

ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



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Episode #261

The Prohibition Era

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[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:11] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about The Prohibition Era, the thirteen-year period in the early 20th century when alcohol was made illegal in the United States of America.

[00:00:35] It is an amazing period of time, one where a society tried to **outlaw**¹ a drug that people had been using for thousands of years, with the **intention**² of making modern society into a better place.

¹ make illegal, ban

² purpose, plan

The Prohibition Era

[00:00:49] We'll start by looking at why prohibition was introduced, what actually happened from a practical point of view, how what happened compared to what the authorities thought would happen, when and why prohibition was [repealed](#)³, how drinking habits have changed since then, and ask ourselves what, if anything, we can take from this.

[00:01:11] Ok then, let's get right into it.

[00:01:15] As of 2022, there are only 14 countries in the entire world where alcohol is illegal. These [tend to be](#)⁴ majority-Muslim countries, where alcohol is [banned](#)⁵ for religious reasons.

[00:01:30] So, for those of us who live in a country where alcohol is legal, which is of course most of the world, a useful exercise might be to imagine if one day all alcohol was [banned](#), and it became a criminal offence to sell alcohol.

[00:01:47] Now, it doesn't matter whether you personally never drink a drop of alcohol, or you are the sort of person who can frequently be found at your local bar or pub, it's clear that a [ban](#)⁶ on alcohol would lead to a very different society.

³ removed by the government

⁴ mostly are

⁵ illegal

⁶ the act of making it illegal

The Prohibition Era

[00:02:03] It might be better, it might be worse, but you can certainly agree that it would be different.

[00:02:10] In 19th century America, there was a growing movement of people who believed that removing alcohol from society would make life better for everyone, a movement called the “[Temperance](#)⁷ Movement”.

[00:02:24] This movement was [spearheaded](#)⁸, it was led by women, women who had often seen the devastating effects that drinking alcohol had on their husbands and male family members.

[00:02:37] From domestic abuse to losing their jobs, getting in accidents or fights, there was a growing movement of women who were simply [fed up](#)⁹ with their husbands’ drinking habits, and started putting pressure on the government to do something about it.

[00:02:54] Especially in the early 19th century, the average American man [drank like a fish](#)¹⁰, he consumed a lot of alcohol.

⁷ the state of not drinking alcohol

⁸ led

⁹ annoyed and unhappy for a long time

¹⁰ consumed a lot of alcohol

The Prohibition Era

[00:03:03] Alcohol was deeply **ingrained**¹¹ in society, and heavy drinking was the expectation for male behaviour.

[00:03:12] There's a great section in a book called "Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition", by Daniel Okrent, where he describes a dinner hosted by the governor of New York for the French Ambassador.

[00:03:26] During one evening for 120 guests, they drank '135 bottles of **madeira**¹², 36 bottles of **port**¹³, 60 bottles of English beer and 30 large cups of **rum punch**¹⁴.'

[00:03:41] A lot, right?

[00:03:43] By the 1830s alcohol consumption per capita, per person, reached a **whopping**¹⁵ 31 litres of pure alcohol every year, which is about 80 bottles of whisky, 260 bottles of wine, or 800 beers every single year.

[00:04:02] And that's on average, so let's not forget that it would be men, not women, that were doing most of the drinking, and, like today, some people would be drinking significantly more than this already very high average.

¹¹ rooted and difficult to change

¹² wine from the island of Madeira

¹³ strong dark red wine

¹⁴ a drink typically made using rum, lime juice, and sugar or syrup

¹⁵ very large

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[00:04:19] Americans were drinking a lot, and as no doubt you don't need me to say, drinking this amount of alcohol isn't generally a good idea for leading a healthy and productive life. The women's complaints were certainly [justified](#)¹⁶.

[00:04:35] One woman in particular [took things into her own hands](#)¹⁷.

[00:04:39] Her name was Carrie Nation, and she would later be given the nickname of "[Hatchet](#)¹⁸ Granny".

[00:04:46] A [hatchet](#) is a kind of [axe](#)¹⁹, and the reason she was given this nickname was because she would go from bar to bar with this [axe](#) and [smash everything up](#)²⁰, [smash up](#)²¹ bottles, bars, every sign of alcohol she found.

[00:05:03] She would [recite](#)²² Bible verses as she did this, but her anti-alcohol views were not only religious, they were also personal; she lost her first husband to

¹⁶ reasonable

¹⁷ dealt with the problem herself

¹⁸ small axe (a tool used for chopping wood, typically of iron with a steel edge and wooden handle)

¹⁹ a tool used for chopping wood, typically of iron with a steel edge and wooden handle

²⁰ break everything in a violent way

²¹ break in a violent way

²² repeat aloud from memory

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alcohol-related diseases, a [mere](#)²³ one and a half years after they were married, leaving her with no support and a 6-month-old child.

[00:05:26] But this anti-alcohol sentiment wasn't just a [fringe](#)²⁴ belief, something felt by women with alcoholic and abusive husbands.

[00:05:36] Moving towards the end of the 19th century, alcohol was increasingly believed, and presented, to be responsible for a large proportion of society's [ills](#)²⁵, from health problems to crime.

[00:05:50] If you were a business or factory owner, the message was that alcohol was making your employees less productive. If they didn't drink so much, they would be able to work more efficiently and you would be able to make more money.

[00:06:04] If you were a factory worker, the message was that alcohol was a tool used by the ruling class to [subjugate](#)²⁶ you, it was a capitalist [ploy](#)²⁷ to stop you from [rising up](#)²⁸ against the ruling class. Das Kapital had been published in 1867, its first

²³ just, only

²⁴ not part of the mainstream, extreme

²⁵ problems, troubles

²⁶ control, enslave

²⁷ something that was done in a dishonest way in order to gain advantage

²⁸ rebelling or protesting

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English-language translation came out in 1887, and there was a small but growing workers-rights movement.

[00:06:33] From a public safety point of view, the [toll](#)²⁹ that alcohol was taking was clear to see. Bar fights, accidents caused by drunkenness, domestic abuse, and all of the sorts of problems [exacerbated](#)³⁰ by alcohol that still exist today.

[00:06:50] Similarly, from a public health point of view, the health dangers of heavy drinking were similar 150 years ago to what they are today. Drinking heavily causes all sorts of health problems and often takes alcoholics to [an early grave](#)³¹.

[00:07:06] Now, picture this, a country barely 100 years old with a growing alcohol problem. A country that was founded as an escape from the old, European [ideals](#)³², and a country where anything was considered to be possible.

[00:07:22] A country that [prided itself on](#)³³ freedom, where literally the first amendment to its constitution guarantees certain freedoms still not given to citizens of every country.

²⁹ the serious and bad effects it was causing

³⁰ made worse

³¹ an early death

³² standards of behaviour, morals and ideas

³³ was proud of having this characteristic

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[00:07:34] So, what would happen if this country, in a **bold**³⁴ attempt to **reshape**³⁵ its **trajectory**³⁶, removed the freedom from its citizens to drink alcohol?

[00:07:46] It would be a **radical**³⁷ act, but America was a **radical** country.

[00:07:51] Its decision to do so was **expedited**³⁸, or **sped up**³⁹, by the First World War in Europe.

[00:07:58] Firstly, as beer, or lager, was seen as a German drink, it became **unpatriotic**⁴⁰ to drink the national drink of the country that your **allies**⁴¹, and later you, were fighting against.

[00:08:12] You might have thought this would have meant that people switched to stronger alcohols, wines and **spirits**⁴², but in late 1918, in fact after the Armistice, after

³⁴ not showing fear

³⁵ shape or form differently

³⁶ direction, course

³⁷ something that would bring great change

³⁸ made to happen sooner

³⁹ made to happen sooner

⁴⁰ not showing loyalty to their country

⁴¹ countries that had officially agreed to support each other during the war

⁴² strong alcoholic drinks

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the end of the war, the US Congress passed an act **banning**⁴³ the sale of alcoholic beverages stronger than 1.28%.

[00:08:34] The objective of this was to **conserve**⁴⁴ grain for food, rather than alcohol.

[00:08:40] In case you need a point of comparison, beer is typically between 4 and 5%, wine is more like 11 to 13% and **spirits** are around 40%.

[00:08:54] So, essentially only very, very weak alcohol was allowed to be sold.

[00:09:00] This wartime act was followed shortly after, on January 16th of 1919, by a vote to **ban** the manufacture, transport and sale of alcohol, but importantly it did not make drinking alcohol illegal.

[00:09:17] The importance of this point will become clear soon enough.

[00:09:22] Another important point to note is the definition of alcohol.

[00:09:27] To many people, even to those **advocating**⁴⁵ for a **ban** on alcohol, it came as a surprise that the act included all alcohol, not only **spirits**, as many had previously **assumed**⁴⁶.

[00:09:41] Many people had thought that beer and wine would still be allowed.

⁴³ not allowing

⁴⁴ keep

⁴⁵ publicly supporting

⁴⁶ thought to be true

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[00:09:46] This was an extreme move, not just a [ban](#) on hard liquor, but a [ban](#) on all liquor for public consumption.

[00:09:55] The country had chosen to go “dry”, but there was another important point to note: the act wouldn’t come into effect until a year later, giving people plenty of time to get ready and plenty of time to figure out ways to get around the law.

[00:10:14] It [turned out](#)⁴⁷ that there would be plenty of [loopholes](#)⁴⁸, plenty of ways to get around the law.

[00:10:21] So it was that on January 17th of 1920, Prohibition, otherwise known as the Volstead Act, went into effect.

[00:10:32] The manufacture, transportation and sale of alcohol over 0.5% was [banned](#).

[00:10:39] [Saloons](#)⁴⁹, old-fashioned bars, had to close their doors forever. [Distilleries](#)⁵⁰ and [breweries](#)⁵¹ were closed. Imports of beer, wine and [spirits](#) were [banned](#).

[00:10:51] But did the drinking stop?

[00:10:53] Well, not completely.

⁴⁷ happened, proved to be the case

⁴⁸ ways to get around the law

⁴⁹ old-fashioned bars

⁵⁰ factories where strong alcoholic drinks were produced

⁵¹ companies that made beer

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[00:10:55] The nature of drinking, and the alcohol industry just changed, and the fact that alcohol was now illegal opened the doors for small and big-time criminals to [emerge](#)⁵².

[00:11:09] On a small-time level, as the production of alcohol was now illegal, people who [brewed](#)⁵³ their own beer at home purely for personal consumption were suddenly [criminalised](#)⁵⁴, they were [outlaws](#)⁵⁵.

[00:11:24] On a more organised level, Prohibition created an environment where the production, transportation and sale of alcohol suddenly became an incredibly profitable activity.

[00:11:36] The 1920s gave rise to criminals such as Al Capone, whose primary source of income was the [bootlegged](#)⁵⁶ alcohol trade.

⁵² appear

⁵³ made (beer)

⁵⁴ considered criminals

⁵⁵ people who had broken the law

⁵⁶ illegal

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[00:11:46] The [loopholes](#) and problems with the Prohibition legislation provided a huge [incentive](#)⁵⁷ to turn to crime, and turned many people from honest, [law-abiding](#)⁵⁸ citizens into hardened criminals.

[00:12:02] One particular example of this was a criminal defence lawyer named George Remus. When he saw that his clients had become incredibly wealthy by selling alcohol, he wanted a piece of the action.

[00:12:17] Using his legal background, he studied the Volstead Act, the Prohibition Act, and realised not only that pharmacies were able to sell alcohol for medical purposes, but that there were large amounts of [spirits](#), of hard liquor, sitting in government [distilleries](#).

[00:12:37] Remus just needed to [figure out](#)⁵⁹ a way of [getting his hands on](#)⁶⁰ this alcohol and selling it to people who wanted to use it for, well let's just say not technically medical purposes.

⁵⁷ reason, motive

⁵⁸ obeying the law, lawful

⁵⁹ find, think up

⁶⁰ finding and controlling

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[00:12:51] Remus bought up a series of [distilleries](#), but he couldn't just take the alcohol and sell it. He needed to figure out a way of getting it out legally, or at least make it look like he was still [obeying](#)⁶¹ the law.

[00:13:05] So, he also bought pharmacies and transportation companies, and would arrange for his pharmacies to buy alcohol from his [distilleries](#), and the alcohol would be transported by his transportation companies.

[00:13:20] Then, when the alcohol was [in transit](#)⁶², when it was being transported, the trucks would be [held up](#)⁶³, they would be mysteriously robbed, and all the alcohol would disappear.

[00:13:32] The robbers were, of course, Remus's own men.

[00:13:37] At one point Remus controlled 30% of all of the illegal alcohol in the United States, and over the course of just three years it's thought that he made \$40 million dollars, which is over half a billion dollars in today's money.

[00:13:54] People were clearly still drinking alcohol. As you might expect, finding any kind of reliable statistics on alcohol consumption from this period is difficult, but one study suggested that consumption dropped to 30% of its pre-Prohibition levels

⁶¹ behaving according to

⁶² being transported

⁶³ robbed

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immediately after prohibition was put into place, but shortly after it returned to between 60-70% of pre-Prohibition levels.

[00:14:24] The public [saloons](#) might have closed, but they were replaced by things called “[speakeasies](#)⁶⁴”, illegal bars where you might have to knock on the door and provide a [code word](#)⁶⁵ to get in, then you’d be let in and the alcohol would be [free flowing](#)⁶⁶.

[00:14:43] Remember, there had been a year’s time between the vote for Prohibition and the act actually coming into effect. This year provided plenty of time for bars and clubs to prepare, and many [stockpiled](#)⁶⁷ alcohol in advance, they bought huge amounts of alcohol that would last them for several years.

[00:15:05] The fact that these bars were [unlicensed](#)⁶⁸ meant that anyone could start one because, well, there were no licences. All you needed to have was a room and someone to sell you alcohol, and as you’ll have gathered by now, there was no [shortage](#)⁶⁹ of people willing to sell you alcohol.

⁶⁴ illegal bars

⁶⁵ a word used for secrecy or secret word

⁶⁶ available in large quantities

⁶⁷ stored up or collected large amounts of

⁶⁸ not having a document giving legal permission

⁶⁹ the condition of not being available

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[00:15:23] And of course, given that they were illegal, it's hard to get an accurate estimate for the number of these [speakeasy](#)⁷⁰ bars across the country, but one estimate has there being anywhere from 30,000 to 100,000 [speakeasy](#) bars in New York City alone.

[00:15:44] As a point of comparison, now, when alcohol is legal, there are around 25,000 bars in New York city, so even at the lower end of that estimate from Prohibition, there were more places serving alcohol when it was illegal than now, when it is legal.

[00:16:04] One major reason that alcohol continued to be so [free flowing](#) was that there were comparatively so few law enforcement officers dedicated to [enforcing](#)⁷¹ the Volstead Act, to [enforcing](#) Prohibition.

[00:16:20] At the start, there were only 1,500 police officers [assigned](#)⁷² to [enforcing](#) the Prohibition law - a tiny amount compared to how many people continued to drink alcohol.

[00:16:33] Sure, there were [prosecutions](#)⁷³ for alcohol-related offences, and people were sent to prison.

⁷⁰ illegal

⁷¹ making sure that it would be accepted

⁷² given the job

⁷³ legal actions against

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[00:16:39] But these cases ended up [clogging up](#)⁷⁴, [filling up](#)⁷⁵ the court system and the jails, [filling up](#) the justice system with people who had become criminals simply through doing something that was perfectly legal just a few years before, and to many people wasn't considered to be a serious crime at all.

[00:17:00] It's [telling](#)⁷⁶, it's [revealing](#)⁷⁷, that two of the biggest [bootlegging](#)⁷⁸ criminals in the entire country, Al Capone and George Remus, never served any prison time for alcohol-related crime. In Capone's case, he was sent to prison for tax evasion, and in Remus case he murdered his wife in [broad daylight](#)⁷⁹.

[00:17:23] Towards the end of the 1920s support for Prohibition had started to [dwindle](#)⁸⁰, it had reduced drastically.

[00:17:32] The promised new society of good health, low crime, reduced poverty and better economic prospects simply hadn't emerged. And people were clearly still drinking.

⁷⁴ causing them to become full, crowding

⁷⁵ causing them to become full, crowding

⁷⁶ showing the truth about the situation

⁷⁷ showing the truth about the situation

⁷⁸ selling alcohol illegally

⁷⁹ during the day, when he could have been easily seen

⁸⁰ decrease

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[00:17:45] In fact, on an economic level, Prohibition is believed to have made the situation worse.

[00:17:52] Tax revenues from alcohol previously [made up](#)⁸¹ almost 75% of state taxes in places like New York, and given that alcohol was illegal, this went to 0.

[00:18:05] As a result, it's thought that Prohibition cost the federal government around \$11 billion in lost taxes.

[00:18:14] And of course, anyone who previously worked in the [sizable](#)⁸² alcohol industry was out of a job.

[00:18:21] Then in 1929, the Great Depression hit. Millions were put out of work and tax revenues [dipped](#)⁸³ even more.

[00:18:31] Still, Herbert Hoover, the [sitting](#)⁸⁴ US president, resisted the suggestions of colleagues and [aides](#)⁸⁵ to [repeal](#)⁸⁶ Prohibition, to generate some much needed tax

⁸¹ compose, form

⁸² large

⁸³ dropped

⁸⁴ current or present at that time

⁸⁵ people whose job was to advise and help him

⁸⁶ remove

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revenue, and give people a [distraction](#)⁸⁷ from the realities of their [grim](#)⁸⁸ economic situation.

[00:18:50] When the opportunity arose, the then governor of New York, Franklin D. Roosevelt, or FDR as he was known, decided to run for the US presidency against Hoover on a platform to [repeal](#) Prohibition, to legalise alcohol.

[00:19:08] And in the 1933 election Roosevelt won [by a landslide](#)⁸⁹, winning 42 of the 48 states, and 89% of the electoral vote.

[00:19:21] Hoover became the first US president to not win reelection, and by voting in FDR the country had delivered a clear message: we've had enough of Prohibition.

[00:19:34] In one of his first acts after becoming president, Roosevelt [overturned](#)⁹⁰ Prohibition, and on December 5th of 1933 the manufacture, transportation and sale of alcohol became legalised on a federal level.

[00:19:50] This 13-year period would become known as The [Noble](#)⁹¹ Experiment, a time when an entire country tried to see what would happen if alcohol was made illegal.

⁸⁷ an activity that would draw their attention away

⁸⁸ worrying, hopeless

⁸⁹ with an extremely large number of votes

⁹⁰ removed, reversed

⁹¹ honourable, righteous and brave

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[00:20:02] So, like after any experiment, let's take a look at the [hypothesis](#)⁹² and the results.

[00:20:09] The [hypothesis](#) of this [Noble](#) Experiment was that it would have an [all-round](#)⁹³ positive effect on society.

[00:20:16] It was believed that it would lead to a [boom](#)⁹⁴ in sales of everything from household goods to clothing, as people had more [disposable income](#)⁹⁵ now they were not spending money on booze, on alcohol.

[00:20:30] Fruit juice manufacturers, cinema owners, all sorts of business owners anticipated a [bumper](#)⁹⁶ [payday](#)⁹⁷ as people switched from alcohol to new forms of entertainment.

[00:20:42] There would be better workers rights, a more moral society, productivity would increase, accidents would decrease, people would be healthier and happier.

[00:20:53] All round, life would be better for everyone.

⁹² explanation of what it was expected

⁹³ in all matters or respects

⁹⁴ increase

⁹⁵ money to spend as they wished

⁹⁶ very large

⁹⁷ amount of money

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[00:20:57] An [ambitious⁹⁸ hypothesis](#), but unfortunately very little of it happened.

[00:21:03] Anyone who was employed in the alcohol industry was suddenly out of a job, the tax revenues from alcohol [evaporated⁹⁹](#), and people continued to drink alcohol, although now it was the criminal underworld that [profited¹⁰⁰](#), not the government.

[00:21:20] On a health level, there was some positive news, with one study suggesting that the [occurrence¹⁰¹](#) of [liver cirrhosis¹⁰²](#), which is a useful [proxy¹⁰³](#) for alcoholism, declined by 10-20%.

[00:21:35] Good news, perhaps, but this reduction was replaced with injuries and deaths from illegally prepared alcohol, so-called “[moonshine¹⁰⁴](#)”.

[00:21:45] What’s more, the deaths and injuries from alcohol-related criminal activity [skyrocketed¹⁰⁵](#), with violent crime in some states increasing anywhere between 30 and 60%.

⁹⁸ difficult to achieve, challenging

⁹⁹ disappeared

¹⁰⁰ made money

¹⁰¹ the fact of it happening, event

¹⁰² a dangerous disease of the liver

¹⁰³ way to measure the presence of

¹⁰⁴ illegally prepared alcohol

¹⁰⁵ increased a lot and very fast

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[00:21:58] People might not be dying so frequently from alcohol-related illnesses, but they were dying from the [bootlegger](#)¹⁰⁶'s [dodgy](#)¹⁰⁷ alcohol and their [bullets](#)¹⁰⁸.

[00:22:08] And on a cultural level related to drinking, the United States didn't simply return to how it was before Prohibition. Prohibition meant 13 years of a different type of bar, the [speakeasy](#), a place very different from the traditionally [macho](#)¹⁰⁹ [saloon](#)¹¹⁰ bar dominated by heavy drinking of [spirits](#).

[00:22:31] [Speakeasies](#) were places with music and dancing, places where men and women, and people from different ethnicities and backgrounds could all mix.

[00:22:42] After the [repeal](#) of Prohibition, it became accepted for women to drink alcohol at bars, something that simply wasn't accepted in pre-Prohibition society.

[00:22:53] In terms of how much people actually drank, after Prohibition was [repealed](#) alcohol consumption took a long time to regain its pre-Prohibition levels.

[00:23:04] Immediately after, the country was still in the middle of the greatest economic [downturn](#)¹¹¹ in its short history, then it went straight into World War Two,

¹⁰⁶ a person who sells alcohol illegally

¹⁰⁷ questionable and dangerous

¹⁰⁸ small metal objects that are shot from a gun

¹⁰⁹ behaving in a manly aggressive way

¹¹⁰ old-fashioned bar

¹¹¹ reduction in economic activity

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and it wasn't until the early 1970s that alcohol consumption [surpassed¹¹²](#), it [overtook¹¹³](#) what it was immediately before Prohibition.

[00:23:25] Purely in terms of changing the country's attitudes towards alcohol and the amount that people drink, Prohibition itself appears to have done very little to [alter¹¹⁴](#) the amount that Americans drink.

[00:23:38] And when people look back at Prohibition now, it's often considered a failure.

[00:23:45] If you [take it at face value¹¹⁵](#), and look at what it set out to achieve and what actually happened, yes, it failed to achieve this [utopian¹¹⁶](#) society which its [proponents¹¹⁷](#) had hoped for.

[00:23:59] But perhaps it taught the country another, more valuable lesson.

[00:24:04] That society is a complicated beast, and that it might be simple and convenient to point at one thing in particular, whether that's alcohol, drugs, or

¹¹² was greater than

¹¹³ was greater than

¹¹⁴ change

¹¹⁵ accept it as it appears to be

¹¹⁶ perfect, ideal

¹¹⁷ supporters

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whichever political party is in charge at the moment in time, and identify that thing as the [root¹¹⁸](#) of all society's problems.

[00:24:25] Yet as this 13-year [Noble](#) Experiment teaches its students, no matter what [hypotheses¹¹⁹](#) and predictions you might have, good [intentions¹²⁰](#) often lead to unexpected [outcomes¹²¹](#), and there is rarely such a thing as one solution to all society's problems.

[00:24:45] OK then, that is it for today's episode on The Prohibition Era.

[00:24:50] I hope it's been an interesting one, and that you've learnt something new.

[00:24:55] As always, I would love to know what you thought about this episode.

[00:24:58] What do you think would happen in your country if Prohibition was proposed tomorrow?

[00:25:04] How do you think the effects would be different, or would they be exactly the same?

¹¹⁸ basic cause or source

¹¹⁹ explanations of what it was expected

¹²⁰ plans

¹²¹ results

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[00:25:09] And can you see a world where Prohibition, where the [abolition](#)¹²² of alcohol, is put into place again?

[00:25:17] I would love to know your thoughts, so let's get this discussion started.

[00:25:21] You can head right into our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:25:30] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:25:35] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

¹²² the act of ending it officially

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Outlaw	make illegal, ban
Intention	purpose, plan
Repealed	removed by the government
Tend to be	mostly are
Banned	illegal
Ban	the act of making it illegal
Temperance	the state of not drinking alcohol
Spearheaded	led
Fed up	annoyed and unhappy for a long time
Drank like a fish	consumed a lot of alcohol
Ingrained	rooted and difficult to change
Madeira	wine from the island of Madeira

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Port	strong dark red wine
Rum punch	a drink typically made using rum, lime juice, and sugar or syrup
Whopping	very large
Justified	reasonable
Took things into her own hands	dealt with the problem herself
Hatchet	small axe (a tool used for chopping wood, typically of iron with a steel edge and wooden handle)
Axe	a tool used for chopping wood, typically of iron with a steel edge and wooden handle
Smash everything up	break everything in a violent way
Smash up	break in a violent way
Recite	repeat aloud from memory
Mere	just, only
Fringe	not part of the mainstream, extreme
Ills	problems, troubles

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Subjugate	control, enslave
Ploy	something that was done in a dishonest way in order to gain advantage
Rising up	rebellious or protesting
Toll	the serious and bad effects it was causing
Exacerbated	made worse
An early grave	an early death
Ideals	standards of behaviour, morals and ideas
Prided itself on	was proud of having this characteristic
Bold	not showing fear
Reshape	shape or form differently
Trajectory	direction, course
Radical	something that would bring great change
Expedited	made to happen sooner
Sped up	made to happen sooner
Unpatriotic	not showing loyalty to their country

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Allies	countries that had officially agreed to support each other during the war
Spirits	strong alcoholic drinks
Banning	not allowing
Conserve	keep
Advocating	publicly supporting
Assumed	thought to be true
Turned out	happened, proved to be the case
Loopholes	ways to get around the law
Saloons	old-fashioned bars
Distilleries	factories where strong alcoholic drinks were produced
Breweries	companies that made beer
Emerge	appear
Brewed	made (beer)
Criminalised	considered criminals
Outlaws	people who had broken the law

The Prohibition Era

Bootlegged	illegal
Incentive	reason, motive
Law-abiding	obeying the law, lawful
Figure out	find, think up
Getting his hands on	finding and controlling
Obeying	behaving according to
In transit	being transported
Held up	robbed
Speakeasies	illegal bars
Code word	a word used for secrecy or secret word
Free flowing	available in large quantities
Stockpiled	stored up or collected large amounts of
Unlicensed	not having a document giving legal permission
Shortage	the condition of not being available
Speakeasy	illegal

The Prohibition Era

Enforcing	making sure that it would be accepted
Assigned	given the job
Prosecutions	legal actions against
Clogging up	causing them to become full, crowding
Filling up	causing them to become full, crowding
Telling	showing the truth about the situation
Revealing	showing the truth about the situation
Bootlegging	selling alcohol illegally
Broad daylight	during the day, when he could have been easily seen
Dwindle	decrease
Made up	compose, form
Sizable	large
Dipped	dropped
Sitting	current or present at that time
Aides	people whose job was to advise and help him

The Prohibition Era

Repeal	remove
Distraction	an activity that would draw their attention away
Grim	worrying, hopeless
By a landslide	with an extremely large number of votes
Overtaken	removed, reversed
Noble	honourable, righteous and brave
Hypothesis	explanation of what it was expected
All-round	in all matters or respects
Boom	increase
Disposable income	money to spend as they wished
Bumper	very large
Payday	amount of money
Ambitious	difficult to achieve, challenging
Evaporated	disappeared
Profited	made money

The Prohibition Era

Occurrence	the fact of it happening, event
Liver cirrhosis	a dangerous disease of the liver
Proxy	way to measure the presence of
Moonshine	illegally prepared alcohol
Skyrocketed	increased a lot and very fast
Bootlegger	a person who sells alcohol illegally
Dodgy	questionable and dangerous
Bullets	small metal objects that are shot from a gun
Macho	behaving in a manly aggressive way
Saloon	old-fashioned bar
Downturn	reduction in economic activity
Surpassed	was greater than
Overtook	was greater than
Alter	change
Take it at face value	accept it as it appears to be

The Prohibition Era

Utopian	perfect, ideal
Proponents	supporters
Root	basic cause or source
Hypotheses	explanations of what it was expected
Intentions	plans
Outcomes	results
Abolition	the act of ending it officially

We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.

What did you like? What could we do better?

What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum community.leonardoenglish.com