5-1981

The Nonpartisan League leadership and the disloyalty issue

Jack C. Carmichael

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.und.edu/theses

Part of the Political History Commons, and the United States History Commons

Recommended Citation

https://commons.und.edu/theses/352

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, and Senior Projects at UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact zeinebyousif@library.und.edu.
THE NONPARTISAN LEAGUE LEADERSHIP
AND THE DISLOYALTY ISSUE

by
Jack C. Carmichael

A Doctoral Research Paper
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
University of North Dakota
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Arts in History

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May
1981
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I. Progressivism, Twentieth-Century, and North Dakota</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II. The Anti-War Position of the Nonpartisan League Leadership A. C. Townley and William Lemke</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III. Nonpartisan League Attacks on &quot;War Profiteers&quot; and &quot;Big Biz&quot;</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV. Nonpartisan League Support for the War Effort</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V. Disloyalty Charges in Minnesota and the Townley-Gilbert Trial</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI. The Stigma of Disloyalty</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VII. Summary and Conclusions</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Is it possible, after all, that we may be fooling ourselves in thinking that history teaches us something? The volume of histories written may be only a retelling of the mistakes that the future is destined to make on a greater scale. Although much of this history is at times wearying, there is always the unusual, the dramatic, and the singular event that claims our various interests. The Nonpartisan League of North Dakota was one such event for the writer of this paper.

Our knowledge of any past event is always incomplete, inaccurate to some degree, confused by opposing viewpoints of historians, obscured by partisan sources, and perhaps distorted by our own bias. The highly controversial nature of the Nonpartisan League and the emotional nature of the disloyalty charges that raged around it make this topic doubly ambivalent. It is the purpose of this paper to try to determine the validity, or lack of it, and the purposes served by the accusations of disloyalty used by the League opposition in efforts to bring discredit to this virulent political movement.

The writer approached the study of this topic by a survey of books, articles, newspapers, Nonpartisan League manuscripts and publications, and personal papers of selected leaders of the League. The holdings and
materials made available through the History Department and Library staff at the University of North Dakota were extensive. The author wishes to compliment these people and profess his gratitude for their excellent, congenial assistance, without which very little of this writing could have been achieved.

Gaps in source materials and difficulties in finding information arise primarily from the absence of records, which was the result of a noticeable tendency of League leadership to conduct affairs without writing things down and a pronounced failure to maintain records. The failure may have been calculated to some degree.

The topics that the writer wishes to examine within the paper are:

The Progressive and reform movements in relation to the unique forces of population that contributed to them in North Dakota at the turn of the century which aided development of the Nonpartisan League.

The roles of two leading figures of the Nonpartisan League, Arthur C. Townley and William Lemke, and their anti-war positions as displayed by their speeches and correspondence, as well as how historians and biographers have interpreted these men's ideas.

The Nonpartisan League's principles and programs toward profiteering and huge business combines, and the control these forces held over government.

Support by the Nonpartisan League and North Dakotans for the "boys at the front" and the country's war effort.
The origin of charges of disloyalty which led to criminal prosecution of League leaders, and the use made of these charges by League opponents.

The validity connected with the proposition that, without changes resulting from World War I, the loyalty attacks by opponents of the League would not have seriously discomfited the League.

The League as a matter of principle had always opposed excessive profits reaped by monopolization and trust building, business control of political processes through control of party politics, a biased and irresponsible press serving the interests of privilege and politicians, unequal distribution of wealth and unequal taxation, and political and economic domination of land and production by absentee wealth or power.

The League believed remedying these evils by state ownership and regulation of mills, banks, insurance companies, transportation lines, newspapers, and wholesale suppliers of equipment necessary for production. They supported the concepts of progressive taxation on profits, self-determinism of all populations, and initiative public state, national, and international negotiations and policymaking.

While the League had successfully demonstrated the validity of its economic goals, it allowed itself to be entangled in the philosophical issues of patriotism by its opponents who found issues with emotional charge more important and appealing than dry economics. We seek an answer to the question: "Was the League unpatriotic, or did the war simply provide a new rationale for opposition by its traditional enemies?"
CHAPTER I

PROGRESSIVISM, TWENTIETH-CENTURY, AND NORTH DAKOTA

Most historians of twentieth-century America would agree that the effective beginnings of contemporary reform ideals can be traced to the Progressive Era. David W. Noble, in an article published in the American Quarterly, stated that:

Progress, for the average American of the nineteenth-century, was a law whose validity was beyond doubt. During the first decade and a half of the next--our present--century, this deep-rooted affirmation reached a high point of intensity, calling forth an emotional and intellectual enthusiasm that has indelibly labeled these years as the Progressive Era.¹

The influence of immigration, growth of urbanization, and intellectual associations of Charles Darwin's thoughts on evolution with a definition of progress all combined to bolster these demands for reform.

In the capitalist economy that had developed during the nineteenth-century, the stress on freedom for personal choice to be good or evil had been interpreted by the defenders of the system in a way that justified concentration of wealth as natural and inevitable. American capitalists maintained that inequalities were not only natural and inborn, but also tended to expand with the growth of civilization. Competition was the
life of growth, and business was the essence of competition. Hereditary inequalities bred social and artificial inequalities within which the strong gained control over technological innovations and became stronger; the weak became relatively weaker. The acceptance of this rationalization carried with it the conclusion that the concentration of wealth would be periodically alleviated by violent or peaceable partial redistribution.²

Progressives countered by saying that the weak are devoured in nature by the strong. Man in civilization attempts to consume other men by due process of law. Unless the masses are protected by the power of rules or collective action, abuse is inevitable. The Progressives believed also that cooperation was a reality increased by social development and became a form of competition. Men cooperated in the group, community, club, party, and nation in order to strengthen their competitive position with others. These competitive groups took on the qualities of competing individuals: acquisitiveness, pugnacity, partisanship, pride, fear, and hate. Political, and non-political, parties were the state's fulfillment of this natural competition.

In the Social Darwinist's interpretation of capitalism, each stage of man's development was seen as being in competition with the next. It was once said that "civilization is a parasite on the man with the hoe." But the man with the hoe no longer existed in the most advanced areas of the country in 1900. The man with the hoe was becoming the
hand at the wheel of a tractor or combine. Agriculture was becoming an industry, and the farmer would have to make his choice between being the employee of a capitalist or the employee of a state.

The struggle between socialism and capitalism was, and is, according to the defenders of the latter, part of the historic rhythm in the concentration and dispersion of wealth. In the industrial stage of man's existence, "the men who can manage men manage the men who can manage only things, and the men who can manage money manage all." This was the rationale of entrepreneurial capitalism in the last half of the nineteenth-century. The bankers watched the trends in agriculture, industry, and trade; and they invited and directed the flow of capital by controlling loans and interest and enterprise. They ran great risks to make great gains, and they rose to the top of the heap if they were the "fittest to survive."

According to this theory every economic system beyond the agricultural stage had to depend upon some form of profit motive to convince individuals to continue productivity beyond their own needs. The capitalist was only fulfilling a creative function in history. He had gathered the savings of people into productive capital by assuring his suppliers of interest and dividends. He was thus able to finance the mechanization of industry and agriculture, which had created such a flow of goods from producer to consumer as history had never seen before. The businessman, left relatively free from any unnatural control
over the laws of supply and demand, as well as the regulation of legislatures, could give the public a greater abundance of food, homes, comfort, and leisure than had ever come from politically managed economies. The "Great American Way" preached that in free enterprise, competition and a healthy zeal for ownership encouraged productiveness and inventiveness, which in turn allowed every person with ability to find a place for his talents, and the natural selection of skills would return just rewards. Basic democracy ruled the process when most articles to be produced, and the services to be rendered, were determined by consumer demand rather than by government decree. The nature of competitiveness did compel the capitalist to exhaustive labor, and his products were constantly improved in excellence. There was a little truth to such claims in the last half of the nineteenth-century.

These claims of capitalism, however, did not satisfy the need for an explanation about why history was full of protests and revolts against abuses by industrial masters, price manipulation, business chicanery, and irresponsible use of wealth-giving resources. Crusted with age, these abuses have called forth socialist experiments in many places and times in history.

The Progressive Era was one during which the concentration of wealth reached such a point that the strength of numbers among the many poor was hardly able to rival the power of the few rich. This unstable equilibrium generated a critical situation which the reformers hoped to
remedy by legislative redistribution, because revolutionary means of adjusting inequalities were odious to them. Imbued with a mixture of selfish and altruistic motives, reinforced by decreasing real income as a result of the price inflation that came about in 1897, middle-class reformers set out to right the errors of their society. They wished to secure legislation providing for more democratic methods within the political machinery, which would break the power of corrupt bosses who manipulated unfortunate and unknowing immigrant voters. They hoped to expose and curtail the practices of unscrupulous businessmen whose maneuvers were subverting good government.

Between 1900 and 1920, American statute books became studded with the results of people-oriented reform drives. The direct primary, the initiative, the Clayton Act, the Seventeenth Amendment, a revived Interstate Commerce Commission, workmen's compensation, child labor laws, and Prohibition—these and many other achievements testified to the intensity of Progressivism.

The multitude of reform groups during the period had augmented the government's role as the watchdog over the economy—a role not yet fully accepted in the United States. Their purpose was either to maintain the traditional "small business" regime of competitive free enterprise they believed existed, or at least to make sure that oligopolists really made consumer benefits available from their large scale operations. It is admitted that all that was done in the name of reform might
not have been an improvement. In his article, "Urban Liberalism and the Age of Reform," J. Joseph Huthmacher stated:

Some measures, notably Prohibition, are counted today as being wrong-headed, while some political panaceas like the direct primary elicited an undue degree of optimism on the part of their exponents.

It was, however, through the effective use of the primary that the Non-partisan League of North Dakota gained its first political power and recognition.

The impact of westward expansion, industrial growth, and the concentration of wealth and political power, of concern throughout the country, seemed to have especial relevance for North Dakotans at the turn of the century. Elwyn B. Robinson has described the situation at that time as one in which the state was virtually an exploited colony of eastern business interests. In Robert L. Morlan's *Political Prairie Fire*, we find the opinion that the state was controlled by an oligarchy of grain and railroad interests not located in North Dakota, but directed from Minneapolis and St. Paul—the banking, milling, and railroad headquarters of the region.

The first great attraction which drew the permanent settler to the region was the agricultural wealth promised by the Red River Valley. Coming at the height of optimism and expectations of Progressivism, the homesteaders felt that everything could be made continuously better. Many brought with them Progressive or Populist ideals from the East or
Europe. They could see that North Dakota was the perfect place to institute the ideas of Progressivism before the abuses and corruptions of industrialization had complicated their agrarian way of life. The Nonpartisan League of North Dakota embodied all of the influences that spread throughout the United States with the Progressive Era and its ideals of reform can easily be found in this exceptional movement. The formulation of Nonpartisan League policies embodied elements of populism, anti-monopolism, agrarianism, and Socialism.

Considered as a mass movement, Progressivism was a response of the average man to the challenges to his accustomed or hoped-for status; much of Progressive sentiment was clearly directed toward regaining the "good old days." Nevertheless, the predominant social thinkers of this movement, while illuminating attendant abuses, accepted the fact of the new industrial forces; indeed, they more than accepted; they waxed eloquent about the promise of the future.

Then, suddenly and without warning, the tragedy of World War I burst upon this generation and, amidst the smoke of battle, the Progressive Era vanished. Seldom, if ever, has there been such a sharp and clear division of periods in American history as there was between that of the Progressive Era and that which succeeded it. Americans have continued to believe in progress; but the assurance, the certainty, and the close identification of this idea with a total moral reawakening have gradually receded.
David W. Noble, in "The Paradox of Progressive Thought" tells us:

The simplicity of conditions that had fostered faith in progress had disappeared and with their disappearance went the naive belief in the inevitability of progress. When thinking of this process by which Americans were divested of their innocence and faith, it is convenient to take World War I as the symbolic opening moment, a sharp and harsh beginning but only the beginning, for major ideas are not obliterated by a single historical event. 10

The past history of America contains no more unusual set of circumstances than that through which many of the leading thinkers of the Progressive movement were destroyed in effectiveness. In the short period of six years, from 1914 to 1920, men who had held the public spellbound with their words at the beginning of the War were, after the War was ended, unable to reach the public ear and joined the legions of disillusioned. The leaders of the Nonpartisan League must be counted among those who lost their place at the top.

In North Dakota, often furiously cold in winter, two very warm pioneer populations from widely varied origins, but similar in hardiness and demand for freedom, proved the courage of immigrants and banded together to constitute a farmers' reform revolt unique, however brief, in American history.
CHAPTER II

THE ANTI-WAR POSITION OF THE NONPARTISAN LEAGUE

LEADERSHIP A. C. TOWNLEY AND WILLIAM LEMKE

In the second decade of the twentieth-century, North Dakota became the focal point of one of the most vigorous movements for reform occurring in American history. The Nonpartisan League of North Dakota was conceived and founded by Arthur C. Townley. It was his genius that provided the adaptation of parts of the many reform movements and made them seem remarkably well fitted to both the time and place.

Throughout most of its active history the League was dominated by the personality and organizing ability of A. C. Townley, one of the great natural leaders of protest movements which this country has produced. Although Townley was never elected to an office, he commanded the respect of friend and foe as a political organizer. His ability as an orator was one of Townley's widely recognized and respected assets. Campaigning throughout both Minnesota and North Dakota, Townley delivered fiery, controversial speeches to huge audiences wherever he went.

The controversial nature of Townley's speeches and the emotional, attacking style were to create the atmosphere out of which violent
anti-League tactics grew. As a speaker with a great deal of natural
talent, Townley had acquired some education and training which, com-
bined with growing experience and strong emotional involvement in his
work, gave him a unique command over his listeners. He quickly
gained a reputation for his caustic attacks upon business interests, and
huge crowds appeared to be entertained as well as informed.\textsuperscript{13} According to Alice C. Poehls, his greatest inventive asset was the emotional
proof apparent in the arrangement, audience adaptation, language, and
use of humor.\textsuperscript{14} Because he spoke primarily to sympathetic farmers
groups, Townley became more convincing as a result of demonstrating
his understanding of their problems, his display of high moral character,
and his real interest in those to whom he was speaking.

As President of the Nonpartisan League, Townley was most often
referred to by his detractors as "czar," "dictator," and "autocrat."
Though Townley shared the leadership of the League, and therefore its
decision making, he did retain the predominant power in his own hands.
Accordingly, questions about the organization’s position on issues were
ultimately considered to be his views.

A. C. Townley as well as other leading figures within the League
were and would remain opposed to war as a matter of principle even after
the European conflict was over. In a pamphlet entitled "How To Finance
The Great War," published by the National Nonpartisan League in St.
Paul, the position was stated as follows:
War is ever the great calamity. The most righteous war is no exception. It is still a calamity that nations should have to suffer to get the rights that should flow freely to them merely because they are rights. ¹⁵

This did not mean that the League was unwilling to support the country or the President. It fully agreed with the position that oppressive regimes might have to be overturned. In the "Resolutions Adopted by the Nonpartisan League Conference," a statement of the proceedings of the September 1917 conference, the resolutions stated: "We are involved in the most gigantic war of all history—a war for Democracy and Liberty against Autocracy and Slavery."¹⁶ For the Nonpartisan League, right had to demand that "the only justification for war is to establish and maintain human rights and interests the world over. For this reason we are opposed to waging war for annexation, either on our part or that of our allies."¹⁷ Being opposed to waging war for annexation on the part of other nations was considered to be proper in the nationalist thinking. Of course, when annexation was accomplished by the United States, or her allies, it was to establish and maintain human rights. Pecuniary interests were not a part of American involvement; to hint that they might be was un-American.

Deeply rooted in an almost purely agricultural way of life, North Dakota was a land of immigrants. The two major groups, the Norwegians and the German-Russians, came in response to land-sale advertisement sponsored by railroads and grain-trade businesses.¹⁸ Recognizing that
the maintenance of a steady flow of population into North Dakota country required the encouragement of immigration, the railroads created "Cham­bers of Commerce" to advertise and sell land.

The Norwegians came first and settled in the more fertile and rain abundant Red River Valley region located on the eastern edge of the state. The German-Russians came later and settled in the poorer lands to the west and frequently found that the advertisements had painted a more glowing picture than reality justified. Both of these groups were, and have remained, fairly close-knit economic and social elements. This ethnicity provided an easy means of political appeal for the Nonpartisan League, a situation it quickly and efficiently capitalized into votes. Not only was the League platform designed to appeal to their group sentiment, but the use of Norwegian and German publications and the courting of local churches and priests added much to League success. The appointment of William Lemke as second in command within the League provided a spokesman in the German language as well as a capable contact widely known and liked among the German-Russian population.

Unlike most agrarian movements, the Nonpartisan League was not born during an era of great poverty and crises. The movement germinated from the idea that the corporate forces dominating the marketplace should and could be made to be responsive to the individual producers. The policies of the League were predicated on a belief that power should not only rest with the people but that through the democratic process it
could be actively and directly wielded by these people to serve their own best interests. Robert L. Morlan, in his book *Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922*, informs the reader that the League was "... an organization proclaiming public ownership and control as a solution for economic ills, which was in time actually able to put its principles into practice on a statewide scale." The appeal to the farmer and to state pride was based on the principle that sources far removed from the actual labor of production should not reap great surplus profits through manipulation of economic and political processes, while those laboring to produce were left with meager return from their work and investment.

The Nonpartisan League worked hard to gain control of North Dakota. Its organizers were trained by Townley to make full use of personal contact, and the buttonhole tactics were rewarded by spectacular success. Not only was the League to control for some years the government of North Dakota, elect state officials and legislators in a number of midwestern and western states, and send several representatives of the League to the United States Congress, but also it was to have lasting influence upon the destinies of many of the nation's voters and policies.

The Nonpartisan League was one of the rarest of examples in American history of an attempt by agricultural sectors to correct the dislocation produced by the growth of political and economic dualism.
brought forth by industrialization. The League was one of the most sweeping and least violent programs ever tried as a solution to the world of "haves and have nots." The lack of violent tactics employed by the League was remarkable in light of the amount of violence and abuse eventually mustered against its members.

Morlan states that it was owing to its proposals and the methods by which it operated, and the period in which it developed, that the League era was one of almost "... unparalleled ill-feeling in those states in which it was a significant political force." The degree of emotion directed against the League may in part be traced to the non-partisan nature of the organization. Townley's insight perceived that the control of party machinery was the result of the ability of individuals to control the legal structure dictating nominations and elections. Townley was able to grasp the full meaning of the party primary and the use to which it could be put to work against the parties. Townley explained the idea as follows:

Inasmuch as the lack of respect for farmer rights could be laid to neither the Republican party nor the Democratic party exclusively, we hit upon the idea of using a no-party or non-partisan organization. This would allow both Democrats and Republicans who wanted to vote for certain principles of the League to become members without leaving their traditional parties. The same reasoning was the foundation of the
decision to nominate candidates in the Republican primaries. Townley stated:

... the Republican farmers would have no feeling of leaving their own party whatever and Democratic farmers would not feel that they had deserted their party because they were trying to force their own men over in the Republican primary. 27

On some occasions the League went beyond the primaries by throwing its support to Democratic or Socialist candidates.

Despite gaining control of the Republican state chairmanship in 1916, the League officials were emphatic in denying their affiliation with the Republican party. In the Nonpartisan Leader, the official League publication, the following statement appeared: "... the League is NOT the Republican party. The League is not a movement WITHIN ANY PARTY. The League has nothing to do with old parties." 28 Of course, this risked alienation of some staunch Republican party members.

The non-party position, the non-capitalist nature of the League programs, the high percentage of recent immigrants, and the previous third-party affiliation of hired League personnel were certain to draw comments about the un-American character of the Nonpartisan League. One of the earliest aspersions labeled both the programs and the members of the League as Socialist. Socialism as a term in American history has been used so imprecisely that it can mean almost anything the listener wants to hear. It was a fact that many of the personnel within the League had worked for and held membership in Populist or Socialist organizations
and these organizations in capitalist United States were un-American. This tendency to use the term Socialist loosely makes it difficult to deal with these accusations even now. Robinson, in *History of North Dakota*, entitled the chapter on the Nonpartisan League as "The Great Socialist Experiment." Then without attempting to explain his assessment, Robinson labeled the party, its programs, its membership and the leaders as Socialist. It is not surprising, therefore, that less professional writers would have used the same loose interpretation. Labor-management conflicts had long since made Socialist thinking the opposite of good American ideas.

Many--including Robinson--were sincere in their feelings that much about the League was anti-American. It is equally evident that all manner of strategy was created to be used to discredit the League. One such circumstance was the State Library scandal. Larry Remele, in an article published in *North Dakota History*, has thoroughly examined the Library scandal issue and concluded that the incident grew out of purely political machinations.

The Independent Voters Association, an association that was created to oppose the Nonpartisan League, had mounted a number of smear campaigns against the League on the basis of the League's being dominated by "bolshevistic" interests. This particular move was in response to the creation of a Board of Administration as part of the 1919 state government reorganization program. The viciousness of the
allegations was the result of the implications that the Nonpartisan League was trying to subvert American society by procuring indecent and un-American books for the public schools. Representative Olger B. Burtness, a foe of the Nonpartisan League, made the charges in the 1919 session of the Legislature. The description given by Burtness to the legislative body characterized a book written by Ellen Key, *Love and Ethics*, as one that

... teaches your boy and your girl there is no holiness in marriage; that love and childgetting out of marriage are a glorious thing; that there is no such things as the sanctity of the home and of motherhood and fatherhood.  

Remele's article showed that the League was exonerated by an investigating committee and by Burtness's own admission that he had not examined the books properly and that he had been guilty of poor selection of words. This ended the public and legislative activities concerning the matter, but the damage that had touched the members of the League and the organization's reputation was not completely undone. The Independent Voters Association never ceased using the phrases "free love" and "bolshevik" to refer to members of the League, and the tendency spread to the news media.

The clannish nature of the Norwegian and German-Russian population that made up most of the League gave it the image of a group of "foreigners" to some others in the state. The impending war increased the
suspicion concerning their real beliefs. Robert P. Wilkins in "North Dakota and the European War," stated:

Deeply rooted ideological distrust of the financial and industrial capitalist classes by the German and Norwegian elements of the population which was greatly intensified by the exploitation of North Dakota producers, may be chiefly to account for the persistent opposition to policies that appeared to lead to war. 32

This distrust on both sides of the question by the League members and non-League population was to remain a problem throughout the war.

The growing possibility of the United States' becoming involved in the World War intensified the conflict between political factions either supporting neutrality or those who pushed for taking an active part in the battle. North Dakota was decidedly pacifistic in the early stages of the developing conflict in Europe, as were most other western states. There was, for a considerable period of time, as much sentiment for Germany as there was support for Britain. Whether or not the Nonpartisan League took its cue from national politics in the 1915-1916 campaign year, the League's position on the war issue was almost identical to that of Woodrow Wilson. There can be little doubt that Townley, other League leaders, and many of the rank and file were strongly against the United States' becoming involved in the war in any way. It was impossible for North Dakota farmers to connect the European affair to their needs or interests.

Prior to President Wilson's message, delivered on the evening of April 2, 1917, in which he asked the Congress of the United States for a
declaration of war, it is difficult to find any evidence of an official war policy for the League. There is a paucity of pronouncement concerning the international situation in official League publications or speeches. Those statements that were made were discussions in a philosophic manner of the evils of war and plaudits for President Wilson's determination to stay neutral. This position was consistent with the League strategy. Any question not directly related to the farmers' needs in North Dakota was viewed as irrelevant. Issues that were likely to introduce heated differences of opinion within the agricultural community were avoided, if at all possible. Herbert E. Gaston stated:

The fact is that the League, up until the declaration of war by our government, had studiously and carefully refrained from any expression of opinion or policy on war and peace questions, the Allies or Germany.  

As long as it could, the League remained evasive on the war issue.

The leaders of the Nonpartisan League sought to pursue with unusual dedication their own political program without allowing controversial or divisive issues to claim their attention. Achieving reorganization of state government, freeing the farmer from control of monopolistic "Big Biz," and gaining financial aid and insurance programs were far more important in the League's infant stages. The problem of European conflict was far away and none of the League member's concern. League leaders viewed as their primary purpose serving the interests of the members, who spent their energies upon the land in long hours of labor which left
scarce time for concern about world problems. Gaining programs upon which they had campaigned was not only a commitment but also a means of building up their own following.

As the League success began to consolidate North Dakota membership and the League-controlled legislature began enacting reform programs, the leadership of the organization began to become known.

William Lemke was the most likely successor to Townley within the League administration. On several occasions Townley was flattering in his praise of Lemke as the man upon whom he most depended within the League. At the first annual meeting of State Committeemen of the National Nonpartisan League in 1919, Townley introduced Lemke, who was one of the speakers. Townley stated:

... Mr. Lemke has above all the men in this organization, served it MOST whole-heartedly, and efficiently. ... I have in him absolute and complete confidence. And I hope that if anything should happen to me, that you first of all, for someone to lead this organization, will not neglect the counsel of this one man of the Northwest, that in his sacrifices to advance this cause, has proved in the last two years that he would DIE for it!  

As chairman of the Republican party, the League's attorney, and frequent trouble-shooter for Townley, Lemke was able to stay well informed about the overall activities of the League. Often, Lemke accepted the additional burden of assisting farmers who sought help for their legal problems. In his biography, Edward C. Blackorby points out that this was the basis for Lemke's devotion to the League. Blackorby states:

"... more than anything else, Lemke needed to feel that he was
Lemke gave so much time to the work of the Nonpartisan League that his income from legal practice was meager. His salary as an employee of the League was modest, and he appears to have been an easy mark for anyone who was "down on his luck." This seems to be the way Lemke wanted to have things remain. Blackorby assures the reader that:

Being at the center of power and influence and feeling that he was making progress toward the removal of society's ills were more satisfying rewards to Lemke than the larger fees he might have collected. Townley and the Nonpartisan League had made him a political factor in the state; a goal that had been Lemke's for a long time.37

William Lemke, unlike Townley, was unusually direct and succinct in his statements about his views. The prolific correspondence and later speeches indicated a bent for logical arrangement of his thoughts. He also seems to have been prone to be blunt and argumentative in asserting his opinions. This was a characteristic that also tended to create enemies among the opposition.

That the position of the League on most matters was one with which he was in tacit agreement appears reasonable. Lemke's strategic position with the League indicates that the League placed great value on Lemke's abilities. His biographer stated:

Lemke's secret for success lay largely in a tireless capacity for work and a drive that sustained him through eighteen-hour days unbroken by the conviviality in which so many public figures find relaxation.38
Among those who were familiar with the League and those who voted, certainly within North Dakota, Lemke was understood to be a power capable of moving the other leaders of the League. His vision and imagination, his capacity to dream great dreams, made Lemke the source of ideas for the League.39 Carl Nelson, editor of The Cando Record and friend of Lemke, sent him a note in which he commented upon an item found in another newspaper. Nelson wrote: "To be called 'the brains of the Nonpartisan League' is not such an awful slam it seems to me."40

Lemke seems to have been particularly popular with members of the farmer’s movement, particularly the German population. A tremendous volume of letters to Lemke shows that people were convinced that he would help them if they asked.

That Lemke carved out a seat of power within the League organization is demonstrated by the fact that he decided to stay with the League rather than make a bid for Congress upon the death of Henry T. Helgesen. Many letters of sympathy, several irate at the League, were written to Lemke when it became known that John M. Baer, the Nonpartisan Leader cartoonist, had been chosen to receive League support in the race to fill the vacancy left by Helgesen.41

William Lemke was to become subject to the same general accusations from the Nonpartisan's opposition as were directed at other leaders. His German background made it almost inevitable that he would have been singled out as pro-German. His avowed position against England
added much fuel to the charges. Concerning his dedication to the program of the League, there was no doubt. His loyalty sometimes became over-zealousness toward those people and causes he chose to back. When others were vacillating over the La Follette incident, Lemke never wavered in his staunch support of the Senator. The La Follette incident is explained in Chapter V. It became the national press basis for branding the League pro-German and un-American. Such incidents made him an admirable friend but tended to provide propaganda for the opposition later in his career. It was difficult at times to determine just when Lemke was being loyal and when he was acting out of stubbornness.

Lemke campaigned tirelessly for Charles Evans Hughes in 1916, and could never quite accept Woodrow Wilson's election. He expressed the opinion after the election that he was sorry to know that the people of North Dakota did not know who that man Wilson was. In an answer to a letter he had received, he stated:

...There are a whole lot worse things about Mr. Wilson than his Mexican policy. If the American people only knew the truth, he would never have gone to first base; but big business can even fool some of the farmers. 43

In his mind Lemke never believed that Wilson had won the election in North Dakota. In a number of letters and notes to friends he expressed the belief that a recount would show the state for Hughes. As chairman of the Republican party for the state he did not call for a recount, since
he knew it would not have changed the final outcome. However, Lemke waited for the election returns from California before conceding the race in the state. 44

Although Lemke's opposition does not seem to have brought any severe reaction from President Wilson, there was some damage to Lemke's future effectiveness in working with the administration. Blackorby described Lemke's approach as "combative extremism" and felt that the natural alliance between the programs of the Nonpartisan League and the Democratic party after World War I was prevented by Lemke's persistent anti-British and anti-war attitude. This abrasiveness was to work against the best interests of both the League and Lemke on some very vital occasions.

Although his correspondence indicates that Lemke urged others to be cautious with their statements if they appeared too harsh for the welfare of the League, he was subject to extremes that denied him the moderation that might have saved the Nonpartisan League many of its most discrediting indictments. 45

William Lemke was characterized as a very capable campaigner and highly motivated speaker. That his speeches did not bring the troubles to him that befell others can be attributed to the amount of time he spent in behind-the-scene work, to his traveling primarily within North Dakota, and to the fact that he was recognized throughout the
area as a very capable defense attorney. Nevertheless, there were times when he endured much abuse.

The fact that he was German made it increasingly difficult for him to express his views without receiving abuse related to his ethnic origins. After 1916, his intensive support of Hughes and strong campaigning in the communities of German people heightened suspicions about him. Lemke recognized the danger to himself. His primary concern, however, was in connection with his effectiveness as a campaigner. He was aware of the adverse effects of attacking too strongly and tried to modify his own views. Blackorby states: "He found it easier to feel and express loyalty to the United States than to convince others that he was loyal." As the principal legal counsel for the League, he was to come in for an abundant share of newspaper criticism and defamation.

Lemke was, as were most leaders of the movement, strongly anti-war as long as there seemed any possibility of the nation's avoiding the conflict. He believed that all wars were caused by a very few for their own enrichment. Most of the leaders of the Nonpartisan League were both anti-imperialists and Anglophobes. Lemke expressed these convictions over and over in his correspondence to other members of the League. Blackorby stated: "Not only at this time but through the period of World War II, he believed that the stronghold of those who start and run all wars was in the British Isles and France."
From the beginning of World War I, Lemke felt that Wilson had acceded to the British sea policy in a manner that was not neutral and that his actions would lead to conflict. In the early stages of the European dispute he was unquestionably more sympathetic toward Germany. 49 Lemke's stubbornness was displayed in some attitudes, his undying dislike for all things British was the motive for Lemke's blaming the loss of certain counties of North Dakota in the 1916 election. Lemke claimed that those counties had been influenced by Canadians, by which he implied influence on behalf of England.

Blackorby stated:

While Lemke may have held the rural and German-American vote for Hughes, he probably lost votes elsewhere by his vicious attacks on Wilson. His attacks on the President's record as one of crime and murder were offensive to some. 50

The tone, the sarcasm, and the choice of words used by the leaders of the League in their speeches were so slanderous in nature that they gave the impression that the speakers were more against the government than against the war. The people listening to the speeches heard the tone and the words and did not always know the unspoken feelings that made it possible for Townley and Lemke to be loyal to the people and the nation, while still abhorring the attendant abuses and corruptions that are always a part of war.

That the Nonpartisan League leadership was responsible for state-
ments, both written and spoken, that put them in a position of opposition
to the war cannot be ignored. That the next six years would make that position so frequently dangerous they may not have understood.
CHAPTER III

NONPARTISAN LEAGUE ATTACKS ON "WAR PROFITEERS" AND "BIG BIZ"

As North Dakota prepared for statehood amid machinations for the site of the state capital, deals for the major educational institutions, and railroad tactics to prevent statehood, one man was moving into a dominant position of power. Alexander McKenzie, who allied himself with newspapers, the Northern Pacific Railroad, and powerful business interests of Minneapolis and St. Paul, worked with these interest groups to establish virtual colonial power over North Dakota. McKenzie was to remain the "Boss" of North Dakota until the rise of the Nonpartisan League. This boss of political and economic affairs who worked for business interests from outside the state was the very essence of what the League wanted to wipe away.

The Nonpartisan League was born and grew up as the people's means of combating these interests, which in League parlance were called "Big Biz." League strategy was to maintain a barrage of constant attacks against this foe. The foe, however, was never very clearly defined, and as the attacks mounted they became all-encompassing.
In speeches and through the Nonpartisan League-owned newspaper, the Leader, League spokesmen began the practice of designating all opposition by vague terms such as "McKenzie ring," "Old gang," and "Big Biz." It appears that members of the League, and its leaders, had no exact roster of the enemy. Circumstances occasionally dictated that anyone not supporting the League on all issues be classed among the opposition. These very careless and imprecise designations eventually alienated groups and individuals, and cost the League much support from those who had no quarrel with the farmers' programs.

On those occasions when more precise interests were pointed out, those named included subsidized newspapers, old guard politicians, industrial manufacturers, bankers, insurance concerns, railroads, utilities, millers, and buyers of grain. Specific examples were even more rare, but might include such names as the Fargo Forum, the Grand Forks Herald, and the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce.

The Nonpartisan Leader quickly established itself as a potent weapon for both offense and defense. Since each membership in the League carried an automatic subscription to the Leader, it soon had one of the largest circulations in the state. It was a rather well edited, folksy publication carrying general news and items of interest to the farmer. The Leader provided such services as a women's page and notices of all meetings held that were to be conducted in the German language. On the farm woman's page, attempts at gaining support were
found in such items as: "Patriotism, Politics, Chivalry and Women. These four have been in the foreground of discussion for some years and have formed the basis of many lectures and papers pertaining to woman suffrage." Suffrage, like the war, was a controversial issue; and the League was willing to appeal to women for their votes, but not at the expense of losing others. The Leader also served as a direct contact between the central organization and the members, and was "... a means by which the leaders might guide the actions of the members, and a method of combating the tide of bitter opposition which almost instantly arose." The editorials were vigilant about responding to charges made by the opposition, and each issue set out League principles and programs. An example of the use of the newspaper to defend League practices while publicizing its views is found in the following case of the membership fee for the League. The Leader item stated:

Nobody raised particular because of the many and varied interests, but as soon as the damphool farmer effectively organized what a whooping howl goes up from all who so dearly love the farmer. What wonder and worry over those $6 or $9 contributions for membership and campaign fund. Has the farmer not the right to spend $9 of his own money without it being any other person's business? The editor went further to point out that people within the state had contributed to party political funds in the past and it was "O.K.!!" "Why was it now wrong?"

The fact that neither the Leader nor the League itself ever made a distinction between the Republican McKenzie ring and the Progressives
greatly galled the Progressives. The League could see no real difference in the platforms of the two parties, and considered both to be unsatisfactory. This attitude created enemies of dedicated party members and other newspapers. The League sweepingly condemned non-supportive newspapers as the kept press, and added insult by instituting the appointment of official county newspapers to carry government news. This practice was an economic threat to many publications, especially those in the smaller towns.

The press and leadership of the opposition did not attempt to deny the existence of evils that the Nonpartisan League addressed, nor did they remedy the situations. They responded by attacking League personalities and programs.

From its inception the League had followed the strategy of attacking members of the opposition in positions of political and economic power by portraying them as adversaries of the good, honest, simple way of life. Such tactics of humiliation and character assassination were reinforced by proclamations by the leaders of the League. It was inevitable that many of those threatened with displacement by League ascendancy and accusation would be deeply antagonistic toward the League. Newspapers, bankers, industrialists, and other parties began to use their power and wealth to stem the growing danger to their stations in society. The fight between the Nonpartisan League and its opposition was intrinsically a political battle.
The threat to business interests was greatly heightened when League representatives attended the Trades and Labor Assembly of Fargo in April 1916. Organized labor in North Dakota which had been of minor importance in the political affairs of the state, became more significant later that month when it endorsed the League program and all its candidates. Nonpartisan League attacks on business were also receiving support from the United States Secretary of Labor. Secretary William B. Wilson was quoted in a column of the Leader, reprinted from an Atlantic City newspaper, as referring to the "unpatriotic profiteering of businessmen." The Secretary was quoted as saying in a speech given to the United States Chamber of Commerce:

"... I now tell you business men, it is no time to stand on your prejudices and insist on abnormal profits. If you could not collect such profits in peace times, you should not take advantage of the crisis of your country in times of war. ... Labor has been restless because the word has gone forth that iron and steel manufacturers are making from two hundred to four hundred per cent profits and shipping and mining companies are making enormous profits."

This was the very thing that the leaders of the League had been saying in North Dakota. Now the League and labor were joining forces to find solutions to their common problems. Morlan states concerning labor and the farmer in North Dakota that the meeting in that year may have been "... of small significance ... in North Dakota, but the later to be famous farmer-labor alliance had had its beginning."
As President of the Nonpartisan League, Townley was often referred to by his detractors as "czar," "dictator," and "autocrat." These terms were more universally used to describe the titans of trusts and monopolies. Townley disliked being cast in the same mold with business giants. Though Townley shared the leadership of the League, and therefore its decision making, he did retain ultimate power in his own hands. Accordingly, the organization's stand on issues was ultimately to be considered his views.

It is noticeable that the Nonpartisan League contained an unusual number of remarkable speakers and campaigners. In the art of persuasion and mass psychology certain League speakers were second to none.

Alice C. Poehls examined the speaking style of Townley, and stated:

Townley demonstrated an ability to adapt to his audience by adjusting his tone, his arrangement and his evidential materials to the particular group. . . . Townley considered the drives and motives of his audience in terms of their emotional needs. . . . Townley motivated his audiences primarily through the activation of their safety needs, love needs, and needs for prestige. . . . [He] used patriotism, fear, and social power as emotional appeals in most of his addresses.

Townley made most effective use of these techniques in arousing strong emotion and fear within his listeners concerning freedom—particularly of speech and assembly. The opposition's harassment, that very early became a factor at nearly every League meeting, worked to Townley's advantage as a dynamic speaker. He and others of the League were masters in the use of humor, satire, and ridicule. Townley
consistently linked his opponents with undemocratic processes, unethical economic practices, licentiousness, and disloyalty.

The potent, emotional language of the League speakers provided the ammunition of counterattack used against the League. The opposition had long used mud-slinging campaign tactics of its own, both on the speakers' platforms and in the press, and soon, as a result of the changing status of the country relative to the war, had new charges to level against League leaders. However distorted the use of Townley's speeches and League publications may have been, they were the source of statements used against the League after 1916.

It was quite natural during a war that League speakers would address themselves to the fears of the families of soldiers. Townley and many other League speakers played upon the emotions of love, anxiety, and loneliness for absent family members who were away in the service. Townley was not above using maudlin drama:

> While your boys are across the water, fighting for liberty and democracy, over there in the night some times there travel among the bodies of the dead, some very low-down degraded creatures in human form. They follow all war. They go among the dead bodies of the soldiers, robbing the little things upon their bodies—money, treasures, clothing, and the little trinkets that might have been sent from home.⁶⁸

These statements, were calculated to elicit feelings of bitterness toward those responsible for this absence. It was obvious that Germany's government was greatly responsible for the fighting, but League speakers were intent upon showing that there were additional culprits accountable
and that they were influencing and directing national activities in America. These forces responsible as the underlying cause of conflict were manipulators of wealth in all countries, including the United States. They were the old and often identified enemies of the League: bankers and industrialists who stood to gain from others doing their fighting for them— in short, "Big Biz."

Townley told his listeners where the burden for supporting the war was carried. "Since the war began you will find the farmer's wives and daughters . . . out in the field picking corn, digging up the potatoes, gathering in the food to feed the world and its armies of liberty."\(^{69}\)

These were merely examples of the injustices. League speakers went on to reveal the real venality which was to be found in those who reaped benefit from such misfortune. The vested interests to be held accountable were pointed out:

When the government conscripted your boys, it didn't conscript wealth, if it had, we shouldn't have to have wheatless days and meatless days and heatless days . . . You farmers are trying to produce more crops than ever before, you have had to subscribe to the Liberty Loan, the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. and on top of all that they now take your boys. . . . Rival groups of monopolists are playing a deadly game for commercial supremacy. . . . The contributory causes of the present war are various; but above horrible slaughter loom the ugly incitings of an economic system based upon exploitation. . . . The pinch of want is even now felt by millions of our people, not because of the scarcity of things needed to support life in comfort, but because of extortionate prices foisted upon us by speculators and gamblers.\(^{70}\)
Shortly after the declaration of war by Congress, Nonpartisan leaders traveled to the nation's capital to make their views about fair practices known to President Wilson and the administration. League leaders urged universal application of price controls on all basic consumer goods to prevent excessive profits and skyrocketing costs of farm machinery. These leaders came away from Washington feeling that they had gained the President's promise of fair and equal treatment for both agricultural and industrial producers. The League leaders, following the Presidential visit, reported that they supported Wilson. Their statements concerning "Big Biz" were almost identical to those of Secretary of Labor Wilson. A League pamphlet, "War Program and Statement of Principles," stated:

We are unalterably opposed to permitting stockholders of private corporations to pocket these enormous profits, while at the same time a species of coercion is encouraged toward already poorly paid employees of both sexes, in urging them to purchase government bonds to help finance the war. Patriotism demands service from all according to their capacity. To conscript men and exempt the blood-stained wealth coined from the sufferings of humanity is repugnant to the spirit of America and contrary to the ideals of democracy. 71

When, as the war progressed, price controls were placed upon selected natural resources and agricultural commodities, while consumer prices and costs of farm equipment were allowed to rise, the members of the League became disenchanted with President Wilson's administration. The price of wheat was limited to approximately two dollars per bushel, but cotton was allowed to seek its highest mark, as were steel and
coal. Midwesterners, and Nonpartisan members in particular, came to feel that they had been sold out by the President to industrial interests within the United States and Britain. The League returned to its more caustic attacks on the enemy, because now the robbers of dead soldiers, the plunderers of the nation, were establishing themselves as patriots. League speakers were intent upon unmasking these abusers:

Nothing that I could imagine, up to a little while ago, is as bad as robbing the dead body of a soldier boy. But while that is going on over there, here in this country are a group of citizens who have talked so much about themselves that we regard them almost as patriots, who go about among us, fat, well kept, well groomed, who with their million ramifications throughout this nation, rob and plunder the mothers and brothers and sisters of those boys who have gone across to fight for liberty and democracy.

In addresses delivered by League leaders, there now appeared such phrases as, "Their patriotism is the kind that requires war profits to make it work," and, "If it is right to conscript the lives of our boys it is right to conscript the steel." These were especially bitter and threatening words to men of economic and political power and great self-esteem—men who also knew the power of words. But words alone, even when spoken by Townley in his impelling manner, hardly seem to provide adequate explanation for the brutal reprisals of the opposition which included mob violence and near fatal abuse of League members. The United States was at war and the mood was changing in the country. It was not just the words of League leaders that seemed to pose a threat; these same leaders represented a dynamic, powerful, and rapidly
expanding political movement that was building the weapon that would be used to curtail the power and prestige of long-standing enterprises. Townley's speeches, and even more so his organization of the Nonpartisan League, were far too skillful and far too much of a threat to be ignored. Frustration at League power and perhaps some guilt on the part of those named the opposition demanded retaliation of a forceful nature.
CHAPTER IV

NONPARTISAN LEAGUE SUPPORT FOR THE WAR EFFORT

In December 1917, President Woodrow Wilson, in his "State of the Union" message, informed the nation that there were those within the country whom he described as disloyal: creatures of passion and anarchy. They were, the President said, attempting to involve the United States in the European War. Continuing the message, he stated:

There are some men among us and many residents abroad who, though born and bred in the United States and calling themselves Americans, have so forgotten themselves and their honor as citizens as to put their passion and sympathy with one or the other side in the great European conflict above their regard for the peace and dignity of the United States. 76

The President called upon Americans to oppose war and called such an attitude "thoughtfully patriotic Americanism."

As circumstances drew President Wilson closer to the view that America's entrance into war on behalf of England was imminent, the leadership of the League would find it more uncomfortable to support the government's position. Nevertheless, owing to the President's adoption of the position that the United States was going to war to "make the world safe for democracy" in its struggle with the autocracy of imperialistic Germany, the League leadership vowed to support the country.
The speeches of the League leaders would from this time forward reflect a strong backing of the "people" of the "country" and more especially of "the boys at the front." The League had been supporting the people of North Dakota, and their boys, while opposing the privilege and abuse it saw in the business and government of the state. This was to be the position of the League toward the national government and World War I. Blackorby stated concerning Lemke:

Now that his native country was involved in the war, Lemke wanted to see her victorious over Germany. But at the same time, by all the powers vested in him, he was determined to see that the President would run the war so that there would be no advantage accruing to England from it. Lemke believed, apparently throughout his life, that the stronghold of those who started and ran all wars was in France and Britain. He was determined, as was Townley, that through the North Dakota Congressman, John M. Baer, the President should be pressured into developing measures that would benefit neither millionaires, bankers, nor industrialists.

The wave of early League successes in North Dakota had seemed to draw the League into expansion and necessitate its becoming a national movement. Poehls stated that at the time of the capture of the government in North Dakota, Townley had not included within his plans for the Nonpartisan League anything beyond the state. With their option to expand, the necessity of combating adversaries of a national character, and the importance of agricultural staples
to the country militarily, demanded that the leadership of the League divide their efforts between North Dakota and other areas of the country. Any question that involved the welfare and economy of the country involved agriculture, and any question that involved the farmers of America involved the League. Becoming a national movement forced the League to take an official position regarding the war. The decision of the leaders was consistent with the other doctrines of their program. The first published statement of the League's position was issued after the Minneapolis and St. Paul National Nonpartisan League Conference held in September of 1917. The rapidity with which the Nonpartisan League was swept into national affairs was used by critics of the League to show that the League really never understood the importance and complexity of certain issues connected with American entry into the war. Defenders of the League pointed out that the secrecy and indecision that was characteristic of the Wilson government prevented any awareness until after the final declaration.

The Nonpartisan government in North Dakota did not want a war, but when the United States entered the conflict it would support the "boys at the front" as few other states were willing to do. Newspapers throughout the state began to report with pride on the preparations being undertaken under the new military act passed by Congress and put into effect July 1, 1916. North Dakota's National Guard had been sent with General Pershing in an effort to police the Mexican border. After their
return they were soon placed under direct federal control in accordance with the new act. This unit would be in the first wave to leave for duty. The *Grand Forks Herald* in September 1917 reported the "rousing send-off" afforded the second draft of the national army leaving for Camp Dodge. The following Monday two regiments of the North Dakota National Guard were to leave for training camp. The boys were going to the front.

North Dakota was to outstrip in per capita effort most other states in Liberty Loan contributions, Red Cross drives, and Y.M.C.A. subscriptions. The farmers, with the aid of their Nonpartisan movement, increased their crop output in spite of climatic adversities. The military units sent from the state were more fully equipped than those of most states, thus saving the federal government much expense. As early as 1917 the League platform included a proposal for $25.00 per month bonus to veterans and a one year moratorium on their debts. The state's provision for debt relief and loan assistance during and after military service was consistent with League belief in just economic reward for those who served. The war record of North Dakota, the only state with a Nonpartisan administration, was very sound.

It defies reason to explain why a government that supported the war effort of its country so well was to have been constantly confronted with accusations of trying to jeopardize that country.

The speakers of the Nonpartisan League did not call a truce in their drive to find some means of forcing a more equitable sharing of the cost
of war. Townley still tore into the opposition with speeches upon the needs of the people in wartime. In an address given at Jamestown in June of 1917, he stated:

This country can never succeed in war until it governs the business of transporting your products. . . . In a time like this . . . all the liberties that your forefathers and mine fought for and won are in jeopardy. . . . I am not talking this way to discourage you in financing this war, but to impress on you the necessity of financing it in a tremendous measure or keep your boys at home, because they should not go there without money only to starve. 84

Disloyalty in the League's way of thinking was in the existing system of inequality, not among those who supported their boys in the war even while abhorring circumstances of the conflict.

The principles of self-determinism, open negotiations, freedom from controlled transportation and travel, removal of economic barriers, reduction of munitions making, anti-colonialism, and guarantees of territorial integrity can be found throughout the League resolutions and statements of principles. 85 These principles were the foundation of League leaders' efforts to coerce President Wilson into laying down the terms of victory. The League hoped to prevent imperialists and despoilers from benefiting after a victor end to the war. They seem to have feared European powers and wanted the whole country to support the war to a greater extent.

The closeness of the ideals of the League and those expressed by President Wilson encouraged the League. The most satisfying effort of
Lemke to influence the national government was a petition demanding terms of victory. The "Fourteen Point Program" of President Wilson was an indication that Lemke's determination for asserting League principles was not without merit. According to Congressman Baer:

The points listed in the petition appealed to the President's idealism, [and in Baer's opinion,] President Wilson saw in them an instrument with which he could appeal to the populations of Germany and Austria-Hungary.  

It was the opinion of Representative Baer that the petition was instrumental in motivating the President to issue the Fourteen Points. Baer felt that, since ten of the fourteen principles were similar in detail to those on Lemke's petition, it was probable that one of the best known documents of the twentieth-century was in "language and sense" partly the work of William Lemke.

The Nonpartisan League believed that normally men are judged by their ability to produce, but that in War they are ranked according to their ability to destroy. The League hoped that its efforts, and those of North Dakota, in support of the war could prevent destruction beyond the havoc of the fighting.

North Dakota and the League did give their full support and aid to the men serving in the military throughout World War I. They went beyond most states in supplying their share of men, crops, and economic protection of those away from their homes. The government of the United States greatly praised North Dakota's contributions. The League
continued to demand equalized assessment of industry, conscription of wealth, and assurance against acquisition of territory.

The League was pleased with the terms for victory as proposed in the "Fourteen Points" of President Woodrow Wilson.
CHAPTER V

DISLOYALTY CHARGES IN MINNESOTA AND

THE TOWNLEY-GILBERT TRIAL

By 1918 the League was active in thirteen states and a threat to those accustomed to govern. The months of terrorism against the League in these states after 1917 comprise a period in American history difficult to assess. The League had always maintained that there was a conspiracy arrayed against it, of those who had been in political control and were turned out by the League, those who feared the economic programs that opposed monopoly, and those ultra-conservative organizations that wished to maintain the status-quo which they had professed to be sacred. Particularly vocal and active among the conservative, nationalistic, and reactionary elements were the Public Safety Commissions, the Independent Voters Association, the Loyal Voters Association, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, The Sound Government League, and the Public Defense Councils. Whether conspiring to defeat the League or not, these groups did comprise a vendetta assemblage.

Morgan informs us that it was scarcely deniable that many high officials, persons in positions of economic power, and numerous
newspaper editors either feared or hated the League because they were part of the political and economic factions the League had attacked.\textsuperscript{88} This does not completely explain, however, the amount of crowd and mob brutalities.

Each side was sweeping in its accusations and imprudent in its use of words to describe the other's principles and personalities. Beyond the uses of rhetoric and caustic newsprint, the opposition to the League increasingly availed itself of methods that were physically as well as civilly abusive. Mobbings, beatings, tarring and featherings, jailings, and injunctions against the League were applauded, if not backed, by entrenched political and economic groups. Concerning the unusual amount of terrorism, Russell stated:

There is no doubt that agents were sent out from St. Paul and Minneapolis in advance to stage some of these riots, and little question that the enginery of the state was in some instances, \ldots{} deliberately employed on the same side. One speaker was mobbed for reading to an audience extracts from President Wilson's \textit{The New Freedom}; others were mobbed for reading the Bible. Wherever it was known that the League was almost ready to establish a branch the efforts were redoubled to cause some outbreak or breach of the peace that could be used to the advantage of the milling and elevator interests.\textsuperscript{89}

Seeing the League as a dangerous threat to property and privilege which they revered, these groups felt strongly justified in availing themselves of any method to rid the nation of "unpatriotic" forces.\textsuperscript{90}

Tweton and Jelliff wrote:
The loyalty issue was a handy and potent weapon against a political opponent who had the popular side of an argument, and the lengths to which this opposition and a fanatical brand of "patriotism" were carried constitutes a sordid chapter in the history of Minnesota. 91

It was in Minnesota, rather than North Dakota, the stronghold of Nonpartisan membership, that the organizers and speakers of the League experienced the most virulent charges and attacks upon their loyalty to the United States. Minnesota was also, of course, the nearest center of "Big Biz." Attorneys long on ambition and short on integrity seemed to be in great supply, and law enforcement officials were prone to view violence as natural if it aided the traditional political structure to which they owed their positions. Such were the times, that these attitudes toward law and order served to foster more intense turmoil and encouraged more extreme action within crowds.

The anti-League news media provided an ample and continuous supply of rumor upon which the opposition could act. The Grand Forks Herald, The Fargo Independent, The Courier News, the Twin City newspapers, and the America First magazine formed the nucleus from which many opposition publications took their cue. 92 Nationally syndicated columnists picked up and disseminated the items found in these papers. This resulted in considerable damage to the reputation of the League and North Dakota throughout the United States. The reporting of these news sources ranged from misunderstanding to misquoting and falsification. Editorials and reporting were regularly so slanted that the text of
speeches and the facts of many League statements and activities were
distorted beyond recognition. Lemke, Townley, and other leaders of the
League were so consistently "mistakenly quoted" that they had to hire
stenographers to record their speeches in order to have an accurate
record of their words.93 Even recorders did not prove to be sufficient
in court or when officials chose to ignore the facts.

The power of the press was most notable when Townley and others
were indicted for disloyalty and sedition. Anti-League news coverage
without hesitation pronounced guilt and tried cases before the courts
convened.94 Such reporting by the "kept press" was perhaps the most
damaging of all the tactics to the League as a political movement.

One incident of error by the press in reporting a speech made at the
St. Paul Producers' and Consumers' Conference in September 1917 demon-
strates the fatal power of the press. Senator Robert M. La Follette was
scheduled to be the last speaker at the conference. Lemke and other
League leaders, fearing a press over-anxious to find something treason-
ous, convinced La Follette to set aside his prepared speech and talk
extemporaneously. In an exchange with a heckler, La Follette stated:
"We had a grievance against Germany." This was carried in the Associ-
ated Press as: "We had no grievance against Germany."95 This news
item was picked up by newspapers all over the country and cited as
evidence that the League supported disloyalty. Many of the League
leaders felt that this incident played a major part in the growing
repudiation of the League and its leadership. It was many months later that the Associated Press admitted that the inclusion of the word "no" had been a mistake. By this time, however, the damage to the League and the advantage for the opposition was an accomplished fact.

It was from this same convention that the National Nonpartisan War Program and Statement of Principles was issued; this pamphlet served as the basis for the sedition charges which were lodged against Townley and Joseph Gilbert, who was a hired organizer for the Nonpartisan League. It was also at this convention that Townley made the speech that would be the primary source for evidence that was used by the prosecution in his disloyalty trial in Jackson, Minnesota.

Some of the most frequently misquoted and intentionally perverted examples from Townley's speeches can only lead to the conclusion that there was little or no real basis for charges of sedition in Minnesota. The essential tone and style of the Townley approach is demonstrated by the following:

All young men who are on the farms ought to be left on the farms to raise crops and not taken into the army. . . . the boys shouldn't be taken into the army, they are better off where they are than in the trenches five thousand miles away. . . . why the millions of American manhood sacrificed upon the bloody field of war? . . . It is equally unjust to permit lobbyists to oppose the conscription of wealth without let or hinderance, while making it a crime for a mother to oppose the conscription of the life of her son.

The subject matter, the tone of assertion, and the words themselves did not constitute reasonable grounds for either sedition or
disloyalty charges. It must be added also that, without fiery polemics, Townley and other League speakers could not have hoped to retain an audience for the great length of some of their speeches. It was not the orations and publications frequently used to attack the League that were the truly offensive elements so hated by the opposition. The real essence of Nonpartisanism that rankled the opposition was the strategy of casting business, press, and old guard politicians as murderers and exploiters.

Local officials and other opponents of the League instigated charges against several of the organization's leaders and workers at one time or another. Most of these charges were never followed through to the extent of coming to trial. They were a tactic used to prevent Nonpartisan speeches and organizing activities. The most notable case of trumped-up accusations being pushed through the court was the Townley-Gilbert trial. This was the event that would be used with continuing effect to discredit both the League and its leadership.

Gilbert had been arrested on other occasions. In fact, many League organizers and speakers had been arrested frequently on bogus charges before they could reach the places they were to speak. This practice was especially well employed in Minnesota, where militant efforts to prevent the farmers from assembling and hearing speeches were well coordinated.
The arrest of A. C. Townley on charges of employing Gilbert was based upon Gilbert's distribution of the "War Program" pamphlet and upon speeches Gilbert had made on those occasions. The prosecution based its case on the allegedly seditious statements in these pamphlets and upon Townley's speech. The actual legal charge, however, was conspiracy. This was made necessary because in spite of the fact that the pamphlet had in an earlier case in Martin County, Minnesota, been found seditious the decision had been overturned by the State Supreme Court. The State Supreme Court ruling stated:

The resolutions, taken as a whole appear to be nothing more serious than a rhetorical and somewhat flamboyant platform on which a certain class of citizens are solicited to join an organization whose avowed purpose is the amelioration of alleged evils of present economic conditions. 98

Morlan has characterized County Attorney Albert R. Allen of Martin County and County Attorney E. H. Nichols of Jackson County, who prosecuted the cases against the pamphlet and against Gilbert and Townley, as two of the state's most vehement "super-patriots"; they were almost fanatical opponents of the Nonpartisan League, often becoming deranged in their speech when it concerned the League. 99

In the trial at Jackson County, the charges were conspiring to teach against enlistment. The prosecution based its case almost entirely upon the testimony of Ferdinand Teigen, a former League organizer who was dismissed from the League for dishonesty, and whose testimony was repeatedly shown to be untruthful. Judge Dean, the
presiding judge, would not allow the defense attorneys to conduct their case to prove that Townley and Gilbert were widely recognized loyal citizens. He charged that they must confine their defense to proving that they were not disloyal. This prevented the introduction of a letter from President Wilson personally thanking Townley for his patriotic cooperation. There were similar letters from George Creel of the United States Justice Department, and a multitude of letters, speeches, and editorials from Townley's own Nonpartisan activities which urged support for the war. Judge Dean defined for the court and again for the jury the interpretation that would be placed upon the term conspiracy. The term was defined to mean that any two or more persons jointly acting toward the same end could form a conspiracy. They did not have to be acting in an organized or concerted way. One conspirator did not have to be directly aware of the other's doings. They did not have to carry the act through to its conclusion, and circumstantial evidence was sufficient for guilt. Conviction did not require proof of personal contact or planning.

The trial which convicted Townley and Gilbert was a travesty against justice and a farce of legal procedure. It was not a Federal statute they were tried for violating; it was a state law passed by the Minnesota Legislature after the Nonpartisan League began to make headway at organizing the state. On July 14, 1919, the Grand Forks American, a League paper, published the following article.
Minnesota has in its midst both the witch-burner and the inquisition.
A. C. Townley, president of the National Nonpartisan League, is found guilty. And with him, Joseph Gilbert, one of his lieutenants.
No sour and solemn gathering of the town elders in Old Salem ever perpetrated such a monstrous judgment in the name of justice and law upon a magic worker.
... For Townley's "crime" is not disloyalty, but magic working and political heresy.103

Although the war was over before Townley was convicted and served his sentence, the charges were made near the end of the terrible conflict, and the damage accomplished by the charges could not be erased.
Hatreds and passions of war do not evaporate with the signing of a cease fire. Long after this, opposition forces frequently used copies or statements about the conviction in the press and from the podium while pointedly ignoring to mention the nature of the conviction or the charges. The damaging evidence was just as potent as though it were a legitimate conviction. Denial and defense by the Nonpartisan League leaders only made them appear less creditable.104

The real League failure in the loyalty issue would seem to have been that Townley and other leaders of the League should have been more aware of the danger from those they claimed to know as established perverters of justice--the opposition. The League leaders were guilty of not making a more thorough investigation into the possibility of such a decision from the Jackson County Court.
In November 1921, Arthur C. Townley finally began to serve a ninety-day jail sentence in Jackson, Minnesota, for "conspiring to discourage enlistments."
CHAPTER VI

THE STIGMA OF DISLOYALTY

The Nonpartisan League and its leadership continued to face increasing denunciations of disloyalty. Having found a potent and ready weapon to use against the League, the opposition was not going to miss any opportunity to take advantage of it.

The Nonpartisan League and A. C. Townley had been praised by President Wilson in a letter in which the President recognized North Dakota's efforts to support the war effort through production of agricultural goods, and their support of "the boys at the front." The President of the United States found no reason to question their loyalty. The office of the Attorney General of the United States had investigated the allegations of sedition against the League leaders. These investigations were instrumental in the Attorney General's Office clearing the Nonpartisan League and its leaders of any charges of disloyalty. Indeed, George Creel of the Justice Department went beyond just words of clearance; he praised the activities of the League. In a letter to a League historian after the war, Creel stated:
I am not at all unwilling to give you my opinion with respect to the war attitude of the Nonpartisan League. Never at any time did I consider it a disloyal organization. On the contrary, the war record of the state of North Dakota, controlled by the League, proved conclusively that the membership, taken as a whole, gave America faithful and ungrudging support in the hour of need. . . . I sent for the heads of various agricultural bodies and unions, and among those that came to Washington in response to the call was Mr. Townley, head of the Nonpartisan League. I found him, just as I found the others, full of distrust and suspicions born of many lies that he had read and heard. I took him, as I took others, to the President himself, and the interview removed every doubt as to the necessity of the war and the high purpose of America. . . . When Mr. Townley left Washington he had not only pledged the full support of his organization to the war, but he had struck hands with Mr. Hoover and promised every cooperative effort. These pledges were kept. 105

In spite of these assurances, Lemke and Townley and other leaders of the League could not save themselves from charges of disloyalty. Opponents of the League and organizations that were trying to elevate their own positions by zealous activity found in the League a ready-made and already accused culprit. 106 They would not let the charges die, and the majority of the press aided them in maintaining the fiction of the accusations. Lemke, who more and more was in charge when Townley was absent, suffered constantly increasing abuse after 1921, even though the war was over; this was partly due to the fact that the agricultural Northwest went into a post-war depression, and abuse of the League seemed to ease some people's fear. After these events and the attendant publicity, neither the League nor Townley was able to recover any former drive or respect.
One area of the League's activities suffered the most from this stress. The organizational efforts of the League were constantly met with already formed attitudes and often misinformed press coverage. In an effort to revive his own commitment and to combat the misunderstanding of the people, Townley either offered or agreed to debate William Langer in 1921.

William Langer had emerged from a political background of progressivism, his father having spent one session in the North Dakota legislature. The father, Frank Langer, refused to return to politics after this first encounter. Those who knew Frank were unanimous in expressing the opinion that his distaste for politics resulted from his extreme honesty. Unlike his father, William Langer made a lifetime career of politics; and unlike his father, honesty did not seem to be an accusation often used against him.

Langer gained his first notable recognition when, as assistant states attorney, he zealously attacked bootlegging. This was his basis for seeking Nonpartisan support to higher office. Langer had been friends with Lemke and other League leaders as a student at the University of North Dakota. He used his friendship with Lemke to aid him in getting an endorsement in 1916. Agnes Geelan in her biography, The Dakota Maverick: The Political Life of William Langer, stated:
He skillfully maneuvered an endorsement to run for attorney general from the Nonpartisan League's first nominating and endorsing convention in 1916, and it can be said that Bill Langer's progressive political career was launched.\textsuperscript{107}

Having secured the nomination, Langer promptly backed out on the agreement he had made with Lemke.\textsuperscript{108} When elected Attorney General of the state as part of the Nonpartisan list of endorsed candidates, he had statewide attention. His first year in office was hardly over before he began to break with the Nonpartisan League. When the break became complete, Langer joined forces with the Independent Voters Association, the major North Dakota foe of the League. Langer was to reconvert to a Leaguer after a setback in his career again made the League necessary to him.

During his tenure with the Independent Voters Association, Langer became a frequent contributor to the anti-League publications in the Red Flame. The Red Flame was created as an anti-League medium, and had little other purpose; it can be correctly described as a radically conservative "rag."\textsuperscript{109} This publication was to do more than any other newspaper to keep alive the terms "free love," "bolshevik," and "anti-Christian."

The Townley-Langer debate tour throughout Kansas became the most continuously absorbing focus of the newspapers throughout Kansas. The American Legion of Kansas gave Langer much verbal support in his debate tour, presenting him as the representative of Loyalty in his contest with the disloyal Townley. The Courir News on March 30, 1921, carried the following comment about Langer as patriot:
Oh, dear, no! To the American Legion this man who stayed home during the war, and whose patriotism was questioned by the extremely patriotic Forum, is the leading exponent of 100 per cent Americanism. . . . Can someone please tell us how to tell a loyalist from a disloyalist? Is this the test: That any man who questions the divine right of Wall Street to rule is disloyal, and anyone who upholds Wall Street and its war-profiteering is loyal? 110

The widely varied positions of the Red Flame and The Courier News were reflected throughout the tour of Kansas in the newspapers of over twenty-five towns visited by Townley and Langer. These local newspapers created about the same picture as existed from only the League's publication or only the opposition's news.

The Herrington Times reported: "... The talks amounted to an exchange of bitter personalities, Langer charged Townley with a great many things and Townley ignoring them." 111 The editor concluded that the debates were simply a clever manner for gaining an undisturbed hearing for Townley in communities he would not dare visit as an advocate of the Nonpartisan League. 112 This was due to his position against the war, for which he was at that time "under jail sentence," 113 a statement that was patently untrue. The Concordia Blade-Empire printed Townley's reply to the question of "Why he had been jailed." He stated:

I made hundreds of speeches during the war, fighting the fight of the farmers against the grain gamblers and the beef trusts. The government had agents taking stenographic notes of everything I said. . . . Finally the grain gamblers found a little two by four county attorney in Jackson County, Minnesota, who would work for them. . . . I was convicted and sentenced to
three months in jail. Think of it, three months in jail. And think of all the trouble I caused the trusts and grain robbers while they were framing [me]. 114

The most balanced reporting came from the Tiller and Toiler, a Farm-Labor publication which characterized two debators according to speaking ability. This newspaper stated:

... Langer ... is a fiery, hammer and tongs debator--rapid, impetuous, defiant, dogmatic, discourteous, vindictive, malicious and verbally ferocious ... Townley is the better speaker, calm, deliberate, courteous in word and demeanor (with rare exception), gruelingly sarcastic, adroitly ironical and damnably plausible. 115

This was the general pattern to the reporting of the debates in Kansas. The stigma of disloyalty was kept alive, since each newspaper made some comment about Townley's trial and sentence for this charge. Not one of these newspapers had the correct information concerning the conspiracy, and many, having obtained their information from the American Defense League, an American Legion auxiliary, made some comment concerning "free love," "socialist," and "atheist" or "anti-Christian." 116 In most of these newspapers the debates were publicized several days before they were to take place. Since the standard American Defense League advance news item could hardly be called unbiased, Townley never entered a town before he had been branded by the press as disloyal. He could not escape these charges even in those newspapers that favored him after the debate.
Blackorby stated:

The years of speaking and persecution had told on Townley; for a time he did not have as much to give as he had had in earlier years. When he was not in the state to take top billing at League rallies, it was often Lemke's name which was used to draw the crowds. . . . But Lemke's preoccupation with the North Dakota League did mean that he was becoming less and less a guiding influence at national headquarters. 117

The stigma of disloyalty took its toll, and the National Nonpartisan League was changing its organization. It was retiring from its front ranks those with a stigma of disloyalty.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Nonpartisan League may have been the creation of popular leaders who only sensed the changing climate in America and moved out of fear; it may have been the product of men imbued with the insight that a pattern of life basically agrarian was being replaced by industrialism in all its complexity, leading eventually to a morass of inescapable problems; in any case, the League was in the forefront of reform at a time when faith in the inevitability of progress was disappearing. When one seeks to understand the process by which Americans were stripped of their innocence and faith, there is a temptation to see this as one more consequence of the cataclysmic changes wrought by World War I. The contrast before and after the war was sharp, but not all of the major ideas and attitudes of the preceding era were totally erased.

This period of the American past contains no more distinctive occurrence than the political destruction of leading thinkers and ideals of the Progressive Era. The extreme rapidity of this change during the six years of the war is hard to grasp. Leaders who were molding public opinion at the outbreak of the war were reduced to ineffective wonderment
by the time of its conclusion. This creates a problem of explanation, because the swiftness of the change is as important as the content.

Both A. C. Townley and William Lemke were men of extremes, commitment, and sincerity; and briefly they were men of power. They failed, however, to recognize adequately the degree of power and commitment possessed by their opponents, and the extremes to which they would be willing to go. They did not comprehend that the Independent Voters Association, the traditional parties, the milling and grain interests, the railroads, and the businessmen were involved in a struggle that was as important to them as life. The opposition was willing and able to use methods that were distasteful to the League.

Even after 1919 it was highly possible that everything was not lost. Restrained actions, careful statements, and the practice of moderation in proposed programs might have created the time needed to give attention to past gains and consolidation of Midwestern aims. Blackorby felt that neither Lemke nor Townley possessed the temperament and moderation needed to accomplish retrenchment. The League boomed too rapidly into a national organization.

The success of the Nonpartisan League as long as it employed nonpartisan tactics and a balance of power position between the traditional parties was assured. When the League moved toward a farmer-labor union, it began to take on the characteristics of a third party, but it lacked the leadership and breadth of program that such a new status
required. Russell suggested that Townley's genius was limited to the promotional and organizational work and that he lacked the needed qualities to moderate and maintain the flexibility necessary for a political "boss." What began as a farmers and citizens group using the machinery and techniques of the traditional political parties became a political organization possessing party machinery and techniques of its own; it thereby lost its unique cause of success.

The League's carelessness in defining "the opposition" alienated the support and membership of many people who, because of the nature of their small-town affinities and occupational enterprises, were not really the opposition. The farmers alone did not possess as much "sticker" awareness as was required to cement them into a long-standing power. They could not manage without the leadership of a Townley to work for their own long-run interests. When World War I changed attitudes, the "radical" movements were attacked in all sections of the country; and it was easy to make the League appear too socialistic and foreign dominated. The farmer could not accept being viewed as radical; he was easily confused by revolt within his own ranks, as exemplified by Langer and the State Library affair, and soon lost faith in the movement.

The Nonpartisan League of North Dakota achieved massive reforms in insurance; in reduction of control by milling, terminal, and transportation interests; in banking and loan establishments; and in the nature of the state legislature, making it responsive to the people. It also
responded dynamically to World War I and supported the "boys at the front." This was all that many League members felt needed to be accomplished and allowed them to return to a more conservative outlook. These traditionally conservative elements were able to reduce future League successes by organizing League-like movements of their own, such as the Sound Government League of Minnesota and the Independent Voters Association in North Dakota.  

The Nonpartisan League was irreparably damaged by the images of anti-war programs and disloyalty associated with it. It is evident that several members of the League, very important leaders among them, were anti-war and opposed government intervention on behalf of England. While they continued to detest abuses by industrial and mining interests, they nevertheless supported the sons of the people of the country at war with unusual dedication. The national government did not at any time find sufficient reason to act against the Nonpartisan League for questionable loyalty and, indeed, praised the League for its cooperative support of the war effort.

The anti-League reaction in Minnesota, where old guard politics, "Big Biz," banking and railroad interests, and the "kept press" were dominant, was irascible to a degree which can hardly be explained in terms other than organized hysteria. The clashes between League members and opposition forces were violent only when the opposition instigated terrorist activities. The war mentality aided League
opponents, who found it easy to equate mob action with "Americanism" against unusual economic and political ideals. Many League opponents held the sadly misguided notion that they could proclaim and bolster their own patriotism by mistreating groups with German-Russian ancestry. That the League offered a real threat to the traditional political machines, economic powers, and conservative newspapers is evident by the degree of opposition so swiftly and frenetically mounted against it.

A. C. Townley, through his speeches and dynamic actions, invited retaliation. Bahmer stated: "... at no point does it appear that Townley was corrupt; his failure lay rather in his inability to regard the opposition as being dedicated to the same extent that he was." The Minnesota court conviction for which he served a jail sentence approaches the limits of judicial abuse and in itself seems criminal. Judged on the basis of all materials available, neither Townley nor Lemke was disloyal, although each opposed inequities in the economic policies of the government and was not an Anglophile. Officials in Washington, including the President and Justice and Agricultural heads, found no reason for questioning their loyalty. Nevertheless, disloyalty charges were responsible for the political career wrecking of both Townley and Lemke. Neither of them ever fully recovered his former respectability.

The power of the press was demonstrated by its response to the League and the degree to which it is inadequately qualified to interpret
most events. In retrospect, the press demonstrated a lack of integrity and responsibility that makes questionable the justification of its power.

Finally, to explain the fate of the League during and after World War I, it must be remembered that the irrationality of the voter is easily triggered. While he is frequently accurate in his judgment, he is also sometimes as fickle as the wind.
FOOTNOTES


5. Ibid., 133.


7. Ibid., 231.


15. Nonpartisan League Pamphlet, "How to Finance the Great War," National Nonpartisan League Papers, Folder 6, Box 6, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota. Found also in A. C. Townley Papers, Folder A-47, Box 1, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.


25. Ibid., 8.


27. Ibid., 624.


31. Ibid., 23.


35. William Lemke Papers, Folder 9, Box 3, 1919, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.


37. Ibid., 59.

38. Ibid., 56.

39. Ibid.

40. William Lemke Papers, Folder 10, Box 3, 1919.

41. Blackorby, Prairie Rebel: The Public Life of William Lemke, 68.

42. Ibid., 80.
43. William Lemke Papers, Folder 1, Box 3, 1919.

44. Ibid.


46. Ibid., 50ff.

47. Ibid., 75, 76.

48. Ibid., 75.

49. Ibid., 54.

50. Ibid., 55.


52. Ibid., 201.


58. Ibid.


60. Ibid., 112.

61. Ibid., 65.

62. Ibid., 66.

64. Morlan, Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915, 66.


67. Ibid., 67.

68. A. C. Townley Address, delivered at Litchfield, Minnesota, October 9, 1917, Nonpartisan League Papers, Folder 9, Box 6, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

69. A. C. Townley Address, delivered to the American Federation of Labor, at Buffalo, New York, November 16, 1917, Nonpartisan League Papers, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.


71. Ibid.

72. Gaston, The Nonpartisan League, 235. Actual price was $2.20 1/2 per bushel at milling site.

73. A. C. Townley, Address delivered at Litchfield, Folder 9, Box 6.

74. A. C. Townley, Address delivered to Farmers and Workers Conference, St. Paul, Minnesota, September 18, 1917, Nonpartisan League Papers, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

76. *Fargo Forum*, December 5, 1917, 1.


83. *Ibid*.

84. A. C. Townley, Address delivered at Jamestown, North Dakota, June 9, 1917, Nonpartisan League Papers, Folder 9, Box 6, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

85. *Nonpartisan Leader*, March 19, 1918, supplement to the *Nonpartisan Leader*, no. 16, April 26, 1919.


92. *Ibid*.
93. Blackorby, Prairie Rebel, The Public Life of William Lemke, 74, also found in Robinson, History of North Dakota, 365.


96. Ibid.


99. Ibid.

100. State of Minnesota vs. A. C. Townley and Joseph Gilbert, A. C. Townley Papers, Folders 3, 4, 5, Box 6, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

101. Ibid., Folders 1, 2, Box 5.


103. Grand Forks American, p. 4, July 14, 1919.

104. Russell, The Story of the Nonpartisan League, 244, 245.

105. Ibid., 247.


107. Ibid.

108. Ibid., 32.


111. *The Herrington Times*, A. C. Townley Papers, Folder 11, Box 6, Orin G. Libby Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.


115. *Tiller and Toiler*, Ibid.


118. Ibid., 94, 95.


120. Huntington, "The Election Tactics of the Nonpartisan League,"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Books


II. Articles


III. Newspapers


Fargo Forum, 1917 to 1919.

Grand Forks American, 1919.

Grand Forks Herald, 1916 to 1921.
The Independent, 1916 to 1920.

Nonpartisan Leader, 1916 to 1920.

IV. Unpublished Dissertations


V. Manuscript Collections

Langer, William Papers, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, Number 19.

Lemke, William Papers, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, Number 13.


Nonpartisan League Papers, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, Collections 1 and 2.

North Dakota Room Political Pamphlets, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Townley, A. C. Papers, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, Collections 1 and 2, Number 47.