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GERMAN GREAT-POWER RELATIONS IN THE PAGES OF *SIMPLICISSIMUS*, 1896–1914*

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ABSTRACT. Wilhelmine Germany had a powerful economy and, after 1898, began construction of a fleet to challenge Great Britain's global power. This article analyses Germany's cultural "will to power" in the period through the eyes of the avant-garde, Munich-published weekly magazine *Simplicissimus* as it examined the series of security crises between 1896 and the outbreak of war in 1914. The magazine was no fan of Wilhelmine militarism, its principal artist having been jailed for criticism of the kaiser, but it showed a deep support for Germany's rise to power on moral grounds. Many illustrations dealt with global power projection through the navy and the need for a suitable security partner within Europe. Its illustrators depicted Great Britain as an immoral world power only Germany might check and France as its preferred security partner to keep Europe at peace. *Keywords:* cultural will to power, naval power, security partners, *Simplicissimus*, Wilhelmine Germany.

In the period leading up to World War I, roughly the British Edwardian period, international relations shifted with great rapidity, making this one of the most significant transitional periods in world history. Two polities, the United States and imperial Germany, pulled level with Great Britain on the world stage and began to challenge British primacy for two main reasons. Both began this drive in the 1860s. Once in charge of Congress, in 1862 the American Republican Party declared a form of economic "war" on Great Britain by passing a stiff protectionist tariff against largely British manufacturers. Paul Kennedy dated the start of the Anglo-German rivalry in the early 1860s as coming from "different perceptions of how domestic policies and external strategies should be arranged" (1980, 8). Imperial Germany imposed its own protectionist tariff in 1879. Both challenger polities, their economies driven increasingly by the second industrial revolution and protected behind increasingly steep tariff walls, began to challenge the global manufacturing domi-

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