outbreak of the war, Brentano, like Finkelnburg, immediately took a public stand in support of the effort to stop Southern secession. Together with ten other German-Americans and others, he signed the bipartisan manifesto of January 5, 1861.<sup>10</sup>

In 1862, hardly three years in Chicago, Brentano was elected to be one of the seven representatives of Chicago in the Illinois House of Representatives. He served only one term. From 1863 to 1868 he also served on the Chicago Board of Education, in the last year as its president. He succeeded in getting the board to approve the teaching of German language and literature on a trial basis in one of Chicago's public schools. The experiment proved successful, and by 1872 thirteen public schools in Chicago taught German.<sup>11</sup> Brentano clearly was a party activist long before he was nominated to run for a seat in the House of Representatives. He was sent to the Republican National Convention in Baltimore in 1864 to renominate Lincoln; he even served as Secretary of that body. In 1868 Brentano was an elector for the Grant Ticket.

During his stay from 1869 to 1872 in Zurich, Brentano earned the gratitude of the Grant administration when he followed the suggestions of the American ministers in Paris and Switzerland and wrote several widely regarded articles in the Wiener Freie Presse, Frankfurter Journal, and Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung in support of the American claims before an international arbitration commission in Geneva to damages from Britain for allowing the Alabama and other English-built Confederate vessels to raid Northern merchant vessels.<sup>12</sup>

Less well known to the American public became Brentano's emotional reaction to the German-French war of 1870. In a letter to an old friend in Karlsruhe shortly after the beginning of the war Brentano gave a classic description of the partisanship many emigrants feel for their home country's victories and defeats in conflicts with other nations. (This effect may be considered part of the "ethnicization" that often occurs after emigration):

Although I was deprived of my inborn rights as a German citizen, the inborn love of one's homeland lives on as strongly as ever. I share all your suffering and sorrows in this great and holy struggle, and I equally share your rejoicing over the splendid warfare and victories of the German armies, just as if I still were one of you.

He enclosed 500 Swiss francs "for the wounded and the sick of your brave army."<sup>13</sup>

The dream of many an emigrant came true in Brentano's case, when the Grant administration sent him as American consul to Dresden, the capital of the kingdom of Saxony. He owed the lucrative appointment, according to the sympathetic Baltimore Correspondent, not to frantic office-seeking on his part but to



the services which the Illinois Staats-Zeitung had rendered to Grant's election campaign.<sup>14</sup>

After three successful years as representative of American political and especially commercial interests in Dresden, Brentano decided to return to Chicago in time to take an active part in the 1876 election campaign. When it became known that Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, who had opposed Brentano's appointment from the beginning, had forced him to resign several months earlier than he had intended to, German-American newspapers attacked Fish's principle of not sending naturalized citizens as officials back to their country of origin as detrimental to American interests and made fun of Brentano's successor, who was unable to communicate with the Saxons in their language.<sup>15</sup>

Election to the House of Representatives: The ethnic dimension of the 1876 election campaign was openly discussed, locally as well as nationally. After praising Brentano's qualifications the Illinois Staats-Zeitung referred to the fact that "besides Schleicher, a Democrat from Texas, no German-born citizen has yet been named for the next Congress. Brentano would certainly be a very strong candidate in his district, which is so largely populated by German-Americans."<sup>16</sup>

The population of the Third District was almost half German-American, and an English-language newspaper claimed that "certainly one half of the Republican voters there are of German parentage."<sup>17</sup> But only against strong Irish competition did Brentano secure the nomination on the sixth ballot of the district convention.<sup>18</sup> When all nominations for the November election were known, the

Illinois Staats-Zeitung reported that in addition to Brentano five German-born candidates were running for the House of Representatives: Salomon Spitzer, Nikolaus Müller and Anton Eickhoff in New York City, Stiastny in New Jersey, and Gustav Schleicher in Texas.<sup>19</sup> The campaign was an unusually bitter one, and the ethnic antagonisms were exploited to the full, especially by the Democratic Chicago Times. In its columns the Republican candidate's name was "Herr Brentano," his understanding of American affairs and especially of Chicago's interests was doubted, as was his very loyalty and his ability to speak "the language of the Congress." Substantive issues, such as Brentano's call for civil service reform, were ignored.<sup>20</sup>

Brentano received 11,843 votes, his Democratic opponent, Pennsylvania-born John Valcoulon LeMoyné, 11,435, which was considered a "substantial majority" by Chicago standards.<sup>21</sup>

Activities as congressman: In his one term in the House of Representatives Brentano, in addition to pushing some local issues, spoke up when German-American relations were dealt with, especially problems naturalized American citizens had when they returned to Germany.<sup>22</sup> When dissatisfaction with the lack of compliance by German bureaucrats with the Bancroft treaty of 1868 between the United States and the North German Confederation led to calls for its repeal, Brentano defended the usefulness of the basic recognition of the American citizenship of emigrated Germans by that treaty and warned against its repeal without a better substitute in sight. He explicitly assumed the role of spokesman for German-Americans in the whole country when he said: "I may

be permitted to state here from the feeling which I know exists among the German-American portion of the people of the United States, that they would be the last to claim protection for such persons whom they consider citizens of two worlds but true to none."<sup>23</sup> Brentano's German background was also acknowledged by his colleagues in the House, when they sent him as their representative to Gustave Schleicher's funeral in San Antonio.<sup>24</sup>

In Chicago at least parts of the English-language press considered him to be "an accurate exponent of the true sentiments upon political issues of the German-Americans in his district" and presented speeches of his as "an index of the sentiments of our German fellow citizens."<sup>25</sup> The role of congressman clearly enhanced and reinforced his role as spokesman of his ethnic group. As an elected representative he had to heed constituent opinion, but as a member of Congress he was also in a favorable position to shape constituent opinion and to influence public opinion far beyond his district.

Brentano was willing to run for re-election in 1878, but his district nominated the New York-born and Wisconsin-raised lawyer Hiram Barber; he was elected.

In 1879 Brentano broke with the Illinois Staats-Zeitung, which crudely reminded him of the power of the press: "You would never have been elected, if the Illinois Staats-Zeitung had opposed your candidacy."<sup>26</sup>

Political activities after service in Congress: Brentano was 65 years old when he returned to Chicago in 1879. He would have liked to be sent back to Germany as American consul and tried

twice to re-enter the foreign service. Both attempts, in 1879 and 1881, were unsuccessful.<sup>27</sup>

Disappointment over not being renominated for the House of Representatives and not being reappointed as consul may have contributed to his break with the Republican party in 1882.<sup>28</sup> Brentano now became an advisor and writer for the Chicago Demokrat, and as an independent Democrat he supported Grover Cleveland for the presidency.<sup>29</sup> A man with strong convictions and a sharp pen like Brentano, needless to say, did not make friends among organized German-Americans. The German Press Club and the Turnvereine refused to send delegations to his funeral in 1891.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout his political career he had to manage without the support of an organized religious group. He was a freethinker.<sup>31</sup>

Family life: The Brentanos obviously had to cope with the stress that accompanied their partly forced and partly voluntarily mobile life. Their American-born son August returned from Dresden to Chicago before his father's term as consul had ended and shot himself at the age of 22.<sup>32</sup> To what degree his "nervous disorders" had been aggravated by his life in two cultures is impossible to say. His brother Theodore became a pillar of Chicago society, a judge on the Superior Court of Cook County, and a U.S. minister to Hungary in the 1920s. Of the two daughters one married a Chicago physician, the other went to live in Germany as the wife of an officer. Brentano's wife Caroline died in 1893 during a visit in Germany but wished to be buried next to her husband in Chicago.<sup>33</sup>

Assimilation, ethnicity and Brentano's leadership roles:

The Brentanos became a bicultural family with its economic and social home base clearly in Chicago. The second generation, except for one daughter was already fully integrated in American society.

Lorenz Brentano may well have been the only American immigrant who was a member of the regional end of the national parliaments of his home country as well as of his adopted country. But even he could not simply transfer his leadership role from Baden to Illinois. He had to go through a decade of adjustment, of learning by trial and error. His first starts as a journalist and as a lawyer in Pennsylvania were failures. The years as a farmer in Michigan may have been intellectually and economically unsatisfactory, but they seem to have given him the time and opportunities needed to get oriented on the American political scene and to establish contacts with other liberal, reform-minded German immigrants, and with the American founders of the Republican party. This reorientation became the foundation for his second and probably decisive step: the move to one of the urban centers of German immigration and the work for one of its flourishing newspapers. One may say that when he arrived in Chicago he was already a leader in search of followers. But it is equally important to recognize that the newspaper was the only means of communications available to him for reaching potential followers. He did not rise out of ward politics, but his political power from 1861 on clearly derived from his ability to influence the thinking and voting of German-Americans in and far beyond Chicago. In the words of one of his most persistent critics, the Chicago

Times: "As a publicist, working almost wholly among American citizens of his own nationality, he acquired notable influence, which was rewarded with honorable public offices."<sup>34</sup> Once he had established himself in American political journalism, his German past added luster to his reputation, at least with the more liberal-minded German-Americans. But it also haunted him; the ultra Radicals never stopped blaming him for losing the revolution in Baden.

The second institutional pillar of Brentano's leadership was the Republican party. Spreading and organizing the new political movement among his own ethnic group provided Brentano with a special opportunity for political leadership.

The crisis situation of the Civil War with its intense partisanship and ultimate test of political loyalty accelerated his integration into the American political process. The intra-American war greatly helped German immigrants and their children in becoming Americanized by taking part in the second founding of the nation, and the talents of a whole generation of intellectual and political leaders, American-born as well as German-born, were needed to organize their political influence, define the issues, and observe and interpret the changing situation of German immigrants and their descendants in post-Civil War America.

Notes

Preface

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I. Ethnic Leadership

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### III. Finkelburg

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13. Lorenz Brentano to Malsch, Zürich, August 22, 1870, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society. My translation.

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17. Newspaper not identified, Sept. 29, 1876, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

18. Letter to the Editor by "German-American," The Chicago Tribune, Sept. 19, 1876; report on convention in The Chicago Tribune, Sept. 29, 1876.

19. Illinois Staatszeitung, Oct. 30, 1876.

20. Chicago Times undated clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

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22. Brentano's resolution concerning the Julius Bäumer case received unanimous approval in the House of Representatives, Congressional Record, 45th Congress, 3d Session, p. 22.

23. Speech on February 24, 1879, Congressional Record, 45th Congress, 3d Session, Appendix, p. 162.

24. In his memorial address before a special session of the House of Representatives on Feb. 17, 1879, Brentano said Schleicher, because of his love of liberty, would have become a Forty-Eighter like himself, had he not emigrated shortly before the outbreak of the revolution. Congressional Record, 45th Congress, 3d Session, p. 1501.

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## APPENDIX I

The German-born Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1862-1945

NOTE: The following list is based on the Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971). No German-born candidate was elected to the House of Representatives before 1862. "German-born" is defined for the purposes of this study as including persons born within the boundaries of what in 1871 became the Wilhelminian Kaiserreich. An exception was made for Nicholas Muller of New York, who was born in Luxemburg.

California

- 1899-1903 Julius Kahn (1861-1924) of San Francisco, Republican, 4th district  
 1905-1924 -- " --

Illinois

- 1877-1879 Lorenz Brentano (1813-1891) of Chicago, Republican, 3rd district  
 1881-1883 Dietrich Conrad Smith/Schmidt (1840-1914) of Pekin, Tazewell County, Republican, 13th district  
 1931-1944 Leonard William Schuetz (1887-1944) of Chicago, Democrat, 7th district

Indiana

- 1879-1883 William Heilman[n] (1824-90) of Evansville, Vanderburgh County, Republican, 1st district  
 1913-1917 Charles Lieb (1852-1928) of Rockport, Spencer County, Democrat, 1st district

Iowa

- 1891-1893 Frederick Edward White/Weiss (1844-1920) of Keokuk County, Democrat, 6th district.  
 1931-1936 Bernhard Martin Jacobsen (1862-1936) of Clinton, Clinton County, Democrat, 2nd district

Louisiana

- 1862-1863 Michael Hahn, (1830-1886) of New Orleans, "Unionist".  
 1885-1886 Hahn, Republican, 2nd district.  
 1895-1897 Charles Francis Buck (1841-1918) of New Orleans, Democrat, 2nd district.

Massachusetts

- 1877-1885 Leopold Morse/Maass (1831-1892) of Boston, Democrat,  
4th district
- 1887-1889 -- " -- since 1883: 5th district

Michigan

- 1883-1885 Edward Breitung (1831-1887) of Negaunee, Marquette  
County, Republican, 11th district
- 1883-1885 Julius Houseman/Hausmann/Hausermann (1832-1891) of Grand  
Rapids, Democrat, 5th district

Minnesota

- 1879-1881 Henry Poehler/Heinrich Pöhler (1833-1912) of Henderson,  
Sibley County, Democrat, 2nd district
- 1893-1897 Andrew Robert Kiefer (1832-1904) of St. Paul, Republican,  
4th district
- 1933-1935 Henry Martin Arens (1873-1963) of Jordan, Scott County,  
Farmer-Laborite, elected at large.

Missouri

- 1869-1873 Gustav[us] Adolph[us] Finkelnburg (1837-1908) of St. Louis,  
Republican, 2nd district
- 1883 Gustav[us] Sessinghaus (1838-1887) of St. Louis, Republican,  
8th district
- 1889-1891 Frederick Gottlieb Niedringhaus (1837-1922) of St. Louis,  
Republican, 8th district
- 1893-1915 Richard Bartholdt (1855-1932) of St. Louis, Republican,  
10th district

New Jersey

- 1885-1891 Herman[n] Lehlbach (1845-1904) of Newark, Republican,  
6th district

New Mexico

- 1867-1869 Charles P. Clever (1830-1874) of Santa Fe, Democrat,  
elected from territory at large.



New York

- 1877-1879 Anthony Eickhoff (1827-1901) of New York City, Democrat, 7th district
- 1877-1881 Nicholas Muller/Nikolaus Müller (1836-1917) of New York City, Democrat, 5th district
- 1883-1887 -- " -- 1885-87: 6th district
- 1899-1902 -- " -- 7th district
- 1894-1895 Isidor Straus (1845-1912) of New York City, Democrat, 15th district
- 1901-1902 Frederic Storm (1844-1935) of New York City (Queens) Republican, 1st district
- 1908-1911 Otto Godfrey Foelker (1875-1943) of New York City (Brooklyn) Republican, 3rd district

Ohio

- 1885-1889 Jacob Romeis (1835-1904) of Toledo, Republican, 9th district
- 1892-1893 Lewis Philip Ohliger (1843-1923) of Wooster, Democrat, 16th district

Pennsylvania

- 1863-1867 Myer Strouse/Meyer Strauss/(1825-78) of Pottsville, Schuylkill County, Democrat, 10th district
- 1895-1897 Frederick Haltermann (1831-1907) of Philadelphia, Republican, 3rd district
- 1901-1903 Henry Burk (1850-1903) of Philadelphia, Republican, 3rd district
- 1901-1903 Robert Hermann Foerderer (1860-1903) of Philadelphia, Republican, elected at large; re-elected in 4th district, 1902.
- 1905-1907 Gustav Adolph Schneebeli (1853-1923) of Nazareth, Northampton County, Republican, 26th district

Texas

- 1870-1871 Edward Degener (1809-90) of San Antonio, Republican, 4th district
- 1875-1879 Gustav[e] Schleicher (1823-79) of San Antonio, Democrat, 6th district

Wisconsin

- 1879-1885 Peter Victor Deuster (1831-1904) of Milwaukee, Democrat, 4th district
- 1881-1889 Richard William Guenther (1845-1913) of Oshkosh, Winnebago County, Republican, 6th district
- 1889-1895 Charles Barwig (1837-1912) of Mayville, Dodge County, Democrat, 2nd district
- 1889-1895 George H. Brickner (1834-1904) of Sheboygan Falls, Sheboygan County, Democrat, 5th district
- 1907-1911 Gustav Küstermann (1850-1919) of Green Bay, Brown County, Republican, 9th district
- 1917-1927 Edward Voigt (1873-1934) of Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Republican, 2nd district
- 1935-1943 Bernard John Gehrmann (1880-1958) of Mellen, Ashland County, Progressive, 10th district

## APPENDIX II

German-born Members of the House of Representatives, 1862-1945

Note: No German-born members served before 1862, "German-born" is defined for the purposes of this study to mean born on the territory that in 1871 became part of the second German empire.

1862-63	Louisiana	Michael Hahn, "Unionist", New Orleans
1863-67	Pennsylvania	Myer Strouse, Democrat, Pottsville, Schuylkill County
1867-69	New Mexico	Charles P. Clever, Democrat, Santa Fe
1869-73	Missouri	Gustav[us] Adolph[us] Finkelnburg, Republican, St. Louis
1870-71	Texas	Edward Degener, Republican, San Antonio
1875-79	Texas	Gustav[e] Schleicher, Democrat, San Antonio
1877-79	Illinois	Lorenz Brentano, Republican, St. Louis
1877-79	New York	Anthony Eickhoff, Democrat, New York City
1877-81	New York	Nicholas Muller, Democrat, New York City
1877-85	Massachusetts	Leopold Morse/Maas, Democrat, Boston
1879-81	Minnesota	Henry Poehler, Democrat, Henderson, Sibly County
1879-83	Indiana	William Heilmann, Republican, Evansville, Vanderburgh County
1879-85	Wisconsin	Peter Victor Deuster, Democrat, Milwaukee
1881-83	Illinois	Dietrich Smith/Schmidt, Republican, Fekin, Tazewell County
1881-89	Wisconsin	Richard William Guenther, Republican, Oshkosh, Winnebago County
1883	Missouri	Gustav[us] Sessinghaus, Republican, St. Louis
1883-85	Michigan	Edward Breitung, Republican, Negaunee, Marquette County
1883-85	Michigan	Julius Houseman/Hausmann, Democrat, Grand Rapids

1883-87	New York	Muller
1885-86	Louisiana	Hahn
1885-89	Ohio	Jacob Romeis, Republican, Toledo
1885-91	New Jersey	Hermann Lehlbach, Republican, Newark
1887-89	Massachusetts	Morse
1889-91	Missouri	Frederick Gottlieb Niedringhaus, Republican St. Louis
1889-95	Wisconsin	Charles Barwig, Democrat, Mayville, Dodge County
1889-95	Wisconsin	George H. Brickner, Democrat, Sheboygen Falls, Sheboygan County
1891-93	Iowa	Frederick Edward White/Weiss, Democrat Keokuk County
1892-93	Ohio	Lewis Philip Ohliger, Democrat, Wooster, Wayne County
1893-97	Minnesota	Andrew Robert Kiefer, Republican, St. Paul
1893-1915	Missouri	Richard Bartholdt, Republican, St. Louis
1894-96	New York	Isidor Straus, Democrat, New York City
1895-97	Pennsylvania	Frederick Haltermann, Republican, Philadelphia
1895-97	Louisiana	Charles Francis Buck, Democrats, New Orleans
1899-02	New York	Muller
1899-03	California	Julius Kahn, Republican, San Francisco
1901-03	Pennsylvania	Henry Burk, Republican, Philadelphia
1901-03	Pennsylvania	Robert Hermann Foerderer, Republican, Philadelphia
1901-02	New York	Frederic Storm, Democrat, New York City
1905-07	Pennsylvania	Gustav Adolphus Schneebeli, Republican, Nazareth, Northampton
1905-24	California	Kahn

1907-11	Wisconsin	Gustav Küstermann, Republican, Green Bay, Brown County
1908-11	New York	Otto Godfrey Foelker, Republican, New York City (Brooklyn)
1913-17	Indiana	Charles Lieb, Democrat, Rockport, Spencer County
1917-27	Wisconsin	Edward Voigt, Republican, Sheboygan, Sheboygan County
1931-36	Iowa	Bernhard Martin Jacobsen, Democrat, Clinton, Clinton County
1931-44	Illinois	Leonard William Schuetz, Democrat, Chicago
1933-35	Minnesota	Henry Arens, Farmer-Labor Party, Jordan, Scott County
1935-43	Wisconsin	Bernard John Gehrmann, Progressive Party, Mellen, Ashland County

## GERMAN-BORN CONGRESSMEN

## APPENDIX III

Congress	Number of Seats					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1861-1863	x					
1863-1865	x					
1865-1867	x					
1867-1869	x					
1869-1871	x	x				
1871-1873	x					
1873-1875						
1875-1877	x					
1877-1879	x	x	x	x	x	
1879-1881	x	x	x	x	x	
1881-1883	x	x	x	x	x	x
1883-1885	x	x	x	x	x	x
1885-1887	x	x	x	x		
1887-1889	x	x	x	x		
1889-1891	x	x	x			
1891-1893	x	x	x	x		
1893-1895	x	x	x	x	x	
1895-1897	x	x	x	x		
1897-1899	x	x				
1899-1901	x	x	x	x		
1901-1903	x	x	x	x	x	x
1903-1905	x					
1905-1907	x	x				
1907-1909	x	x	x			
1909-1911	x	x	x			
1911-1913	x	x				
1913-1915	x	x	x			
1915-1917	x	x				
1917-1919	x	x				
1919-1921	x	x				
1921-1923	x	x				
1923-1925	x	x				
1925-1927	x					
1927-1929						
1929-1931						
1931-1933	x	x				
1933-1935	x	x	x			
1935-1937	x	x	x			
1937-1939		x	x			
1939-1941		x	x			
1941-1943		x	x			
1943-1945		x				

x one term

x

x same incumbent

Distribution by number of terms served by each congressman:

19 congressmen	1 term
11	2 terms
4	3
4	4
1	5
1	6
1	7
1	11
1	12

## APPENDIX IV

Note on Foreign-born Congressmen

The U.S. House of Representatives had 387 foreign-born members who served between 1789 and 1945.<sup>1</sup> They constituted 4.9 % of the total number of congressmen ( 7 866) serving in that period.<sup>2</sup>

The distribution by country of origin was as follows:

Ireland	122	30.3 %	} English-speaking countries: 69 %
England	63	15.6 %	
Canada	50	12.4 %	
Scotland	42	10.4 %	
Germany	43	10.7 %	} German-speaking countries : 12.4 %
Austria-Hungary (excl. "Bohemia" and "Czechoslovakia")	7	1.7 %	
Norway	10	2.5 %	
Denmark	5	1.2 %	
Sweden	5	1.2 %	
France	8	1.9 %	
Poland	6	1.5 %	
Russia	4	under 1 %	
Czechoslovakia	3		
Netherlands	3		
Italy	3		
Greece	1		
West Indies	3		
Bermuda	2		
Mexico	1		(excluding what became New Mexico)
Danish West - Indies	1		
Santo Domingo	1		
Azores	1		

Not included in this count are the 15 men who were born in French, Spanish and Mexican territory which became part of the United States, and the one Hawaiian.

<sup>1</sup> These statistics were extracted from Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971).

<sup>2</sup> Information from Kathryn A. Jacob, Historical Office, U.S. Senate.





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