



5-1989

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Perry J. Hornbacher

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THE ICONOCLAST
A STUDY OF A RADICAL NEWSPAPER

by
Perry J. Hornbacher

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 1989

INTRODUCTION

The definition of an iconoclast is one who attacks or ridicules traditional or venerated institutions or ideas which the iconoclast believes to be erroneous or based on superstition. On May 24, 1912, a Minot weekly entitled The Socialist Advocate changed its name to The Iconoclast. The Socialist Advocate had been in existence only long enough to print eight issues. The newly hired editor of The Iconoclast, J. M. Near, explained that despite possible criticism from friends and enemies, the change was needed. In a rather candid editorial Near acknowledged the limitations that a socialist newspaper faced:

The old name—Socialist Advocate—advertises the paper in advance as a Socialist publication, and it is a fact well known to all active Socialists, that there are some people who as soon as they see the word Socialism on the head of any publication, they stop right there and no amount of ordinary persuasion can tempt them to read further. They have their orders from their political masters, or the pope.

The Iconoclast was published in Minot from May 24, 1912, to July 21, 1916. The weekly newspaper claimed a circulation that ranged as high as six-thousand and as low as three-thousand subscribers. The position of editor and ownership changed several times in the paper's four-year existence. Despite these managerial changes The Iconoclast maintained a fairly consistent standard. The style was fresh and interesting and always edged with the socialist attitude and purpose. The Minot weekly was often innovative, daring, and sometimes cynical in its articles, features, poems, and cartoons. The Iconoclast always attempted to live up to its name.

The Iconoclast did not try to compete with daily papers because that was not its purpose. The Iconoclast did not normally feature local news on its

front page but did report items that it deemed important to the socialist cause. The Iconoclast could not compete with the larger socialist and radical magazines and newspapers. The local weekly ran articles, cartoons, poems, and series from national publications such as Ripsaw, Milwaukee Leader, New York Call, and Coming Nation.

The Iconoclast attempted to maintain its own identity in spite of its dependence upon other sources. The editors, writers, and local membership who contributed to the newspaper were able to infuse The Iconoclast with a great variety of their own material and creativity. This made The Iconoclast important to the local socialist effort and gave it the character of a local newspaper unique to problems, politics, and socialists of North Dakota.

The Iconoclast was an extremely important vehicle for local socialists in their efforts to reach and educate the people of North Dakota. For the Socialist party, it served as a publication where its platforms and ideas could be disseminated. The Iconoclast is the main primary source for observing the socialist organization and viewpoints. The paper brings to life the socialist effort that can be found no place else. The Iconoclast is an excellent window through which to examine North Dakota's radical minority.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN NORTH DAKOTA

THE NDSP AND THE IGNOMINIOUS

The turn of the century witnessed the beginnings of the socialist movement in North Dakota. The North Dakota Socialist party (NDSP), organized in 1902, was an important step in the creation of the state's unique and possibly most influential political movement, the Nonpartisan League (NPL). What success the NDSP achieved was due to its agrarian emphasis which appealed to some of the state's farmers. The NDSP's call for agrarian reforms, however, did not go unnoticed, and rival organizations soon developed. In fact the very success of the NDSP's farm platform led many within the party to concentrate exclusively on that issue. When the more politically acceptable farm reform movement, the NPL, was formed and most farmers deserted the NDSP. The NPL took away the NDSP's platform and its leadership. The NDSP disappeared within several years after the organization of the NPL.

The socialist movement began in Fargo, the state's largest urban center, when Arthur Rasset founded the first socialist club in 1900. In the same year its first political candidates appeared on the ballot as Deb's Social Democrats.¹ The candidates and their support came from eastern North Dakota. The vote total was not large in 1900 and most support came from Cass County and Fargo, its county seat and major population center. Among the Socialist candidates was Arthur LeSueur, who ran for attorney general.² As a lawyer, LeSueur was one of the few Socialists in North Dakota who was eligible to run for that position. LeSueur's candidacy ended in failure, but he would go on to become a leader in the socialist movement and would gain a great deal of prominence both locally and nationally.

The socialist club and other local socialist groups, including Norwegian-language clubs, formed the nucleus that would become the NDSP. The party held its first state convention in Fargo on February 4, 1902. Math Eidness was elected as the first state secretary and state organizer.³ In 1902 Socialist candidates did not generate many votes but did attract more support in the northwestern part of the state. Eventually this area, especially Ward County and the city of Minot, would become the stronghold of the NDSP. In 1904 Ward surpassed Cass as the county with the highest tally for candidates of the NDSP. (Ward County averaged around two-hundred votes per candidate and Cass County averaged about one-hundred and fifty.)⁴ LeSueur, who moved to Minot after the election of 1900, polled 1,843 votes in 1904, whereas in 1900, running for the same office of Attorney General, he received only 397 votes.⁵ The growth of the NDSP in the northwest was in part due to LeSueur. He provided able leadership which gave credibility to the movement. Although the party's headquarters remained in Fargo until 1911, Minot was on its way to becoming a socialist center.⁶

In 1906 the NDSP faced a very serious rival in the progressive movement. Revitalization of the Democratic party due to a progressive spirit offered an alternative reform movement that was more acceptable to the average voter. The Socialist vote was reduced by one-third.⁷ The major decline in the 1906 election returns forced a reappraisal of party tactics. The NDSP's leadership entered the next election with a farmer-oriented platform that called for popular agrarian reforms such as state-owned elevators and flour mills, a rural credit bank system, and a state financed hail insurance program. The NDSP even went to the extreme of running its candidates not as Socialists but as Independents.⁸ This was to be the first and only time the Socialist

candidates did not designate themselves as NDSP candidates. Socialist vote totals, however, were even lower than in the previous election.⁹

In 1910 the NDSP once again listed its candidates as Socialists. The party platform remained agrarian in scope, while maintaining its progressive, step-at-a-time policy. The election returns of 1910 seemed to vindicate its decision. The party's vote total rose over 500 percent. It also was the first and only time that a NDSP candidate was elected to the state legislature.¹⁰ The western counties around Minot experienced the greatest growth. Ward, Williams, Bottineau, Rolette, and Mountrail counties provided 40 percent of the total Socialist vote in 1910.¹¹

In 1912 the Socialist platform included a list of immediate demands as well as a special farmers' program which called for the state ownership of elevators, packing house, banks, and state hail, fire, pest, and animal insurance.¹² (See Appendix 1-1) This platform must have been attractive to many voters, for the candidates received their greatest support yet. The state total for the Socialists averaged over 6,000 votes. The election gave the NDSP five percent of the total vote, thus qualifying the party to run in the next election year primaries.¹³ The area that provided the most support was again in the northwest. Eastern North Dakota gave the party little support. In the Third Congressional District, which included northwestern North Dakota, Arthur LeSueur received 5,254 votes, nearly 25 percent of the votes cast.¹⁴ Ward, LeSueur's home county, gave him 1,027 votes which compared very well with the Republican and Democratic candidates who received 1,158 and 1,235 votes.¹⁵ In Minot, LeSueur came in second, behind the Democrat who tallied 424 and ahead of the Republican who got 273.¹⁶ (The Socialist candidates for the first and second districts did not fare as well, receiving only 1,310 and 1,922 votes.)¹⁷

The NDSP candidate, A. R. Bowen, received 6,835, the highest vote total of a Socialist who ever ran for governor.¹⁸ The NDSP also had some success in local mayoral contests, electing Socialist mayors in Hillsboro and Rugby.¹⁹ Eugene Daba again ran for President and received nearly 7,000 votes in North Dakota. This was especially significant since in North Dakota five parties fielded presidential candidates, none of whom received over 30,000 votes.²⁰ The election of 1912 marked the NDSP's strongest showing.

In spite of its vote totals, the NDSP failed to win any victories in state contests. The northwestern part of the state, especially Ward County, had clearly become the bastion of North Dakota socialism. Minot was becoming the hub of the movement and the party. That was clear as early as 1909 when Arthur LeSueur was elected president of Minot's new commission government.²¹ LeSueur conducted a campaign for reform and achieved a favorable reputation as a crusader against gambling and racketeering.²² Despite his victory at the polls and his reform accomplishments, LeSueur did not finish his full term, resigning in 1911. His resignation is most often attributed to his minority position on the commission.²³ However, trouble arose when the 1910 city election returned an opposition majority to the commission.²⁴ His first defeat came when L. D. McGahan, an opponent of LeSueur's, was elected to the commission. LeSueur's position was further weakened when one of his supporters was defeated, thus securing for his opponents control of the commission.²⁵ The socialists responded to this turn in the city commission with a unique party position. On May 10, the headlines of the Minot newspaper, The Reporter, read: "MINOT SOCIALIST WILL ASK MAYOR LESUEUR TO GIVE UP THE OFFICE." The paper went on to state that the move was unanimously agreed upon at the socialist meeting which was held the night before.²⁶ The socialists did not disapprove of LeSueur; they detested the city's majority

opposition. The socialists insisted that LeSueur's administration was the cleanest the city had ever had, "and if the people of Minot don't want a clean administration, then they don't want a Socialist at the head of the city government."²⁷ The Reporter stated in its May 12 edition that "The Minot Socialists have recalled President LeSueur. They not only demand his resignation as President of the Minot City commission, but they announce that Mr. LeSueur will resign—that he will file his resignation with the city commissioners."²⁸

LeSueur's official response was not long in coming. On May 15 he handed in his written resignation which was immediately and unanimously accepted. LeSueur's rival, L. D. McGahan, was elected as acting president.²⁹ The next day's editorial in The Reporter was entitled "THE PASSING OF L'SUEURISM." The editorial implied that LeSueur was sincere in his work, "a one-man government wherein the policy was pernicious activity and eternal prosecution of petty offenders and at least a prima facie attempt at law enforcement."³⁰ The editorial maintained that the citizens of Minot objected to LeSueur's and that LeSueur was a servant of the socialists not the people of Minot. The editorial contended that LeSueur had "built up and strengthened an organization in Minot which numbers some three hundred, and he has been advertised throughout the Northwest as the socialist mayor of Minot and has made his administration Socialist in the extreme."³¹ The other Minot daily, the Optic, cited many problems and mistakes that LeSueur's socialist background created, especially "undiplomatic" attacks on the church.³² The Bismarck Tribune spoke favorably of LeSueur's administration and its war on the "blind piggers" (illegal liquor establishments), gamblers, and keepers of disorderly houses.³³

When in 1911 Arthur Basset moved from Fargo to a land claim near Ryder, the party's headquarters moved to Minot. A year later, however, Basset lost his position as party secretary to H. E. Thompson of Minot. Basset remained on his homestead until his death in 1914.³⁴ Adding to Minot's prestige as party headquarters, LeSueur in 1912 founded The Socialist Advocate, a weekly newspaper which later that year became The Iconoclast. In 1912 it must have appeared to the socialists of Minot that they were on their way. The recent strong showing in state and local elections indicated political respectability, maybe even success. The establishment of The Iconoclast not only expressed optimism but also gave the leadership of Minot a vehicle in which they could express themselves fully.

Minot remained the center of socialist activity and in 1913 became a hotbed of controversy—the free speech crisis. The crisis climaxed with the arrest of leading socialists on the charge of blocking the streets, leading to the recall elections of 1913. In the city elections of 1913 the NDSP was represented by several leading candidates, including the state secretary for the NDSP, H. E. Thompson, and Minot businessmen Eugene Teutsch and Dewitt C. Dorman.³⁵ The socialists prepared for the election with a number of progressive, reform-oriented planks in their official platform. They demanded civil morality, more humane treatment at the city jail, and the appointment of a police matron. They also criticized excessive light and power rates of the local Consumer Power Company and called for a municipally owned light, power, gas, and telephone systems.³⁶ The Iconoclast ran a series of front-page articles entitled "HOW YOU ARE GOUGED" which exposed Minot's unfair electric rate system.³⁷ The elections produced one Socialist victor, Dorman. While the other socialist candidates lost by no more than thirty votes.³⁸ Dorman held the office of street commissioner and faced many of the same pressures

that LeSueur had encountered while he was working as a minority member. Dorman found little support for his racialist proposals; the issues for which the socialists had campaigned were brought before the Commission and defeated. Dorman took offense at these defeats and often spoke out, specifically when his proposal for a police patron was defeated.³⁹ Dorman also attacked what he considered to be lax behavior by Police Commissioner W.S. Shaw and City Attorney George McGee in enforcing warrants against violations of the city ordinances.⁴⁰ But it was not these and other minor disagreements that cost Dorman his position on the City Commission. Trouble came in the summer of 1913 when Dorman and other local socialists became involved in the free speech riots which followed the appearance of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organizers who came to Minot on July 25 to organize harvest workers. According to the Fargo Forum, James J. Cannon, an IWW organizer, lent "J. A. Law and Jack Allen to Minot from Minneapolis in response to a call from Socialists"⁴¹ The effort was part of a wide and quiet campaign to organize the harvest hands of the northwest; and according to Cannon, Minot was an important recruiting center.⁴² The IWW was considerably more radical than the large unions and its preamble called for a day when "workers of the world organize as a class, take possession and abolish the wage system."⁴³

The effort in the summer of 1913 was to be, according to Cannon, "more extensive and systematic than ever before. Camp delegates and volunteer organizers are in almost every town, camp and jungle with authority to initiate members and to line them up for higher wages than ever paid before."⁴⁴ IWW organization tactics antagonized many of the local population; instead of renting halls or running local ads, the organizers often spoke out on street corners. In such situations the speakers were open to abuse, verbal or otherwise, often resulting in conflicts. The IWW desired to organize the

harvest workers before the fall cutting. Neither farmers nor business people, however, wanted their workers organized. The socialists were thus forced into taking a stand that could eventually damage the party whichever group they supported. If the socialists failed to support the IWW, they would appear hypocritical and afraid of following their principles; but if they did support them, they would clearly antagonize many people in the city and on surrounding farms.

The NDSP eventually sided with the IWW in the controversy. City authorities and businessmen used this support of the IWW to arouse the population, especially the farmers, against the socialists. The NDSP had shown surprising strength in Ward County, especially Minot. In taking the side of the organizers, the Socialist party was forced into a position that was not popular. Opponents painted the socialists as anti-farmer, even though their platforms had stressed agrarian reform.

Rumors of a recall movement aimed at Dorman spread throughout the city. On August 11, 1913, the Minot Optic reported that Dorman was about to be recalled because of his role in the free speech riot. This was soon more than a rumor, for on August 16 a petition was being circulated for Dorman's recall.⁴⁵ In a letter to The Iconoclast Dorman admitted to the fact that a petition was being circulated on the grounds of "general incompetency."⁴⁶

Soon, however, petitions began to circulate calling for the recall of President Davis, Police Commissioner Shaw, and Police Magistrate Lynch. The charge against them was the alleged misuse of authority during the controversy.⁴⁷ At the September 8 meeting of the City Commission, Dorman's recall petition was accepted; all others were rejected due to insufficient numbers of signatures. However, the other three petitions were accepted five days later when enough signatures were accumulated. Thus a recall election

for all four posts was scheduled for October 18, leaving a month for a very heated campaign.⁴⁸

The socialists put up candidates for all four contested posts; Dorman ran again for his position. The other Socialist candidates included the local secretary for Minot, Edward M. Eisale, Charles D. Kelso, and the well-known Arthur LeSueur.⁴⁹ The recall election centered on the free speech controversy. The socialists charged city authorities with inhuman action in their handling of the free speech confrontation. In an article on the front page of The Iconoclast, the socialists charged their opponents with violating laws as irresponsible officers, convicting men even though innocent, and of being tools of the Consumers Power Company.⁵⁰

The opponents of the socialists also relived the free speech crisis throughout the campaign with help from the local newspapers. Critics accused the socialists of fermenting the crisis and predicted that socialist victories would bring more of the same. The Minot Daily Optic charged LeSueur with inviting the IWW organizers to Minot and aiding their attempts to disrupt the city.⁵¹

The result of the election was a major defeat for the Socialists, as all four candidates were defeated.⁵² The recall election of 1913 indicated that even in the city from which they drew their strongest support, the Socialists were definitely a minority party. In the previous election the Socialists had won one post and were within striking distance of others. But the city was now aroused; the local socialists were seen in a new light, tainted with their association with the IWW and having been arrested and jailed in the subsequent free speech crisis. The socialists of Minot had done the most devastating thing possible for a minority to do; they had aroused the majority.

The free speech riots and the recall elections that followed alienated a large percentage of the local population. Those in the city who had taken little notice before now associated socialists with radical organizers and riots. The large farm population which in the past may have looked favorably on the socialists' reforms, now saw them as agents of the IWW and organizers of farmhands. They had, in the public mind, become the farmers' enemies. The party was unable to recover from this reversal.⁵³ The free speech crisis did not spell the end of the NDSP, but it did show the party's limitations.

Socialist party membership began to decline.⁵⁴ The leadership hoped to reverse this trend through speaking tours of local and national socialists. One such speaker was Emile Seidel, ex-mayor of Milwaukee and the Socialist party vice-presidential candidate in 1912. The speaking tour was different in that he addressed crowds in English or German.⁵⁵ Although the NDSP ran in the state primaries for the first time in 1914, the returns were disappointing. The general elections did not turn out much better when compared to expectations. The 1914 election showed no sign of growth; in fact a slight decline was evident statewide, along with a sharp decline in Ward County.⁵⁶ Despite this loss of support in Ward County, an increase of the socialist vote did occur in several other western counties.⁵⁷ The new support was due to the vigor that the new party secretary injected into organizing the state. Under the leadership of Henry G. Teigan, party organization was stepped up and new techniques employed. In addition to the use of The Iconoclast and sponsoring speaking tours, the party put on several plays in an effort to educate as well as entertain. For example, "Lusk to Dawn" detailed the hard times of the Barclay family and the beliefs of their daughter who became the embodiment of the IWW and woman's suffrage. The play ended with the establishment of a

cooperative commonwealth and Arthur LeSueur as the president of the United States.⁵⁸

The creation of the Organization Department under the control of Arthur C. Townley gave the party a new recruiting arm in 1914. (See Appendix 1-2, for example) Townley's organizational efforts proved to be very successful. The idea for the Organization Department originated with Townley while he was walking across the wilderness of Billings County.⁵⁹ It occurred to him that it would be infinitely better to have a means by which the field worker could get to the people even though it necessitated a small sacrifice by a few good socialists. The Organization Department was to be attached to the NDSP, under the control of the executive committee, and was in charge of all the work done in the local districts. The plan was to raise funds in each district to support a local organizer who would be guaranteed \$3.00 per day, expenses, and a Ford automobile. As of September 1914, organizers included A. E. Bowen, Beecher Moore, and Townley.⁶⁰ The Iconoclast voiced the optimism of the party, predicting that "Every house in North Dakota is to have an organization automobile stop before it at least once before 1916."⁶¹

Under Townley's leadership the importance of the Organization Department grew and so did his position in the party. The Organization Department was a very successful part of the socialist movement in North Dakota. As of December 1, 1914, there were five organized districts, and party assets included five automobiles, valued at \$2,075, and about \$8,000 in accounts receivable, the balance due on pledges. The financial report of the Department showed total resources of \$14,058.71.⁶²

Opposition to Townley, however, developed within the party. Orthodox socialists who differed on the basis of philosophy disagreed with the Department's emphasis on the farm question to the exclusion of labor problems.

Others feared that the Organization Department was becoming too powerful and that the Department was being used to organize the NPL within the Socialist party.⁶³ The opposition began its assault by trying to curb the Department's work. In a meeting held on December 8, 1914, a motion was carried that all organizational work be discontinued on December 25 until spring.⁶⁴ At the NDSP meeting on December 15 it was moved that the head of the Organization Department "be instructed to release organizers Moore, Townley, J. Y. Richardson and Cooper until further notice."⁶⁵ Eugene Teutsch, who was anti-Townley and had seconded the motion to dismiss him as an organizer, declared that Townley, "Ignoring orders, he jumped out and began organizing another county and bought another auto. When this became known he was called in and separated from the payroll. That effectively stopped the Nonpartisan League plan of organization within the Socialist Party."⁶⁶

However, this did not end Townley's relationship with the NDSP. The last fight over the Organization Department took place at the state committee meeting in Minot on January 26 and 27, 1915. Townley and others, including H. G. Teigen, who agreed with the organizational efforts, attempted to control the meeting.⁶⁷ When the state executive committee met to discuss the Organizational Department, Teutsch related that Townley "was stopped by the executive committee as being dangerous and not worthy of Socialists."⁶⁸ Townley attempted to change the status of the Organization Department but the motion was defeated four times. In Teutsch's account, "This quadruple defeat of the Townley gang marks the birth of the present Nonpartisan Political League. Townley discovered he could not control the Socialist Party in this particular. From then on their main work has been outside of the Socialist Party."⁶⁹

When Townley's plan was defeated in the state executive committee, he left the NDSP. Townley may or may not have left due to his defeat over the control of the Organization Department, but there were clearly other reasons as well. Despite the fact that he had joined and worked for the NDSP, leaving was not that difficult for Townley, who had come to view the NDSP as a conservative organization. He was not a long-standing member and was a political realist who could see his difficult position within the party. Not only was the NDSP a minor party, but also Townley had lost what power he had built in his creation, the Organization Department. His plans for his own political organization, the NPL, more than likely played a key role in his departure.

The Organization Department had been very successful under Townley's leadership. It was this success, historian Robert L. Marlan believes, that helped persuade many members of the NDSP to oppose the Department and Townley. Many members felt the progress the Department had made "was in essence dishonest, and less altruistically that the tail would be seen wagging the dog."⁷⁰ The Organization Department continued under the leadership of Teigan but did not continue the success that it had under Townley. Townley's new creation, the NPL, cut into the NDSP membership as it began its own organizing efforts.

Many factors contributed to the demise of the NDSP. The free speech crisis was the first step in the party's decline, cutting into the most important region of socialist support. The struggle over the Organization Department eventually led to the most important reason for the NDSP demise--A. C. Townley's departure. The days of the NDSP can be numbered from the time Townley left and formed the NPL. The Socialist party could not maintain the success of the Organization Department. Instead, Townley translated his

successful methods and the NDSP farm-reform platform into the more successful NPL.

The NPL, however, owed a great deal to the NDSP, most specifically the Organization Department. It was while working for the socialists that Townley was allowed to develop the methods that he would later use to make the NPL a success. Many within the party soon joined the NPL. In the first months of co-existence the NDSP State Secretary Teigan stated "that there is NO connection whatever between the two organizations. The Socialist Party accepts no responsibility for the merits or demerits of the 'league.'"⁷¹ The NPL became the major issue facing the socialists over the next few months, a debate within the NDSP most visible through The Iconoclast.

When A. E. Bowen, past party candidate and prominent contributor to The Iconoclast, joined Townley, members of the executive meeting decided to print his letter of departure in the paper.⁷² He gave as his reason a desire to do good for all humanity, which he felt was impossible to do within the Socialist party. Bowen also hinted that he would join forces with "those men in all parties who desire real progress (and no party has a monopoly on these men) to stand together in favor of a program that shall [be] specific in character and that would appeal to all parties."⁷³ The ranks of the NDSP soon suffered the consequences of this call as scores of the socialists within the state responded, including the editors of The Iconoclast.

In mid-March editorship of the The Iconoclast changed hands, as Henry Teigan, editor and manager, and J. Arthur Williams, editorial writer, left. Teigan stated that he enjoyed keeping the "idol smasher" on the firing line but was gratified to be relieved of the work. He hoped that readers realized that any shortcomings found in past management and editing could be in part "charged to the fact that the paper has for considerable time, been the object

of charity. Neither Williams nor I have received any pay for the energy expended, and the time devoted to this work had to be 'stolen' from that which should have been devoted to our regular work."⁷⁴ At an executive meeting on February 28, 1915, O. H. Thomson was hired as managing editor at a salary of one-hundred dollars per month beginning April 1st. The departing Teigan welcomed Thomson as "a man of ability, experience and education and will bring to The Iconoclast the best that is in him."⁷⁵

The first direct mention of the NPL in The Iconoclast was on April 9, 1915. In a short declaration State Secretary Teigan informed "the public that there is NO connection whatever between the two organizations. The Socialist Party accepts no responsibility for the merits or demerits of the League."⁷⁶ The following week's editorial restated that no connection existed between the Socialist party and the NPL, the "so-called nonpartisan organization" alleged to be forming in the state. Furthermore, it informed readers that the NPL was not even a political organization and could not be considered a serious political movement by any real socialist. It advised readers to sit tight and not be fooled by shortcuts.⁷⁷

The question of whether or not the socialists should support the NPL was discussed in opposing articles placed on the front page in the September 24 issue. The article that supported the NPL movement was written by someone identified as J. Smith who believe that "it was ridiculous to think that the N.P.L. will undermine the party. . . ."⁷⁸ He favored legislation that would help advance the socialist program, including the NPL. In his support of League activities, he pointed out that farmers were willing to listen to socialism if one left off the label: "Lets get results no matter how, any action is better than inert theory."⁷⁹

N. M. Grefshein wrote the opposition viewpoint in an article entitled "A Legalized Bull-Head Party". He maintained that the Socialist party should not allow itself to sponsor a particular reform or social legislation because immediate demands are of no consequence: "The socialist party has been a revolutionary party; and it must remain such if it shall not go the way of other reform parties, to oblivion. It must not allow itself to become [sic] sponsor for some reform or other; or for some special class legislation, not even if that class legislation purports to be in the interest of some branch of the working class."⁸⁰ Grefshein held that class legislation for the farmers would not emancipate the working class or benefit farmers: "The Socialist party stands for the little the 'League' pretends to work for and a lot more—to do away with all profit, interest and rent, and not simply to cut the profit of some one or two middle men or business interests."⁸¹ Grefshein remained critical. In "The League's Work is Futile" he purported to show that the League's plan for public ownership was without value as well as far below the final goal of the Socialist party.⁸²

Under Thomson however, the paper took a more favorable position on the NPL. The best example of this was a Thomson editorial that countered a Fargo Forum editorial which labeled the NPL as a "six dollar sucker club". Thomson disclaimed official party recognition, "But if the farmers want to effect such an organization they certainly have our permission."⁸³ Thomson commented that other groups within the state were organized for economic and political advantage—such as lawyers, bankers, and politicians—without Forum approval. Why not the farmers? Thomson's sympathies were evident in his conclusion: "We repent, that while we are not pleading the cause of the Non-Partisan League, yet it is a joy to see the worms squirm and we calmly sit back and yell, 'Sick'ens, Tige."⁸⁴ Thomson's position was made even clearer when he

shortly joined the NPL, resigning as editor at the executive meeting on August 1, 1915.⁸⁵

Thomason served as a lecturer, organizer, and writer for the NPL. O. M. Thomason's career within the NPL was not without its troubles. According to J. D. Bacon's pamphlet published in 1918, "A WARNING TO THE FARMER AGAINST TOWNLEYISM AS EXPLOITED IN NORTH DAKOTA," Townley fired Thomason in 1916 and the League published a warning to farmers to avoid him. Thomason briefly attempted to start his own "League" in South Dakota but before too long he rejoined the Townley forces. Thomason had more trouble within the NPL when he joined a minor revolt against Townley's one-man rule of the League. The letter of protest, written by Joe Gilbert and signed by fifteen members, included Thomason. The "protest and recommendation" contended that the time was right within the NPL for greater democracy. Nothing came out of the protest and Thomason soon left the League.⁸⁶

When Thomason defected to the NPL, Teigan resumed control of The Iconoclast. The NPL continued to be a topic of conversation. A Teigan editorial confronted the question of whether or not it was wrong to work for immediate demands and stated that the program of the League "has in the past had the endorsement of the Socialist Party. All the propositions of the N.P.L. can be found in the immediate demands of the Socialist platform."⁸⁷ Criticism by several comrades that the program would not accomplish emancipation of the working class and thus was not worthy of socialist support led to the following statement: "We are not going to enter into a defense of the League. Judging from reports, it would appear that it is in no need of assistance. The only point we wish to call attention to is this: Has a Socialist the right to work for anything less than the overthrow of the system?"⁸⁸ The answer, according to the editorial was "yes", as evidenced by

their own platform.⁸⁹ However, despite this apparent editorial position, the next issue of the paper included a critical article by Grefsheim, "Why the 'League' Will Fail."⁹⁰

LeSueur contributed several articles which discussed the relationship between the NPL and the NDSP. LeSueur recognized that the NPL would appeal to many socialists, or alleged socialists, but contended that even if victorious, it would still be a class victory, and while classes last, capitalism lasts. LeSueur conceded that some good educational work was being done by the League and recommended that the party organize while they stirred the waters. LeSueur believed that the Socialist party was not yet strong enough to form an opposition party, and that ought not to be its function: "The Nonpartisan League will doubtless help to fill this notch. The true function of the Socialist party should be to stand out in front as a revolutionary educational organization, leading the way to economic emancipation and real fraternity and brotherhood."⁹¹ According to LeSueur those who worried about losing membership to the NPL were worrying "about the loss of something which they never had," and that "real, red-blooded Socialists of North Dakota spend no time in fighting the League or worrying about it."⁹²

State Secretary and editor, Henry Teigan, a political realist who favored the moderate NPL policies, used his strength within the NDSP to encourage this path. But he hoped the Socialist party would not be destroyed, preferring to promote cooperation within the two organizations. To accomplish this the party had to change its rules that prohibited members from working for another political organization. The opening came at the state convention in Minot on February 4-6, 1916. Not all the NDSP membership favored this opportunity, and at the convention Henry R. Martinson moved that membership in the NPL

constitute fusion with another political organization.⁹³ The motion failed, much to the delight of those wishing fusion. Teigan's editorial report on the convention showed his pleasure as well, remarking that the old, narrow, self-satisfied attitude that characterized previous conventions had been absent:

True, there were those who felt that a rigid, iron-clad role for the conduct of the membership was the only safe policy to be pursued. On the other hand, the vast majority took a far more liberal view, and held to the position that it will prove the part of wisdom to make war on all other elements associated with us in the struggle against Capitalism. This was clearly evidenced by the vote on the motion to declare membership in the Non-partisan League 'fusion.' After having discussed the League in its relation to the Socialist Party pro and con for several days, the convention, at the last session, went on record opposing the idea of declaring Socialist who had joined the League, heretics.⁹⁴

The convention provided the change needed to allow the socialist membership "greater freedom in thought and action than is their privilege at the present time."⁹⁵

Teigan quickly took advantage of this change and resigned as NDSP's state secretary to become secretary of the NPL. He gave as his reason the inability to work with the majority element of the party: "Feeling that the Party Organization can better be served by another more in harmony with the views of the dominating element of the Organization, I hereby tender my resignation" as State Secretary and editor of The Iconoclast.⁹⁶

Teigan helped to place Martinson, an opponent of the NPL, into office as acting state secretary and editor of The Iconoclast, believing it would help define the difference between the two organizations. According to Martinson, his appointment was to insure that whoever edited the paper "would not hesitate to attack the League in order to let the good people know that there was no connection between the two. To what extent the good people were fooled is a question; as a matter of fact, they called the Leaguers worse names

(Bolsheviks, home destroyers, free lovers, etc.) than they had ever called the socialists."⁹⁷ Martinson was also available for the position, no small factor as there was already a large void of personnel due to the rapid departure of its members to the NPL.

It was understandable that the socialist executive committee picked an avowed left winger to carry on for the socialist party, to head the State party as secretary and to edit the Iconoclast. They must find someone who would be really recognized as a true socialist, one who would not go over to the League, at least not to soon, and someone who would at least publicly, fight the newly-organized monster which had destroyed the Socialist Party.⁹⁸

The Iconoclast under Martinson continued to be a vehicle for debate between those who remained and those who departed the NDSP. The last issue of the The Iconoclast included the Martinson editorial "Divided We Fall," which admitted trouble within the NDSP. Placing some of the blame upon itself: "Perhaps the Socialist Party has not paid enough attention to that very necessary class of producers--the farmer." Prophetically it ended, "We are doomed to failure, as has been the case in the past."⁹⁹

The election of 1915 was a dramatic turning point in North Dakota history, for in this election the NPL triumphed for the first. NDSP candidates dropped drastically in voter support. The leadership of the NDSP jumped to the NPL: Bowen, a past Socialist candidate for governor; Teigan, the past state secretary; and LeSueur.

By the end of 1917 almost all of the socialist support had gone over to the NPL. The only prominent member who seemingly did not join was Henry Martinson. Despite all efforts to keep the party alive, the end was just around the corner when The Iconoclast folded in mid-1916. Even Martinson was talked into working for the NPL. In the 1918 election the party was placed on the primary ballot even though it had no candidates. Some die-hards voted for the socialists.¹⁰³ The gesture was minimal, and the NDSP died, as Townley and

the NPL grabbed control of the state and initiated its program of "state socialism" during the legislative session of 1919.

CHAPTER 1 ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER 2

THE ICONOCLAST

HISTORY, FORMAT, AND ROLE

In North Dakota the vehicle for the propagation of the socialist cause was the radical weekly newspaper, The Iconoclast. First published at Minot in 1912, The Iconoclast tried to further the socialist movement and the NDSP until it folded in 1916. It was published every Friday at a cost per year of \$1.00 in the United States, \$1.50 in Canada. The Iconoclast was generally four pages long, although it did go to six and even eight pages for brief stretches of time. The first editor and the individual responsible for the paper's title was J. M. Near, who left in August, 1913 in the midst of the free speech crisis. Henry Teigan, state secretary of the NDSP, took over the position and held it until 1916, except for a brief interruption in 1915 (March through August) when O. M. Thomason was in charge. Henry Martinson was given the editor's job along with the position of state secretary in February, 1916 when Teigan resigned both positions to join the NPL. Five months later the paper closed its doors.

Initially the paper was a privately owned enterprise in the hands of H. E. Thompson, E. J. Peple, Harry Bray, and Arthur LeSueur, the latter of whom had controlling interest.¹ In 1914 The Iconoclast's ownership was transferred from the stockholders to the NDSP.² The change was announced on the front page of The Iconoclast on March 20, 1914, under the large capitalized heading:

ORGANIZATION

CO-OPERATION

EMANCIPATION

With this issue the ownership of the ICONOCLAST passes from its present owners into the hands of the Socialist Party of North

Dakota, to be owned and controlled by the membership. The transfer of the ownership carries with it a great deal of individual responsibility, and just to the extent that each member does his or her part will the Iconoclast be a power in the state for fighting the battles of the toilers and the establishing of a co-operative commonwealth. Then, as we learn the power of co-operation, backed by a clasconscious [sic] organization, we will move forward with an irresistible force that will crush the bulwarks of capitalism in our onward march to claim the world for the workers.

Ownership of The Iconoclast took another turn at the North Dakota Socialist state convention on January 4-6, 1916--a turn that forshadowed and mirrored the difficulties and demise of the NDSP. A motion was made to turn the paper back to the original owner, but instead the Rochdale plan, a reorganization proposal, was adopted. The plan called for the incorporation of the paper, obtaining a State charter, and the selling of shares.⁴ The executive committee announced that The Iconoclast was being reorganized into a stock company:

It is the wish of the Executive committee that stock be only sold to red card members if it is possible to sell enough in this way. This will leave the Iconoclast in the hands of Socialists, where it really belongs, and will do away with the possibility of the Iconoclast falling into hands that would use the paper for other purposes.

Later announcements in The Iconoclast reinforced the need for urgency. The former owner, Arthur LeSueur, stated that he would foreclose on his mortgage and take the paper back if the proposed stock company did not raise enough money to pay off all obligations.⁶ A week later the paper carried another call for support was carried along with a not-too-subtle disclaimer about the quality of the paper which "doesn't perhaps come up to our standards of what a Socialist paper should be but it is just as good as we can make it under the present circumstances."⁷

During the following weeks The Iconoclast published a list of those who had subscribed. The paper stated that although not as long as it had hoped,

this was a start.⁸ The response, however, remained small. Within a month a front-page article began with the following: "Socialistic publications have always had a hard struggle to exist in this country. Nearly all of them have been on the verge of bankruptcy most of the time."⁹ The paper explained such problems were caused by lack of support by rank-and-file socialists, increased war-time printing costs, and lack of capitalist advertisements. The paper emphasized the need for North Dakota socialists to support its effort:

Perhaps this majority does not deem the paper of enough value to warrant their support. If this is the case further effort on the part of the few is, of course futile. It would be foolish to try and force something upon the majority of the membership that they do not want.¹⁰

The paper hoped that even if publication ceased, the NDSP office would continue to function and that North Dakota socialism would not die.¹¹

The appeal for subscriptions failed and the paper ceased publication on July 21, 1916. The end came with no fanfare. The last issue carried a notice that apologized for the poor condition of the paper, explaining, "We are trying to keep the paper 'legal' with as little exposure as possible, hence the rather dubious appearance of the same."¹² Although the paper had held that its death would not mean the end of the NDSP, it did in fact mirror the reality of the demise of the Socialists as a political party in North Dakota.

The changes in ownership of the paper had very little effect on The Iconoclast's format or content. While in privately held hands prior to 1914, a statement on the editorial page explained:

This paper is NOT the organ of the Socialist Party, and that party is not responsible for the views, or opinions expressed herein. The Iconoclast simply expresses the views and opinions of the editor and contributors as they understand Socialism and the class struggle.

After the change in ownership the same statement ran without the "NOT." The Iconoclast generally maintained a fairly consistent viewpoint no matter who owned or worked the editorial controls. Differences in style, content, and tone changed only slightly depending upon who was the editor.¹⁴

The format of The Iconoclast remained fairly consistent throughout its brief history. The first two pages were generally devoted to socialist news, national and local, and editorials. The paper also entertained with humor and serialized novels and stories by authors such as Jack London and O. Henry. The Iconoclast also contained numerous features that were created to fulfill certain local needs, views, and goals.

The Iconoclast often relied on other publications such as the Coming Nation, Ripsaw, The Melting Pot, The Iron Molders Journal, and the Montana Socialist for important articles, interesting stories, illustrated cuts, cartoons, poems, and even fillers. In an issue in early 1912 The Iconoclast explained how it was able to use such sources in a reference to an illustration by Ryan Walker.

In our last weeks issue we forgot to give credit where credit was due for the cut we ran on the first page. We were able to give our readers the benefit of that masterpiece only through the courtesy of the Coming Nation, that great Socialist weekly magazine of Girard Kan. The Coming Nation makes no charge whatever for this and other cuts that we may run in the future (for which proper credit will be given) other than the cost of postage.

Many of the more interesting and visible examples of outside sources within The Iconoclast were these illustrations and political cartoons. The paper reproduced scores of such political cartoons; a particular favorite was Ryan Walker. (See Appendix 2-1) The quantity and quality of such external sources varied from issue to issue and editor to editor, but they furnished The Iconoclast with a variety of socialist statements.

Feature articles that were reprinted from other publications usually dealt with the mistreatment of the "masses." Two examples, concerning West Virginia and Mexico, illustrate this approach. Charles Edward Russell in The Coming Nation reported on a labor dispute in West Virginia. Under the headline "MR. MORTON HAS SPORT Shooting Unarmed Minors," he told about one incident in the labor dispute from which Russell asked the reader to judge the rest of the struggle's history.¹⁶

That one incident involved use of a heavily steel-plated car, equipped with gatling guns, that swept through the town, opening fire at the houses and tents, killing one man, and wounding a woman. Russell related how a Mr. Morton had brought along his own trusty rifle for the purpose of sport and that afterwards Morton boasted of his role in the shootings, expressing regret only that as far as he knew he had not brought anyone down.¹⁷

According to Russell, the reason that most readers never heard of such incidents was that most newspapers in America took their information from the Associated Press. The AP, Russell alleged, got its information from only one of the men who were terrorizing the miners. Russell explained that readers had to depend on magazines such as the Coming Nation because: "The Associated Press and your daily newspapers--why do you ever for a moment believe either?"¹⁸ The Iconoclast agreed, labeling the AP as prostitutes.¹⁹

In the issue of March 14, 1913, Mexico was a centerpiece of the front page. A cartoon entitled "The Cause of Mexico's Misery," from The Helting Pot showed a priest riding a peasant with a whip in his hand. Accompanying the cartoon was an article entitled "Cause of Mexico's Misery- Priest and Capitalist," which explained the situation and the cartoon:

Do you ask what is the matter with Mexico, why are revolts continually taking place there? The picture here reproduced tells the tale. The Mexican working class--the peons--are merely

afflicted with the world's two great monstrosities--The Plunderbund and the Priesthood.

Although The Iconoclast sometimes used material that was in a lighter vein, most of the articles that were reprinted from other publications were similar in message to those on West Virginia and Mexico. Even fiction carried a social message. For example, The Iconoclast gained the rights to serialize a Jack London story entitled "The Absymal Brute," a story that dealt with the cruel world of boxing and its effect on man's nature.²¹

The newspaper also picked up serialized articles from other sources that dealt with larger issues. The Iconoclast announced one such feature with great fanfare on November 6, 1914: "Commencing next week the Iconoclast will run one of the clearest and most concise descriptions of the modern bank graft in this country yet published in a North Dakota publication."²² The manuscript of "Morgan and the Money Monoply" by Fred Hurst was acquired through happy chance and quick action by National Committeeman LeSueur. Announcing it as the most important series that it had ever printed. The Iconoclast promised to take the readers step-by-step through violations of the law by congress and presidents to bolster the power of the bankers. The series ran for nineteen installments and the paper suggested that readers "cut them out from the very first."²³

Although the paper was dependent upon national publications for most national stories, it ran several features of a local nature. Some features were intended to boost circulation or to serve the needs of readers. Some were written more specifically to present a vision that was expected from a socialist publication, either for educational or propaganda purposes.

"The Look-Out," a column written by the state secretary of the Socialist party in North Dakota, started in 1912 in an arrangement between The Iconoclast editor, J. M. Near, and current state secretary, H. E. Thompson, to

publish reports of that office.²⁴ (For an example see Appendix 2-2) "The Look-Out" was filled with various announcements, statements of party business, schedules of socialist speaking dates, opinions, and calls for support. In the first issue of The Iconoclast, "The Look-out" featured several announcements along with a plea for support of the state's socialist newspapers: the North Dakota Call, The Iconoclast, and The McGregor Sentinel.²⁵

"The Look-Out" remained a feature until the last months of publication. The column became a valuable tool of the state secretary in providing a platform for party positions. The column served as an invaluable link between The Iconoclast and the state's socialist movement. Another column that served a similar function for announcements and party business was "At The Front," which was first written by Arthur Williams and later by Henry Teigan. [For an example see Appendix 2-3] The column often featured party business and reports about socialist locals. For example:

GRAND FORKS: Big anti-famine meeting on the 9th preceded by a distribution of two thousand leaflets, "Starve the War and Feed America". Organization was the key-note of the rally, and from now on organization is going to be the main topic of all meetings. Watch the Forks Local!²⁶

In addition to such services the column provided a forum from which the authors praised efforts such as: "That man Todd at Williston must be a human dynamo. Keep it up, comrade, we only wish we had more of the Todd tribe in our state organization." The writer also called for more support: "Hardly fifty percent of the party membership in North Dakota take the Iconoclast. Now that this is a party owned paper measures should be taken by each local to put every member on its mailing lists. Make the Iconoclast part of the regular order of business next meeting night--and every meeting thereafter."²⁷ Arthur Williams slipped in his own opinions, as evident in the following

comment: "A river in Brazil is to be named Roosevelt. Doubtless it has a mouth bigger than its head."²⁸

Other short-lived local columns included "Workers of the Week," the "Grand Forks" column, "Farmers Exchange," and the "Open Forum." "Workers of the Week," which Hal Thompson wrote, featured reports and comments on the "workers" who were laboring for the socialist cause within the state. [For an example see Appendix 2-3] The column carried reports that covered the success of locals and admissions such as: "Pay little interest to socialism and you will pay much interest under Capitalism."²⁹ The column was suspended on March 6, 1914, with the following announcement: "This will be the last appearance of the 'Workers of the Week' column, the writer having severed his connection with our well-beloved paper. The field it has attempted to cover will be amply cared for in the 'Look-Out' and other departments."³⁰

The "Grand Forks" column ran briefly in 1913-1914. It may have been an attempt to increase circulation, creating another market for the newspaper and showing that the socialist movement was not just a local phenomenon in the northwestern part of the state. On November 21, 1913, The Iconoclast announced that a new department "will be conducted by a bunch of Grand Forks 'live wires' who will remove the whitewash from several civic sins. The love of justice inspires them to discuss questions of public interest from a working class point of view."³¹ It also announced that a special edition of two-thousand copies would be circulated in Grand Forks. The column was a hodgepodge of comments on local politics and officials that were laced with calls for support, announcements, and editorial comments.³²

The Iconoclast attempted to create reader interest through the "Farmers Exchange," a column that was free for farmers:

Our proposition is this: We propose to give to our readers from this date a free column, and more if necessary, in which to discuss farming and farm finances, politics, township management, road building, and any other topics of concern to the farmers of North Dakota. If you have anything to exchange, no matter what it is, send in a list of what you have and what you want to exchange for.

Although the column lasted only a short time, it did seem to show an active effort to interest and involve the farm community in the newspaper and socialist circles. The column featured typical want ads for the sale of farm machinery, livestock, feed, and land, and for farm hands.³⁴ The column, however, did not discuss farm issues. That became the responsibility of the "Open Forum."

The column "Open Forum," originated at a meeting of the state committee in Minot on January 26 and 27, 1915. The Iconoclast was an important topic of discussion which included criticism as well as recommendations. "A lively discussion followed, after which it was moved by Comrade Anderson and seconded by Huss that an open forum be given to the Iconoclast for signed articles."³⁵ The motion was carried and the first "Open Forum" appeared February 26, 1915:

Articles appearing in this department are the views and opinions of the writer and neither the Socialist Party nor the Editor assumes any responsibility for same. All articles must be signed by the writer, free from personalities, and short. 'Brevity is³⁶ the soul of wit.' Be brief and give the other fellow a chance.

The "Open Forum" became a centerpiece for The Iconoclast during the NDSP's most difficult time, its struggle to survive and combat the rival NPL. The column provided a place where party members could voice their own views on the struggle, often counter-attacking each other. An early discussion in the "Open Forum" centered on the organizational efforts of the Non-Partisan Political Organization League. An early entry entitled "An Impolite Message on Party Folly," published in the "Open Forum," was by L.N. Sheldon. He believed that the NPL was folly and that socialists should not work outside of

the traditional Socialist party. Sheldon attacked those who had left the NDSP to join the NPL, specifically A. E. Bowen. "In chasing 'new things,' or old things in a new dress, Bowen is but sustaining his reputation and this new harlotry is not surprising to old acquaintances."³⁷ Those socialists who went before the people advocating any program other than the socialist program, according to Sheldon, did so with a lie on their lips and deceit in their heart.³⁸

The receipt of an application and program for the NPL by D. I. Todd prompted another "Open Forum" selection printed the following week. (Todd, a county organizer still working for the NDSP, remained one of the diehards even beyond the party's demise.) Todd described the NPL's program, organization, and by-laws. On "the face of it," Todd admitted, it looked like a commendable enterprise. Todd noticed that among the names of officers, organizers, and references were a number of men who had been connected with the Socialist party and possibly still were:³⁹

But I see nothing in it that justifies me in joining it nor lending my influence to it in any way. As a member of the Socialist Party I am already in an organization pledged to support for office men who will work unceasingly for legislation that will stop the₄₀ robbery of the producers by not only middlemen but all pirates.

Todd recognized that to those well-meaning farmers who had not joined the Socialist party, the NPL might look like a "good" thing. However, Todd pointed out that the dues were twice that of the Socialist party "and it surely does not possess the splendid machinery of that party for controlling and guiding the work of its officers."⁴¹ The whole scheme looked to Todd like an "effort of a few people to avoid the restrictions of the Socialist Party and make a living out of the funds raised for organizing it."⁴² According to Todd, the League was not founded on a secure base and soon would be exhausted

when the promoters looked for greener pastures. He predicted, "If the whole thing lasts a year, I shall be greatly surprised."⁴³

Even if the whole scheme worked, Todd believed that it would mean more votes for socialist candidates because neither party could be depended upon to endorse the NPL program. "Thus I contend no Socialist has anything to gain by joining the Non-Partisan League. If he has \$6.00 to spare let him send it to the Iconoclast" for subscriptions which he could sell and get his money back along with the "satisfaction of knowing he helped the cause of real education and progress."⁴⁴ Todd's entry on May 7, 1915, was not the first nor the last to discuss the NPL within the "Open Forum." Throughout the coming months a great deal of public disagreement appeared, especially as the NDSP declined while the NPL ranks swelled, including ex-leaders of the Socialist party.

The "Open Forum" also printed letters and articles sent in by those who had departed the Socialist party. The "Open Forum" was at times truly open, with members and ex-members attacking each other through The Iconoclast in interesting, informative, and often entertaining style. Although most of the letters sent to the "Open Forum" were against the NPL, some pro-NPL entries responding to attacks, often personal, were printed.

One of the more dramatic letters published in the "Open Forum" was sent in by Eugene Teutsch in May of 1916 and was entitled "Down with the 'Yellows.'" In harsh, extremely critical language, Teutsch gave his account of the birth and rise of the NPL. "Sometimes I feel that there is no adjective in the English language strong enough to apply to myself and my comrades for letting men of the Townley stripe deride us of our senses to the extent of allowing our organization to be used as a stepping stone to deceive and defraud our fellow men."⁴⁵ Teutsch then proceeded to try to find the words and denounced not only Townley but also the many other past members of the NDSP who joined

the NPL, including Thomason, Dorman, Teigan, Youmans and Durocher. Teutsch charged all of them with various offenses, including violating the party pledge, fraud, deception, and the falsification of records. Some of the strongest language he reserved for O. M. Thomason, "a typical mental humbug, of the ex-priest variety," and for Townley, whose great aim in life according to Teutsch, then and now, was to get money.⁴⁶

Teutsch's attack on Townley and the others did not go unanswered. The following week the "Open Forum" contained a reply by one of those men, L. L. Griffith, countering not only the attacks by Teutsch but also slighting the management of The Iconoclast: "In view of the fact that the Iconoclast is now about to pass in its checks, it seems a pity that it should wind up with a tirade of abuse against those who have helped to make it the power that it has been for several years in this State."⁴⁷ Griffith concluded by stating that it was sad that all the good work done in the past by the Socialist party could be undone through the misuse of the paper's columns while it was on its last legs.⁴⁸ Durocher also replied to Teutsch's remarks, urging "self-respecting Socialists to shun you the same as they do all things that have a bad odor."⁴⁹ Grefshein was not silent during these months either, contributing a series of letters to the "Open Forum" entitled "Soft Soap No. 1--Introduction, Soft Soap No. 2--Nominating Convention, Soft Soap No. 3--Kraabel Nomination."⁵⁰

The "Open Forum" was a unique column that allowed a wide variety of opinions. Both proponents and opponents of the NDSP expressed their views openly and candidly. While the pages of daily papers such as the Grand Forks Herald refused to print viewpoints that dissented from their own stands, The Iconoclast opened this column to all comers.

Although the The Iconoclast's columns and articles were designed to advance the socialist movement through persuasion, propaganda, and polemics, the paper viewed itself as an educational instrument, as an "explainer" of the socialist position. It often ran what it considered to be educational articles that national figures within the socialist movement had written. Eugene V. Debs, leader and perennial presidential candidate of the Socialist party; provided several informative pieces. For example, Debs wrote "Why Education Must Be Free," a personal view on the importance of education in the development of the mind and its role in the search for true happiness and freedom for a people. According to Debs, "Education has been zealously guarded by the privileged parasites who have ruled in every age and nation since society was first organized, and whose salvation as a class depends upon keeping their subjects in their mental childhood."⁵¹ He detailed the long ongoing struggle for power in education and encouraged the masses to take control of education from the ruling class, thus obtaining the essential means of their emancipation. The public schools, according to Debs, were not truly free but were controlled by the same capitalists who controlled the government. On a more personal note Debs lamented that public schools would not allow a social revolutionist to address their students. Debs related how a board of trustees at a leading state university had denied the request of the students and faculty for him to speak. He charged that the university allowed "upholders of the ruling class" to speak out but not the "man or woman who speaks for the working class."⁵² Debs called for the workers to own and run their own schools and colleges where they could learn the truth, the whole truth without any distortions. His answer was the People's College, a free institute and "the real beginning of free education among the workers."⁵³

The People's College was the creation of leading socialists including Debs who served as chancellor and Arthur LeSueur of Minot who was vice-president. The institute, located in Fort Scott, Kansas, offered workers a year's course in "Plain English." The college offered correspondence study through which students could work at home at their own pace. The college advertised in many publications including The Iconoclast.⁵⁴

North Dakota socialists, too, used The Iconoclast as an educational vehicle. A. E. Bowen, candidate for the NDSP and future co-founder of the NPL, wrote a series of articles, "The Socialist Platform," which ran from November 29, 1912 until April 11, 1913. In the first installment he stated his intent clearly:

The object of these articles is to fill a long felt need in Socialist propaganda, namely, a work which will explain and defend the platform of the Socialist Party, and in doing so leave to others a discussion of those problems so often touched upon on Socialist books which have little if any bearing upon the subject up for discussion.⁵⁵

In multi-installments Bowen went on to discuss some of the fundamental ideas on the platform, hoping to help those who "because of past misinformation have been groping in the dark."⁵⁶ He explained in lengthy detail how the initiative; the recall; woman's suffrage; the abolition of the Senate; income inheritance, and corporation taxes; and the direct election of the vice-president and the president would improve the American political system and give the masses more control over government.⁵⁷ Bowen was especially eloquent in his discussion of Article IV, freedom of speech, press, and assembly. Bowen elucidated the importance of freedom of speech, press, and assembly; the "only remedy for any obnoxious or ridiculous political theory", he asserted "is to turn on the light. Let us have public discussions having for their object the education of the public and have confidence that in the

end the public will choose rationally between ideas that are sound and theories that are not."⁵⁸ In his concluding series of articles Bowen stressed that socialism was not primarily a political movement: "Socialism is an economic movement. Its very basic principles are protests against industrial despotism."⁵⁹ A political reform that assured a voice to the people, however, was essential to achieving economic change. Bowen also called for public ownership of industries that socialists believed to be within the public realm but reassured readers that private ownership on a personal level would be maintained. Bowen ended the series of articles with the following call for action:

Let us BE the state!
Let us CONTROL the MEANS [sic] of our own lives!
Let the people rule!

Perhaps the most important local contributor of educational articles was LeSueur. In an article that ran under the headlines "SCANDALOUS? OF COURSE," LeSueur discussed the horror that forty-thousand wives of North Dakota farmers felt when expectations were never fulfilled. The article discussed the difficult struggle that wives had to endure with seemingly little hope. However, the article ended with a message of hope that there was work for them to do, work that could not be destroyed by any capitalist system of robbery and extortion, work that would restore the spirits, regenerate the mind, and bring back the zest for life. That work was, of course, the cause of socialism, "the mightiest regenerating force on earth, the hope of the children, the hope of the world. TRY IT."⁶¹

In "Real Revolutionist" LeSueur wrote about a personal experience with students of the Hebrew Institute in Chicago. The Institute refused to allow a meeting in the interests of two men on trial for dynamiting the Times Building in Los Angeles. Resenting police prevention of the meeting, students went on strike in protest. LeSueur spoke briefly to the students and was deeply moved; "There, as never before, was impressed upon me the fact that revolutions are not fought upon battlefields, are not fought with torch and bomb,—are not fought, in other words, at all,—are not capable of being fought, as real revolution is the development of an intellectual status."⁶²

In "Political Honesty" LeSueur tried to help educate and explain the Washington lawmaking process and its importance in regards to the current senatorial debate over the Clayton Anti-Trust Bill, specifically stressing objections to "the amendment which legalized Labor Unions and Agricultural and Horticultural Associations."⁶³ In "Equity vs. Chamber of Commerce," LeSueur explained the equity movement and its merits, because the best co-operative ideas in the world have not created any successful co-operatives in the United States, at least none which had stood the test of time. LeSueur repeatedly stated that the fault was not with the idea but with the absence of proper

laws to make it successful. In referring to the North Dakota Equity Co-operative, LeSueur commented that its work was doing "much good, and we sincerely hope it will do more, but it is a make-shift only, and we must go further than that."⁶⁴

In 1914 The Iconoclast tried a new educational format, devoting entire issues to a particular topic. There were three such efforts, each covering a topic that the editors presumed would interest their readers. The Bankers Special Edition ran on March 6, 1914, with the banner, "LET THE NATION OWN THE BANKS," along with a political illustration. (See Appendix 2-4.) Articles on the front page included "Chunks of Prosperity for the Beach State Bank," "Bankers are Human," and "Sound Banking System?"⁶⁵ The Iconoclast took on the middleman with its August 14 edition, explaining:

THIS IS THE TWILIGHT OF THE MIDDLEMAN

The present European war that casts its gloom over the entire civilized world is the indirect result of the class known as the middleman. The great gun manufactures, steel corporations, and merchants are spending millions every year to capture and control the markets of the world, which is the direct cause leading to all war.

THE ICONOCLAST is not making a fight upon the middleman as an individual. But as an institution the middleman has got to go. This special edition has been issued for the purpose of pointing out the fearful price the people are paying for prolonging an economic system that necessitates a middleman. And we are more than satisfied to rest our case with the general public itself. The wider this issue is circulated the fairer that decision will be.⁶⁶

The lead article, written which Arthur LeSueur wrote, opened with the opinion that the middleman was making his last fight as a class. Another article by E. P. Johnson dealt with the relationship between small businessmen and the farmers. The front page included a poem by E. P. Johnson entitled "The Middle Man." Its first stanza shows the essence of the work.

The 'middle man' is a go-be-tween
He is the goat of a thing unseen.
The goat of a thing that can not rust
Be dead or buried among the just--
The thing that 'Teddy' once tried to bust.⁶⁷

The Farmers Special Edition reflected the newspaper's constant effort to reach the farmers. The headlining banner of the special edition stated that "Politicians tell the Farmers they are the backbone of this country, and then the Trusts proceed to pick the bones." The article that followed explained

one way in which this occurred, specifically in the amount of "One million forty thousand eighty-nine dollars forty-eight cents"-the amount of mortgages that author L. L. Griffith contended was recorded against real and personal property in Ward County in November 1913. Griffith broke each day down into columns of amounts; a particularly bad day was November 17 with \$62,302.96 under chattels and \$47,747.18 under real estate.⁶⁸

According to the article, farmers supported those who did not produce. The author maintained that bankers, lawyers, preachers, doctors, politicians, and editors of the capitalist papers were doing nothing but trying to protect all of the nastiness through a conspiracy of silence of the blood-sucking bunch of parasites who live by the cunning of their wits through the crooked system of graft."⁶⁹

Two series that local socialists wrote exemplify The Ironoclast's effort to educate its rural readers in the nature of socialism and its role in farm areas. Charles D. Kelso in a month-long series of articles, "Has Socialism Anything For the Farmer" held that socialism should have appeal to farmers: "There are many, and honestly, who make the claim that Socialism has nothing for the farmer--will give him no relief. This error arises from a misunderstanding of the economic status of a farmer."⁷⁰ His installment tried to clarify that status. Kelso attempted to counter the argument that since farmers were independent and worked for themselves, they were capitalists. He attempted to show the status of the exploited wage-laborer in America, including the revolutionary effect of mechanism in manufacturing. To Kelso, the farmer and the laborer shared the same status. "If, Mr. Farmer, it can be proven to you that you have no control of your job will you not be in as much need of the Socialist remedy as the wage slave?"⁷¹

Kelso answered the question in the following issue. The farmer was in reality a producer of raw material, which represented his labor; "the price you receive for that raw product is the wage you receive for that labor. The difference between you and the laborer is only in name, the result is the same."⁷² The problem, according to Kelso, was that the finished product that was made from the raw material of the farmers was not under their control. The author asked farmers if they indeed had no chains, reminding them that they had no control over the price of their raw material or the finished product.⁷³ In the next installment Kelso discussed the effect of machinery on the farmer. He also emphasized that the concentration of land into fewer hands would increasingly drive out the small farmer.⁷⁴ Kelso reminded the farmer that "out of this small return to the small farmer has grown a wage slave farmer. It is known by common parlance as 'tenancy.'"⁷⁵ Due to demand, the series, "Has Socialism Anything For the Farmer," was printed in pamphlet form for sale at 10 cents each, "cheaper rates available in larger numbers."⁷⁶

Arthur LeSueur contributed "Wage Workers and Farmers." The series was extensive and ran for several months from November 1913 into early February 1914.⁷⁷ The content varied within the framework of "Wage Workers and the Farmers." Specifically, LeSueur tried to counter charges made by other newspapers in the state that the farmers had nothing in common with the wage workers and belonged to another class. According to LeSueur, the state's press was attempting "to keep the workers ignorant of the true unity of their interest, to keep both farmers and wage workers in the mood to fight each other while the capitalists walk off the field of battle with all the subject matter involved in the struggle."⁷⁸ LeSueur hoped that his articles would end this division and the animosity between farmers and workers.⁷⁹ LeSueur also discussed collective ownership of machinery, costs of finished good in

relationship to the wages of the workers and purchasing power, and the inevitable public ownership of the means of production.⁸⁰ LeSueur dramatically called for a change, centering on what he believed was the main stumbling block to progress: the ironclad, dead hand from the past, the Constitution of the United States:

While you calmly worship that dead man's government the live crooks rob you to death protected by it. Now, you good ignorant patriot, holler, holler your head off about that traitor LeSueur, and the traitorous sheet, the Iconoclast, but just remember this, that any government that has not as its first and highest and sole consideration, the good of the people over whom ⁸¹ it rules, is fit only for the dark ages, and ought to be in Hell.

According to LeSueur, only the Socialist party could solve these problems.⁸²

The editors of The Iconoclast also attempted to inform readers in practical, informative instructions. For example, D. C. Dorman wrote on "How to Organize A Socialist Local," detailing the practical first steps that were essential for the formation of a socialist local.⁸³ Dorman provided procedural advice on how to run the crucial first organizational meeting, suggesting that whoever called the meeting should act as chairman and that a temporary secretary should be chosen to keep a full record. He continued with specific information:

The chairman should state briefly the purpose of the meeting. Show as clearly as you can the need of organization. Explain how the party is financed. Thus: The Local charges 25c per month dues to each member. For this sum a stamp is furnished. These stamps are obtained from the state office for 15c each. Thus you retain in your Local treasury 10c for each member. The state office pays the national office 5c each for these stamps, and thus retains 10c each per ⁸⁴ month. In this way the Local, state and nation are financed.

Dorman laid out the step-by-step specifics for the establishment of a successful local along with information on dues, charter, membership cards, and supplies.⁸⁵

The NDSP and editors of The Iconoclast viewed touring speakers as politically and educationally valuable. The paper played the dual role of reporter and promoter of these events. Although not as numerous as local speakers, the number and variety of nationally known figures within the socialist movement that toured the state was quite impressive and included national Socialist party candidates Emil Seidel and George Kirkpatrick; Kate Richards O'Hare, co-publisher of the National Rip Saw; and Ryan Walker, political illustrator and a favorite of The Iconoclast. (For example of ad announcing speaking tour and works of Walker see Appendix 2-5)

The most notable socialist leader to tour the Minot region was Eugene Debs. The coming of Debs was an event of great importance, acclaimed with extensive coverage by The Iconoclast. (See Appendix 2-6 for example of ad in The Iconoclast.) Huge banner headlines above Debs' photo announced, "DEBS COMES TO MINOT, MONDAY, JUNE 14," along with praises to Debs and encouragement for all to attend. "Let every Socialist and friend of the movement to emancipate labor from the thongs of wage-slavery help to make this the greatest day in the history of the movement in North Dakota."⁸⁶ [for copy of article and headlines see appendix 2-6] The author hoped that meeting with hundreds of enthusiastic followers would fill those attending with new courage to overthrow tyranny and injustice and encourage others who may have been discouraged, stating "if you will take a day off and come to this great meeting, you will realize as never before the wonderful magnitude and strength of the movement and you will go home with a greater determination to tell the message to your neighbor and to do more to spread and propagate the great cause."⁸⁷

The Iconoclast lasted but four years and was never on solid ground financially. However, it did provide a forum for important issues of the

socialist movement, both national and local. The weekly publication was a constant source of news, features, articles and editorials that were unavailable in other state publications. In special columns and features The Iconoclast in special columns and features localized the paper in attempts to reach a larger audience, always of course in an effort to educate, persuade, and increase socialist numbers. The paper paid particular attention to the farmers in columns such as "Has Socialism Anything For Farmers," as well as others.

The Iconoclast was by choice and necessity a platform for the socialist issues, stands, and spokepeople. The paper's role within the North Dakota socialist movement and the NDSP was evident throughout its four years. Founded in the spirit of high hopes of 1912 the paper served as a voice for the NDSP, a service no other North Dakota publication of was likely to fulfill.

CHAPTER 2 ENDNOTES

- 1 The Iconoclast, October 11, 1912, p.2.
- 2 Ibid., March 20, 1914, p.1, April 17, 1914, p.2.
- 3 Ibid., March 20, 1914, p.1.
- 4 Ibid., February 11, 1916, p.1.
- 5 Ibid., April 14, 1916, p.2.
- 6 Ibid., April 28, 1916, p.4.
- 7 Ibid., May 5, 1916, p.4.
- 8 Ibid., May 12, 1916, p.1.
- 9 Ibid., June 23, 1916, p.1.
- 10 Ibid., June 23, 1916, p.1.
- 11 Ibid..
- 12 Ibid., July 21, 1916, p.1.
- 13 Ibid., August 15, 1913, p.2.
- 14 Ibid., August 13, 1915, p.4.
- 15 Ibid., July 6, 1912, p.2.
- 16 Ibid., April 11, 1913, p.1.
- 17 Ibid..
- 18 Ibid..
- 19 Ibid., April, 24, 1914, p.2.
- 20 Ibid., March, 14, 1913, p.1.
- 21 Ibid., February 20, 1914, p.7.
- 22 Ibid., November 6, 1914, p.1.
- 23 Ibid..
- 24 Ibid., June, 7, 1912, p.2.
- 25 Ibid., May 24, 1912, p.2.
- 26 Ibid., September 11, 1914, p.4.
- 27 Ibid., May 8, 1914, p.3.
- 28 Ibid..
- 29 Ibid., March 6, 1914, p.3.
- 30 Ibid..
- 31 Ibid., November 21, 1913, p.3.
- 32 Ibid..
- 33 Ibid., December 13, 1912, p. 1.
- 34 Ibid., April 14, 1913, p.2.
- 35 Ibid., February 19, 1915, p.3.
- 36 Ibid., April 30, 1915, p. 3.
- 37 Ibid..
- 38 Ibid..
- 39 Ibid., May 7, 1915, p.3.
- 40 Ibid..
- 41 Ibid..
- 42 Ibid..
- 43 Ibid..
- 44 Ibid..
- 45 Ibid., May 19, 1916, p.2.
- 46 Ibid..
- 47 Ibid., May 26, 1916, p.2.
- 48 Ibid..
- 49 Ibid., June 2, 1916, p.4.
- 50 Ibid., June 9, 1916, p.4., June 16, 1916, p.2, June 23,
1916, p.2.
- 51 Ibid., April 24, 1916, p.1.

- 52 Ibid..
53 Ibid...
54 Ibid., February 12, 1915, p.3.
55 Ibid..
56 Ibid..
57 Ibid., November 29, 1912, p.1, December 6, 1912, p.4,
December 13, 1912, p.4, December 30, 1912, p.1, January 3, 1913,
p.1, January 10, 1913, p.1, January 17, 1913, p.1.
58 Ibid., December 13, 1912, p.4.
59 Ibid., April 11, 1913, p.1.
60 Ibid..
61 Ibid., March 13, 1914, p.1.
62 Ibid., October 22, 1915, p.1..
63 Ibid., October 23, 1914, p.1.
64 Ibid., March 13, 1914, p.1.
65 Ibid., March 6, 1914, l.
66 Ibid., April 14, 1914, p.1.
67 Ibid., August 14, 1914, p.1.
68 Ibid., January 9, 1914, p.1.
69 Ibid..
70 Ibid., September 13, 1913, p.1.
71 Ibid., p.2.
72 Ibid., September 20, 1912, p.3.
73 Ibid..
74 Ibid., September 27, 1912, p.3.
75 Ibid., October 4, 1912, p.3.
76 Ibid., October 11, 1912, p.3.
77 Ibid., January 9, 1914, p.1.
78 Ibid., November 14, 1913, p.1.
79 Ibid..
80 Ibid., November 28, 1913, p.1, January 16, 1914, p.1.
81 Ibid., January 16, 1914, p.1.
82 Ibid..
83 Ibid., July 26, 1912, p.2.
84 Ibid..
85 Ibid..
86 Ibid., June 11, 1915, p.1.
87 Ibid..

CHAPTER 3

THE ICONOCLAST: ISSUES AND CONTROVERSY

The Iconoclast, as one might expect, spoke out boldly on the issues that its editors deemed essential to the enhancement of the socialist cause and the people's welfare. Because the paper was situated in Minot, it saw itself as that city's conscience and became embroiled in local issues. The editors raised questions about matters such as the condition of the streets and the quality of the bricks that were being used in the construction of a building at Minot Normal School, but devoted the lion's share of their attention to issues such as blind pigs and the free speech controversy.

Editor J. M. Near seemed to be consumed by violations of prohibition and "blind pigs" (the term given to illegal drinking establishments). In 1911 Arthur LeSueur, while he was president of the Minot city commission, worked tirelessly to eradicate the "blind pigs," indicating that this was a high priority reform for local socialists.¹ Throughout late 1912 and into 1913, Near kept the prohibition issue at stage center. In early August 1912 he asked on the paper's front page: "HAS ANYONE HERE SEEN KELLY, OR KELLY'S LITTLE PIG?" (Kelly was the Chief of Police in Minot.)² Several weeks later Near discussed the effect of a recent police raid on local pigs, sarcastically describing Minot as dry as the desert. Near gave the law enforcement officials some credit, but added, "They had an awful time finding those two small porkers."³

Near kept the issue alive with numerous articles. Bold headlines such as "POLICE RAID PIGS? MINOT DRY?, PIG HUNTERS AND POLITICS OR THE REASON WHY!" and "ECONOMIC INTEREST AND BLIND PIGS" graced the front pages.⁴ In his articles and editorials, Near assailed the problem from all angles. In an

article entitled "Fair Play or No Game" he demanded that there be either no pigs or plenty of pigs. Insisting that fair play had to be observed, Near lashed out against closing down small-time operators who did not have enough pull to stay out of the law's clutches. If "blind pigs" were good for some, they were a good thing "for ALL men to have, and all will have them or there will be none here, and you peanut politicians are welcome to take that straight off the bat."⁵ Near offered the following personal challenge.

We are going to give you until the next issue of this paper to CLOSE and prosecute the men who own the two Main street pigs and if that is not done and done in the proper manner, we will show you how little 'that dirty sheet' cares for your power, or your pull and if we don't hang some political skins on our fence, it will be because the owners of said skins increase the population of western Canada.⁶

In the next issue Near gave a first-hand account of a visit into the hold of the Titanic, a local "blind pig" where seventy-five men in various stages of intoxication were fighting, quarreling, swearing, and singing—all pushing themselves through clouds of tobacco smoke in order to once more find the bar.⁷ In the next issue The Iconoclast under the headline

WELL THEY DID
----DID WHAT ?----
MISS THE BIG PIG !

discussed the sleight-of-hand performers who were involved in recent local raids: "What! You didn't know it? Where the thunder were you all? The pigs knew it twenty-four hours before hand."⁸ What Near wanted to know was why "your" police force could find only the small pigger, "but when they make a raid (??????) on a pig that is running open on Main street they can never grab anyone unless it is some old cripple who is so slow that he can't even get away from a policeman?"⁹ The Iconoclast expressed this in a cartoon that

showed the mayor and chief of police standing in a the mud next to several pigs. (See Appendix 3-1)¹⁰

The topic remained a centerpiece in The Iconoclast during the following week when Near discussed "WHY some men are allowed to break the law with impunity, and others are arrested and punished."¹¹ Near charged that owners of the Waverly and Titanic were above the law as they were members of the ruling class. "Did Mayor Halvorson DARE to arrest the proprietors of the Waverly resort, or the Titanic den? Did he dare give orders that ARE orders to his hired men, the police force, to make a REAL raid on those two dumps?"¹²

Near continued to hit at the problem with articles, comments, editorials and political illustrations. (See Appendix 3-2) In "Whoa! Stop Says Mayor" Near responded to recent statements of the Mayor, declaring that every one in town knows about the problem and they are nincompoops if they deny the facts.¹³ In his accompanying editorial Near reported that a recent raid on the Titanic ended with the usual arrests—every man but the owner.¹⁴ To the right of an article which discussed the "Economic Interest and Blind Pigs" Near ran a fake program for the "BIG SHOW: Pig Sticking Time!: THE HIT OF THE SEASON" which included in act three the closing ode:

Oh, Minot 'tis of Thee
One lovely piggery
Of Thee I sing,
Town where ten thousand died
Minus all Civic pride
Where graft is not¹⁵ denied,
Let dollars ring.

Although articles on blind pigs began to appear less frequently in early 1913, continued attacks on related issue of illegal gambling (slot machines), and on lax law enforcement by County Attorney Ragnvold Nestos.¹⁶ Near was not very impressed with Nestos' effect, thanking the County Attorney him for the fearless action after he had been notified twice.¹⁷ When officials did take

action, its results were short lived. Near complained that on the "day following the re-appointment of Elmer Smith as chief of police, almost fifty gamblers, pimps and prostitutes, who had temporarily wiped the mud of Minot off their feet, returned to the city."¹⁸ Near, however, remained a voice in the wilderness; his words on "blind pigs" and gambling fell on deaf ears. When he departed the paper in August of 1913 The Iconoclast dropped the issue.

The Iconoclast raised other issues about Minot, including the condition of public facilities and the need for city-owned utilities. It questioned the welfare of the student population in "Central School A Fire Trap," as well as the buildings sanitation. Near acknowledged there were fire escapes, however not everywhere. "On the first floor, which as everyone knows, from eight to twelve feet above ground, there is ABSOLUTELY no escape except by the doors. Plenty of chance? Let us see it would be necessary for the children to march THROUGH THE FIRE in order to escape from the building. There is NO OTHER WAY."¹⁹ Near also exposed the sanitation system of the school.

"Absolutely ALL the ventilation provided is out and up through the halls directly into school rooms. We visited the school building on Saturday last, when the toilets had been flushed, yet the stench in the hall on the first floor was enough to sicken anyone."²⁰ In other Minot concerns, Near compared the city jail with a starvation camp and charged that Chief of Police Smith starved, abused and threatened prisoners.²¹ In a later article the local Detention Hospital was called a house of filth, poverty, and neglect. The paper also editorialized on the need for a police matron.²²

In the spirit of the socialist movement The Iconoclast demanded municipally owned light, power, and gas facilities. In a series of front-page articles, entitled "How You Are Gouged" The Iconoclast explored the issue and promised that "no amount of advertising will prevent this paper from telling

the truth, and hewing to the line, no matter who are hit by chips."²³ The series was quite extensive, running from December 13, 1912, until February 14, 1913. "Again you will hear the argument advanced that this paper in making this fight for cheap light is simply a trouble maker, a kicking machine; that there is nothing in it. If you believe this just ask Judge Murray. He KNOWS."²⁴ In one article of the series Near looked at the problem of graft. "There is Graft in the operation of a private plant, but there is this difference. Under private ownership of the plant the GRAFT is LEGAL, while under the operation of a municipal plant the GRAFT IS ILLEGAL. In the first case the takers of the graft are our most respected citizens, while in the second case the taker of the graft is sent to prison if caught. Some difference eh?"²⁵

Of all the local issues, the free speech controversy of 1913 received The Iconoclast's fullest attention. In huge headlines on August 15, the paper called upon all North Dakota socialists to aid in Minot's free speech fight:

The Plutocracy is attempting one of the most despotic acts against free government ever recorded in the annals of class tyranny. The fight MUST be won and WILL be won if it takes a year to it, and regardless of what limits the city officials may go to. Let us hear from every loyal comrade in North Dakota. Without your aid in this matter we shall have to bear the brunt of the fight alone and thus drag out unnecessarily, a fight that can be won with ease provided all work together. Yours for Free Speech, HENRY G. TEIGAN, State Secretary.²⁶

A political illustration that explained solidarity (See Appendix 3-3) and an article that described the event from a socialist perspective dominated the front page. The article "FREE SPEECH FIGHT ON IN MINOT" chronicled the events that led to the crisis. To its right the paper listed Minot's socialist leaders who had been arrested, including several, according to the editor, who had taken no part in the demonstration--Arthur LeSueur, Leland L. Griffith, D.

C. Dorman, H. R. Martinson, R. E. Wright (a Civil War veteran and printer), Iver Ek, and H. E. Thompson.²⁷

Editor Near attempted to convince readers that the tax-payer was the goat since the affair was costing the city about \$500 per day. He questioned the hiring of 'special police' for two dollars a head and the need for this special force which, he feared, would stir more rioting. Furthermore, he held that the crisis was created "at the behest of a few parasites, that have never swallowed a mouthful of food that was earned honestly, since they nursed at their mother's breast. And yet they are classed as 'prominant' and 'respectable citizens.' O tempora, O mores, O, duck tracks."²⁸ The statement was Near's last as editor as he severed connections with The Iconoclast in the midst of the free speech crisis. Whether he was fired or resigned is of some dispute. At a socialist meeting held at state headquarters in Minot, Sunday afternoon, Editor Near was disconnected from The Iconoclast. (The implication being the paper could not continue under his radical policy.) In an interview printed in the Fargo Forum, Near stated he would not bind himself to the party or owners if he could find a better way to advance the interests of the working class.²⁹ The Forum article implied Near's siding with the IWW had something to do with the action. The departure of Near was obviously tied to the crisis, but Jackson Putnam in "The Socialist Party of North Dakota, 1902-1918," suggests that it was also a good time to get rid of Near as editor of The Iconoclast. According to Putnam, Near's departure may have been related to his support of the IWW even before the free speech crisis began, but he suggested that Near's expulsion was motivated to consolidate control by the current state secretary, Henry Teigan. Putnam explained that with Near's departure the replacement "was none other than Teigan himself," and within "a year Teigan brought The Iconoclast completely

[sic] under his control."³⁰ (In 1912 ownership was transferred to the NDSP.) Although this is a possibility, this author does not see any real conspiracy present. Near was simply a lone wolf and hired gun; when he became troublesome it was easy to force him out. Near was not a Minot resident or a long-time North Dakota socialist, or any kind of socialist for that matter, he was a rebel who used his talents as a writer to attack the establishment, whether it was as a socialist or editor of a scandal rag.

Near was not yet out of the newspaper game in Minot; in fact he briefly published The Rebel, as evident in the Minot Daily Optic headlines: "RIOTOUS ELEMENT IN MINOT FINDS SUPPORT IN COLUMNS OF NEAR'S 'FREE SPEECH BULLETIN.'"³¹ The Optic stated that authorities were slandered with "gross untruths published in editor Near's sheet in order to boost the cause of anarchy."³² Charging it was not only false but blasphemous, a prize purveyor of abuse and vituperation, "and when he is finished calling names, he is through, absolutely through. He seems utterly incapable of writing anything else, but abuse."³³ The Rebel did not survive for long and Near left town on August 21, pleading illness.³⁴

Henry Teigan carried on where Near left off. Headlines in the following week's paper declared "CLASS LINES DRAWN IN MINOT!" (See Appendix 3-4) Editor Teigan described the trial of those arrested as a farce and attacked the jury as prejudiced with class hatred which "in the face of their oath found the defendants guilty in spite of the fact that they knew them to be innocent."³⁵ On its front page The Iconoclast proudly displayed the list of the convicted, along with their fines of five, ten, fifteen dollars, all printed under the comment that "Men in Overalls Sent to Jail--Other Defendants' Fines to be Collected by Civil Action."³⁶ Henry Martinson's poem "Where the Old House

River Flows," which he wrote while he was in jail, presented an unfavorable review of Minot.

Chorus—
Where the old Mouse river flows
Each pimp and pigger knows—
They have bullied and suppressed us
And still our spirit grows.
But we have found a way boys
To give us all our say, boys
And we're going to win the day, boys
Where the old Mouse river flows.

Ryan Walker's political illustration portrayed Christ on trial before a scowling judge with the caption "If the Carpenter of Nazareth should come to Minot?".³⁸ (See Appendix 3-5) Other articles reported a hunger strike in the Minot city jail and cases of police brutality. The editor also printed an open letter from LeSueur to Governor Louis B. Hanna which tried to correct misinformation about the controversy.³⁹

The importance of The Iconoclast as the only vehicle through which the socialists could combat what the other Minot papers were publishing was obvious throughout the free speech fight. According to Teigan, "We doubt if there is a man or woman in the city, who has read the dirty lies that have appeared in the two daily capitalist rags, the Reporter and the Optic, who will say that they have ever in their whole lives, read more anarchistic, riot inciting, rotten dope, than these two sheets have peddled out during the past two weeks."⁴⁰

Although the free speech episode was over by August 29, 1915, in the next issue The Iconoclast announced that "FREE SPEECH FIGHT OVER workers win right to use streets--City officials dismiss charges empty jails and bull pen--Street speakers to have police protection after excitement is over.

I. W. W.'s going into harvest fields as rapidly as they can find jobs "⁴¹ The free speech crisis might have been over, but it still was a topic that received space in The Iconoclast, not only with it's versions of the incident, but efforts to counter charges of affiliation with the unpopular IWW. In the "Farmers' Special Edition," January 9, 1914, "A REVIEW OF THE MINOT POLICE RIOTS" gave the socialist side of the crisis including the statement that they were not responsible for the IWW coming to Minot, or that the IWW was there to organize farmhands. They did admit standing up for the rights of the IWW to speak on public streets, but that was all."⁴² Many of the articles and editorials on the crisis had a distinctively defensive tone, especially in regards to the alliance with the unpopular IWW. In successive editorials The Iconoclast countered charges of lawlessness by stating that not one of the IWW had been found carrying a gun or found guilty of doing violence; furthermore, an editorial stated that the IWW "were not invited to come here by any faction or organization to create disturbance, but on their own accord came to Minot to organize the workers engaged in construction work."⁴³ To soothe fears of the farmers even further, a later article in The Iconoclast stated that both the socialists and IWW knew organization of farmhands in North Dakota was impossible. The earlier free speech crisis arose because the interests of owners and political masters of the region wanted "to create all the friction possible, between the farmers and the I.W.W.'s, in the vain hope that the farmer will withhold his support from the I.W.W.'s and Socialists in the present fight."⁴⁴

The free speech crisis furnished The Iconoclast with perhaps its most important issue. It indicated not only its ability to state the cause of the socialist movement but also the importance of countering the traditional press. The free speech crisis, however, exposed a problem that the socialist

movement and The Iconoclast shared: its association with unpopular positions, or in this case, the unpopular IWW. This created great difficulty for both organizations in their efforts to gain acceptance by the people of North Dakota.

The Iconoclast did not neglect national issues that it believed would lead to the establishment of a better society. Throughout its four years the paper dealt with many of the common calls that bound the movement: initiative, referendum, woman's suffrage, women and labor, and labor legislation. A common bond was also reflected in its coverage of national leaders and elections. Two issues that The Iconoclast believed in strongly and debated throughout its publication were the roles of militarism and religion.

The Iconoclast took a strong stand on what it considered the attempts to use religion against the labor movement. Although it may have been wiser politically to avoid attacking anything cloaked with religion, The Iconoclast spoke out. Since the public tended to identify socialism with godlessness the safe road would have been to skirt the issue. It did not, however, take the more discreet position and often attacked what it believed to be the misuse of religion. The Iconoclast insisted, however, that it did not attack religion as such but only the malpractice of religion. In its second week of publication on May 31, 1912, Near, in a rhetorical response to the charge that The Iconoclast was seeking to destroy religion, plead guilty if that meant "we agitate against commercialized churchanity; against hypocrisy"; a system that builds magnificent palaces to worship God, and miserable hovels for the poor.⁴⁵

The Iconoclast attacked revivalist Billy Sunday, whom the paper condemned for his use of profanity, language that without the protection of the cloth would have landed him in jail. Near denounced Sunday as a hypocrite because

of his alleged vice for greed: "Pennies and beer checks don't pass the mustard with Billy, its the 'long green' or no salvation."⁴⁶

The Iconoclast, especially Near, took a strong, at times abusive, anti-Catholic position. The paper often spoke out against that church in terms such as "hypocrisy," "sham," and "mental slavery" to describe the church's negative influence on the masses. When reports of the Pope's deteriorating health crossed Near's desk his editorial was far from sympathetic, suggesting that the Pontiff "is scared stiff everytime he thinks of having to change his present abode in the macaroni fatherland for a chance at that eystic mansion."⁴⁷ Near argued that the Pope had reason to fear the "great mirror of eternity", and thus "we can hardly be blamed if we doubt the divine origin of the old dago."⁴⁸

Charges that Near's words were slanderous only drove the editor to more graphic language. "At the wiggle of a dago finger, one of the faithful must fast, or feast, drink water when one wants wine and wine when a glass of water would look and taste like a nector [sic] of the gods."⁴⁹ According to Near, all that a person with the "intelligence of a gnat" had to do to "prove the fallacy of the popish 'holiness' claims is to T-H-I-N-K. If the old macaroni stuffed, wine soaked geezer would start all the holy machinery going, from the time of Constantine down to the present day and date, he wouldn't have enough 'holy power' to pull a 'wood-tick' off a calfs [sic] back, let alone yanking an immortal soul out of purgatory."⁵⁰

Near labeled the Western Catholic, a "sewage outlet" that "vomits forth as per usual, divers and sundry lies, so dam rotten, that none, were he not a moral and mental pervert, or one of the hells slimy vermin, make such a statement."⁵¹ He attempted to softpeddle the attacks on the church itself,

"When we say the catholic hierarchy, we mean the ecclesiastics the priests and holy (?) parasites, the 'princes of blood', and the dago pope."⁵²

The city's school election in 1912 brought a fury of words by Near on the influences of the Catholic Church and the threat to free public schools. Near of course did not blame the lay members of the Catholic Church, as the majority were unfamiliar with the political tactics of the powers of Rome. "Every catholic church official, from the pope, down to the parish priest, is a sworn enemy of public schools."⁵³

In an accompanying piece, "Father Vaughan will Annihilate Socialism," Near lashed out against the father and other priests who were afraid of the socialist movement because it was an educational effort "and they and the cause they represent can thrive only on ignorance and superstition."⁵⁴ Near stated that freedom, intelligence and education of the masses would mean the end of their usurped power and their lives of "opulent luxury on pennies wrung from widows and orphans; poverty and death."⁵⁵

The Iconoclast did not reserve all of its wrath for the Roman Catholic Church. In "Minister and Master" Near strenuously questioned the behavior of a local minister whom he had asked to read a petition that called for better fire protection for the central school. The minister's response, according to Near, was less than Christian: "IF THAT be Christianity then in the name of humanity, class us a PAGAN. We had rather be one of the Biblical dogs, licking the sores of the begger Lazarus than to be inoculated with THAT brand of religion" ⁵⁶

The Iconoclast used poetry in its editorial attacks on organized religion. Editor O. M. Thomason in "Is There a God?" pondered:

If there is a God--O Christian on death's bed,
Why do the righteous have to beg for bread?
Why does the toiler have to live in need

While idlers fill and gratify their greed?⁵⁷

In "Now What is God Going to do?" Thomason wondered what will happen when God hears conflicting prayers for victory by the Kaiser, Tsar, and Old Leopold of Austria.

And since each Christian nation is praying to its God,
To help them put their enemies beneath their native sod
And Wilson asks the self-same God to stop the whole blamed smears,
Now under such conditions who's God a-goiny-to-hear?

Thomason attacked the popular tent evangelist in "When Billy Sunday Comes to Town."

The Masters know that slaves are meek,
when herded like dun-driven sheep,
And so they giggle in their sleep,
And freely plank the dollars down,
When Billy Sunday comes to town.

The bosses know that Bills a fake,
But laugh to see the sinners quake,
When Billy holds 'em over the lake,
And so they plank the dollars down,
When Billy Sunday comes to Town.⁵⁹

Many of the political illustrations found throughout The Iconoclast were critical of its preceived failures of religion. A political illustration that explained "The Cause of Mexico's Misery" pictured a priest (with a capitalist hanging onto him) with a whip in one hand and in the other dangling a cross before the peasant which they were both riding.⁶⁰ In the Philippines it was the "Holy Trio" of big business, the police and the priest with the caption, "we rule you, we club you, we fool you."⁶¹ Under an article entitled "The Sheltering Wings" which discussed the role of the Catholic Church and public schools, an illustration showed a priest, in the form of a huge vulture with talons and wings labeled hypocrisy and slavery, sheltering capitalism.⁶² One of the more subtle and dramatic illustrations questioning both religion and war was the drawing of a crying mother who had just received a letter from the

Red Cross. The caption read, "And I prayed night and day he would return safe" to which the young daughter replied "Mama- maybe God didn't hear you."⁶³
(See Appendix 3-6)

The Iconoclast's positions on militarism ranged from the fairly traditional anti-war socialism to being anti-Boy Scouts, an organization it believed represented an attempt to indoctrinate boys with militarism. When the National Executive Committee of the Socialist party sent to President Woodrow Wilson a telegram that protested the United States' invasion of Mexico, The Iconoclast published it.⁶⁴ American involvement in Mexico was a popular target for The Iconoclast. In the same issue that contained the National Executive Committee statement, The Iconoclast editorialized: "Who wants war with Mexico? Not I, says the farmer who does his own thinking. I don't want to help finance a war against a puny little nation of half starved peons in order to aid a few well-fed grafting capitalists to gain control of the resources of the country."⁶⁵

The May 1, 1914, issue linked a current labor conflict with the situation in Mexico. The Iconoclast headlines, printed in red, cried "WAR! IN COLORADO AND MEXICO." (See Appendix 3-7) "The newspapers say they have insulted the flag by illegally arresting some blue-jackets. But is this true? I say no, a thousand times no A flag that cannot hear the cries of its own people, has no sense of honor and it gives back the lie that it has been insulted."⁶⁶ To The Iconoclast, what was happening in Colorado tied to what was happening in Mexico. "The strikers as a last resort are trying to offer some resistance against the hired murderers of the Rockefeller millions, aided by the servile state militia and state government."⁶⁷ Between the two articles the paper ran a dramatic illustration of a crucified Christ figure hanging on a cross below a sign of labor.⁶⁸ (See Appendix 3-7) The following week the paper had a

political illustration of an overweight capitalist-businessman (suit covered with dollar signs, a universal code symbol for "capitalist") reacting with great fear after he is handed a bunch of guns with the statement "Here, if you're so keen for intervention in Mexico. Take these tools yourself and go to it!"⁶⁹ In the next to last issue of The Iconoclast an article blamed Mexican troubles on United States businessmen.⁷⁰

The Iconoclast also spoke out strongly against the possibility of American intervention in the European War. This, though, was not extreme, as evident in Robert P. Wilkins "North Dakota and the European War, 1914-1917: A Study in Public Opinion." Opposition to the war was common throughout North Dakota. The governor of the state, L. B. Hanna, even accompanied Henry Ford on his peace ship, the only state governor to do so.⁷¹ The Iconoclast's first reaction to the declaration of war in 1914 was "Don't fight, but protest." The paper called for a worldwide labor strike and argued that those who declared the war should fight it.⁷² The Iconoclast applied a strictly economic interpretation to the war; it came because of economic reasons. In an editorial of April 20, 1916 the paper asked the working class what they intended to do if entry were inevitable and it was too late to elect a pacifist. The Editor argued that the working class should refuse to have anything at all to do with a war: "We, the working class, pay the bill both during and after the war. The Capitalist class reap the profit in profiting by the sale of war goods and by gaining foreign market for their surplus goods."⁷³

Until the paper ceased publication, it argued against the war and the American entry. The Iconoclast even published some of its own plans for the prevention of entry by the United States. The Iconoclast called for the working class to use the arms the capitalists provided against those in

power.⁷⁴ In 1915 the state committee for the NDSP adopted a resolution that if the United States went to war, the socialists must refuse to enlist, and if drafted, refuse to go.⁷⁵ In May 1915, in its editorial, the Optic printed a pledge that called for citizens to support President Wilson's handling of the Lusitania crisis. Editor Teigan reprinted the pledge and stated that he would not sign; he also offered his own pledge, for readers to sign:

Whereas the stand that President Wilson has taken relative to the sinking of the Lusitania is calculated to result in this nation being plunged into the European blood carnival, and

Whereas, Such stand is solely in the interest of those who monger in profits on war materials, therefore be it

Resolved, That in the event that war does result from the President's stand

I, _____, the undersigned, as citizen of the world and recognizing the universal brotherhood of man, pledge myself not to kill any man's father, not to slay any mother's son, nor to plunge my bayonet in the breast of any sister's brother, nor to murder any women's husband, not to butcher any little child's father, not to wet the earth with blood and tears, not to assassinate ANY man⁷⁶ and then hide my blood-stained fists in the folds of ANY flag.

According to The Iconoclast, invasion by a foreign power was the only justification for the United States to enter into war.⁷⁷ It opposed the president's preparedness campaign: "The only way that a war can be had will be for Uncle Sam to begin a 'preparedness' program that will compel others to follow suit."⁷⁸

The Iconoclast from the beginning spoke out against what it considered to be undesirable military elements. While editor, Near described the country's standing armies as composed of "undesirable citizens." The editor warned of the military's corrupting influence on young men: "If you, mothers and fathers, want YOUR son to sink down to the lowest depths of degradation, filth and vice, advise him to take advantage of the present opportunity of joining the marine corps. Remember that he will have an opportunity of seeing the

world--the UNDERWORLD--that part of the world that lives in darkness, and in vice and crime."⁷⁹ The Iconoclast went on to attack the National Guard and State Militia, which they called "hired Hessians of capitalism."⁸⁰ The new Minot armory became a "thirty thousand dollar mansion dedicated to the god of war."⁸¹ On January 1, 1915, an editorial attacked the University of Minnesota plan of having male students' indoctrination which will "twist them into the inhuman 'fighting machine' our capitalist need to exist. . . . and we bet dollars to doughnuts President McVey of the University of North Dakota will soon fall sedately into line. The same wires are being pulled all over the United States and from now on we can expect all our 'intellects' to give out dignified interviews approving organized savagery."⁸²

The Iconoclast's most extreme anti-military position regarded the Boy Scouts. The paper viewed the Scouts as an indoctrination movement. It attacked a local minister who was a strong defender of the Boy Scouts and who "hides behind the stereotyped statement of the founders that it is NOT a military organization."⁸³ The paper expressed this view in a headline that stated: "Boy Scouts Not Military? Go Tell The Marines!" Alongside of which The Iconoclast ran a two-frame illustration, the first showed the promise of the military with its far-away and exotic lands, the next frame demonstrated the fulfillment, a skeleton in the grass.⁸⁴ (See Appendix 3-8)

A large percentage of The Iconoclast's coverage of issues was not that controversial, as socialist publications go. Many of the articles which stated the paper's position were reprinted from other sources, thus reflecting a mainstream view. Although The Iconoclast may have taken a stronger stand than other socialist publications on some issues, most of their views were not extreme enough to be destructive. The Iconoclast's position on public works and the military on the whole were not controversial.

However, the paper got into trouble when The Iconoclast tried to live up to its name and went beyond the more general role of educator, to that of outspoken critic. Near was the most iconoclastic; under his editorial control The Iconoclast took on many cherished icons such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Boy Scouts. Near's harsh and personal view expressed through the pages of The Iconoclast, thus identifying it, along with the NDSP, with these very unpopular stands. This may not have affected current members, but it was bound to antagonize potential supporters among the Catholic community, along with other groups. Near's tirades seemed to validate the opposition's charges and provide a door through which they could easily attack not only the editor but also the party. The Minot Daily Optic responded to The Iconoclast's views on the Boy Scouts by calling it a destructive, anarchial force out to destroy the nation's cherished institutions.⁸⁵

CHAPTER 3 ENDNOTES

- 1 Massarek Tribune, May 16, 1911, p.1.
 - 2 The Iconoclast, July, 12, 1912, p.1.
 - 3 Ibid., August 9, 1912, p.1.
 - 4 Ibid., August, 9, 1912, p.1, October 11, 1912, p.1,
December 6, 1912, p.1.
 - 5 Ibid., October 4, 1912, p.1.
 - 6 Ibid..
 - 7 Ibid..
 - 8 Ibid., October 11, 1912, p.1.
 - 9 Ibid., October 18, 1912, p.1.
 - 10 Ibid..
 - 11 Ibid., October 25, 1912, p.1.
 - 12 Ibid., November 1, 1912, p.1.
 - 13 Ibid., November 1, 1912, p.4.
 - 14 Ibid., November 22, 1912, p.1.
 - 15 Ibid., p.2.
 - 16 Ibid., December 6, 1912, p.1.
 - 17 Ibid., March 14, 1913, p.2, April 4, 1913, p.2.
 - 18 Ibid., April 11, 1913, p.2.
 - 19 Ibid., April 25, 1913, p.2.
 - 20 Ibid., February 7, 1913, p.1.
 - 21 Ibid., February 17, 1913, p.1.
 - 22 Ibid., p.2.
 - 23 Ibid., May 2, 1913, p.3, May 16, 1913, p.3.
 - 24 Ibid., December 13, 1912, p.1.
 - 25 Ibid., January 10, 1913, p.1.
 - 26 Ibid., January 17, 1913, p.1.
 - 27 Ibid., August 15, 1913, p.1.
 - 28 Ibid..
 - 29 Ibid., August 15, 1913, p.4.
 - 30 Fargo Forum, August 14, 1913, p.8.
 - 31 Jackson Putnam, "The Socialist Party of North Dakota,
1902-1918," p.54.
 - 32 Minot Daily Optic, August 15, 1913, p.1.
 - 33 Ibid..
 - 34 Ibid..
- 34 Fargo Forum, August 21, 1913, p.1. Near went on to controversy in neighboring Minnesota in the Supreme Court decision Near v. Minnesota. In 1916 Near was hired by Howard Guilford to work on the Twin City Reporter, a weekly paper that dwelled on the unseemly side of the twin cities. In Minnesota Rag, author Fred W. Friendly described Near as anti-catholic, anti-semitic, anti-black, anti-labor, whose "pen and typewriter were occasionally weapons for hire, a means of scratching out his living as a sort of scavenger of the sins and political vulnerability of others." [Minnesota Rag, Fred W. Friendly, Random House, New York, 1981, p.1.] They later rejoined forces in 1927 when Guilford and Near created The Saturday Press, a weekly which had a field day, attacking with vehemence many of the same targets Near assaulted while editor of The Iconoclast. Although the situation was a bit more intense as the shooting of Near's co-owner Guilford indicated. [Ibid., pp.37-38.] Near gained legal fame when a Minnesota statute passed in 1925 gagged the paper and

thus began a long court battle from 1927 until 1931 when the Supreme Court rendered its decision. Near v. Minnesota became a landmark case which Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes read on June 1, 1931, ruling that the Minnesota gag law which shut down Near was an infringement of the liberty of the press guaranteed by the 14th amendment. Near had won, although he personally gained little from the verdict. The efforts to revitalize The Saturday Press failed and he again, moved on, dying in Fort Atkinson, Iowa, April 18, 1936.

- 35 The Iconoclast, August 22, 1913, p.1.
- 36 Ibid..
- 37 Ibid..
- 38 Ibid..
- 39 Ibid..
- 40 Ibid., August 22, 1913, p.1,2, and 4.
- 41 Ibid., p.1.
- 42 Ibid., August 29, 1913, p.1.
- 43 Ibid., January 9, 1914, p.1.
- 44 Ibid., p.2.
- 45 Ibid..
- 46 Ibid., May 31, 1912, p.2.
- 47 Ibid..
- 48 Ibid., May 24, 1912, p.2.
- 49 Ibid., April 18, 1913, p.1.
- 50 Ibid., June 13, 1913, p.1.
- 51 Ibid..
- 52 Ibid., May 30, 1913, p.1.
- 53 Ibid..
- 54 Ibid., May 31, 1912, p.1.
- 55 Ibid..
- 56 Ibid..
- 57 Ibid., February 14, 1913, p.1.
- 58 Ibid., March 13, 1914, p.1.
- 59 Ibid., September 25, 1914, p.1.
- 60 Ibid., May 21, 1915, p.1.
- 61 Ibid., March 14, 1913, p.1.
- 62 Ibid., February 28, 1913, p.1.
- 63 Ibid., May 30, 1913, p.1.
- 64 Ibid., June 30, 1914, p.1, January 15, p.1.
- 65 Ibid., June 1, 1916, p.1.
- 66 Ibid., p.2.
- 67 Ibid., May 1, 1914, p.1.
- 68 Ibid..
- 69 Ibid..
- 70 Ibid., May 8, 1914, p.1.
- 71 Ibid., July 14, 1916, p.1.
- 72 Robert Poole Wilkins, "North Dakota and the European War, 1914-1917: A Study in Public Opinion," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of West Virginia, 1954, p.129, 134.
- 73 Ibid., August 7, 1914, p.1.
- 74 Ibid., May 21, 1915, p.1, April 20, 1916, p.2.
- 75 Ibid., October 16, 1914, p.1.
- 76 Ibid., February 15, 1915, p.1.
- 77 Ibid., May 31, 1912, p.1.
- 78 Ibid., December 24, 1915, p.2.

- 78 Ibid.,
- 79 Ibid., August 16, 1912, p.1.
- 80 Ibid., August 2, 1912, p.1.
- 81 Ibid., July 19, 1912, p.1.
- 82 Ibid., January 1, 1915, p.2.
- 83 Ibid., June 7, 1912, p.1.
- 84 Ibid., June 28, 1912, p.1.
- 85 Minot Daily Optic, June 8, 1912, p.1.

CONCLUSION

Historians disagree over the reasons for the failure of American socialism and its political parties. Ira Kipnis in The American Socialist Movement (1952) maintained that the party declined rapidly because it compromised its ideals and moved toward the middle class. In A Socialist Party of America, A History, published in 1955, David Shannon emphasized internal division within the party as the main cause of its demise. Daniel Bell, whose "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States" appeared in 1952, asserted that the Socialist party strayed from its traditional tactics to avoid its rigid rules and doctrine. Bell singled out North Dakota as one of several states where this happened as Socialists left the party to join the NPL. All these studies describe the situation in North Dakota. The NDSP compromised the traditional socialist philosophy when it decided to reach out to increasingly "middle-class" North Dakota farmers. This eventually created internal division—especially over Townley's Organization Department. That internal dispute drove Townley from the NDSP and channelled his energy in another direction—the formation of the Nonpartisan League which became "socialism" within the Republican party. The League, as Bell pointed out, weakened the NDSP and eventually led to the party's demise. National socialism stumbled and fell on the issue of American participation in World War I; North Dakota socialism came apart from 1915 to 1916 when the League offered farmers a more moderate and attainable course of action.¹

The Iconoclast was founded in 1912, the peak of the socialist movement in North Dakota. The growing socialist movement needed a voice for its views and

positions. The Iconoclast became that voice, and eventually, the official publication of the NDSP. The paper tried to fulfill many important roles as the only North Dakota socialist publication (there had been several minor efforts in 1912 other than The Iconoclast, but none survived the year) and advertised itself to be the only publication in the state that dared print all the truth.

The Iconoclast functioned as the vehicle through which the socialist movement could educate prospective converts. Farmers were often the target for such efforts. The goal of education dominated socialist thought and hopes for a brighter future. Without The Iconoclast views of socialists within the state and nationally would have been dependent upon less reliable, less controllable, and more expensive sources. The Iconoclast provided a weekly source of persuasion, propaganda, and polemics for North Dakota.

The Iconoclast was a very effective force for the state's socialists on many occasions, the most striking example being the free speech crisis in Minot. In that situation the paper was the rallying voice of the Minot socialist community, a lone voice against an opposition that could have taken advantage of a press monopoly to destroy the socialists. The Iconoclast conveyed, translated, and personalized the cause and issues to "their" audience.

However, the stands which the paper took were not always beneficial to the overall effort of gaining converts to the movement. The Iconoclast's fascination with "blind pigs" had questionable if any value for gaining members to the NDSP. The papers tirades against religion must have antagonized some of the population. The attacks on the Roman Catholic Church were especially abusive and were clearly a mistake as it was still the largest single religious denomination in the state as of 1916.²

Despite these mistakes, The Iconoclast was invaluable to the promotion of the NDSP and its causes, providing a forum for the party and membership. But the NDSP after 1916 was without support, leadership, or membership; The Iconoclast as the official voice of the NDSP suffered the same fate. Silenced by the overwhelming strength of the NPL, The Iconoclast, along with the NDSP, faded into obscurity. As the NPL replaced the NDSP, the Nonpartisan Leader replaced The Iconoclast.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

¹Daniel Bell, "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States," Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, eds., Socialism and American Life, 1. Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1952, Chapter VI, Ira Kipnis, The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912. New York: Columbia University Press, 1952, David A. Shannon, The Socialist Party of America, A History. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955.

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ORGANIZATION DEPARTMENT

SOCIALIST PARTY OF NORTH DAKOTA

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
 G. O. BROWN
 A. W. BAKER
 JAMES WOODS
 H. A. STUMP
 W. L. CHITTENDEN
NATIONAL COMMISSIONERS
 ARTHUR GARDNER



SECRETARY
 G. O. BROWN
STAFF ORGANIZER
 G. O. BROWN
DETECTIVE AND VIGIL
 A. W. BAKER
 H. A. STUMP
 JAMES WOODS
 W. L. CHITTENDEN
 H. A. STUMP
 A. W. BAKER

BINGO, NORTH DAKOTA, OCTOBER 23, 1915

Dear Comrades:

Reading is important to the success of the present work, to every step of your personal betterment, to the development of the party, to the success of the movement, to the success of the struggle, to the success of the revolution, to the success of the world.

According to the report of the Executive Committee, the work of the party in the past has been very successful. The party has been able to attract a large number of new members, and to increase its influence in the community. This is due to the fact that the party has been able to present a clear and convincing case for its program, and to attract the support of the masses.

It is important to the success of the party that every member should be able to read and understand the program of the party. This is why it is so important that every member should be able to read and understand the program of the party. This is why it is so important that every member should be able to read and understand the program of the party.

The success of the party depends upon the success of the masses. This is why it is so important that every member should be able to read and understand the program of the party. This is why it is so important that every member should be able to read and understand the program of the party.

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R MITTANOR LETTER

PRINTED AT THE

Executive Office, Socialist Party of North Dakota

BINGO, N. D.

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PERMIT NO. 100

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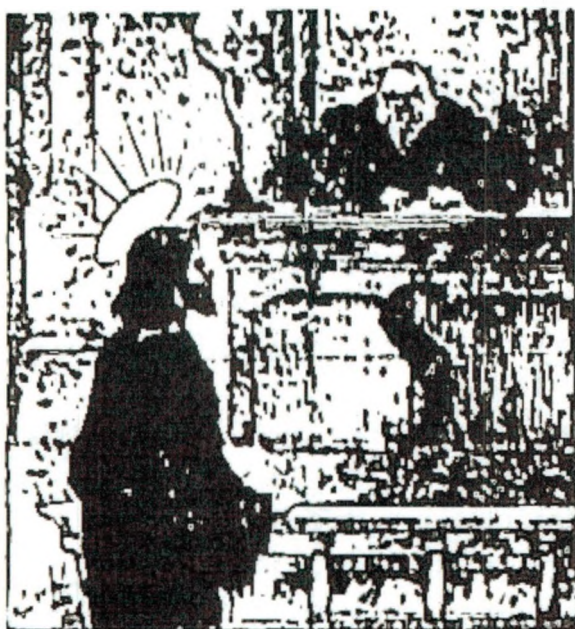
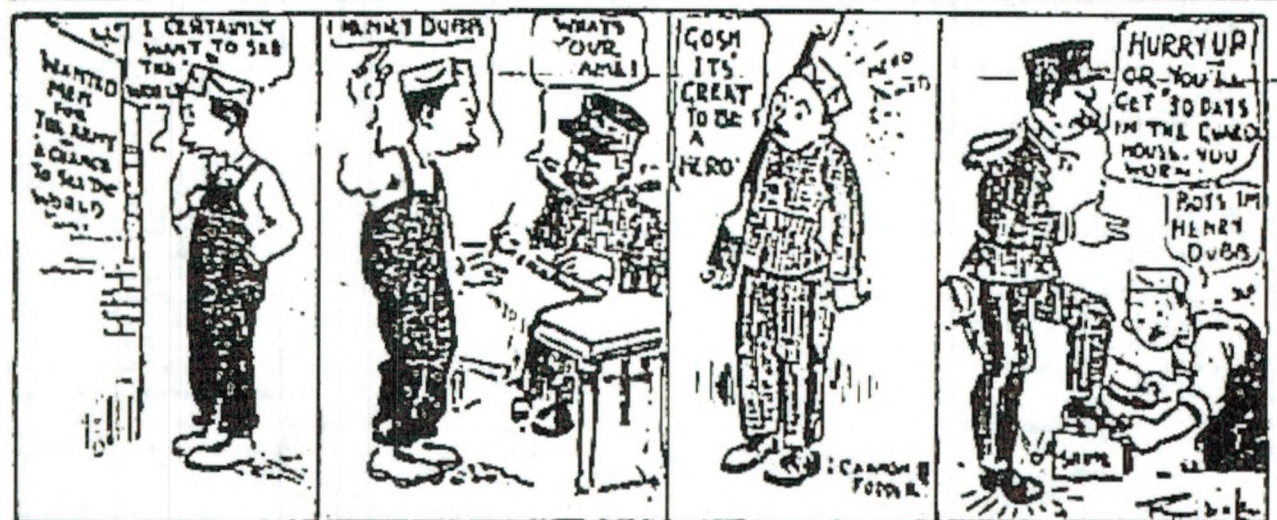
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THE ICONOCLAST

FIGHTING FOR THE UNDER DOG

MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA, AUGUST 14, 1912



If the Carpenter of Nazareth should come to Minot

THE LOOK-OUT

H. G. THOMPSON
State Secretary Socialist Party

It is better to vote to "Let the People own the Banks" than to wish you had.

Miss Marie Baxter, State Woman's Correspondent, is now located at Madras.

Wm. Heuser is a busy man, but he found time to organize two locals in Williams county last week.

Read the Socialist Platform now. After election you will have some "please remit" letters to read.

The banks want Hanna in the governor's chair. Therefore they will not cash collections very strong until after November 3.

Everybody is busy. The "sleeper" is busy telling how busy he is. The "live wire" is busy handing out copies of the platform and leaflets.

The Socialist Legislators who will be elected this fall will make a strong fight for woman's suffrage and the initiative, referendum and recall.

The requests for information which have been received at this office prove that special provision should be made in the future to take care of this work.

A prominent official said the other day that despite the big crops there would be no more money in Williams county next spring than there was last spring. Why?

Does stamp sales fell off somewhat during the month of September. The special work of the campaign is being carried on mainly by literature sales and small campaign donations.

Elmer Moore and O. M. Thomson, who were engaged for work in the state, sent word that they would be unable to come. The meetings that had been advertised were, therefore, called off, causing considerable disappointment.

Now that the secretary of state has promised the mossvelts a column on the official ballots, they ought to forget that he isn't exactly a "what do you call 'em." Can't catch Socialist votes that a-way, P. D.

APPENDIX 2-2

THE LOOK-OUT

H. G. THOMPSON
State Secretary Socialist Party

Comrade Phil Galtrey, private secretary to Major Leno of Independence, N. Y., appeared at the Wood during the summer months. Comrade Galtrey is one of the most eloquent and forceful speakers upon the American platform. Locals can make no mistake in engaging him for a lecture. He writes his Galtrey, State Secretary of Arkansas, is arranging his routing. His address is, 270 N 12th, Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

Comrade Jacob's routing to this part of the state is as follows:

June 27	Veils
" 28	Minot
" 29	"
" 30	Iron Lake
July 1	Aerota
" 2	Kennett
" 3	Flagler
" 4	Southville Twp.
" 5	Columbus
" 6	McKeaney
" 7	Loufard

Comrade Albert E. Bowen, recent candidate for governor of this state, will be the fourth of July speaker at Madras. His routing will be as follows:

June 27	Veils
" 28	Minot
" 29	"
" 30	Logan
July 1	Herron
" 2	Garrison
" 3	Energy Chautauque
" 4	Howe City
" 5	Minot
" 6	Kennett
" 7	Clairton

From the 10 to the 16th inclusive, the routing will be arranged by Comrade Theo. Hennessee, State Committee member of McKeaney county.

From the 17 to 20, inclusive, the County Secretary, O. M. Heuser, will have charge of the routing and will deliver the speaker to J. E. Mayer, of Madras, who, in turn, will have charge of the routing from 21 to 23 inclusive and will deliver speaker at here Comrade J. Arthur Scott, of Fairview, Mont., who has done splendid work for the cause in northwestern McKeaney county, will at lead to the work of advertising the meetings and assisting Comrade Hoover at here and Fairview.

The Comrades of McKeaney Co., have a difficult field to work in. But their untiring efforts are bound to overcome all obstacles. We will want that the Socialists will carry McKeaney county by a large majority in 1914.

WORKERS OF THE WEEK

BY HAL THOMPSON

Every Local should see that its secretary is getting the Iconoclast regularly.

Don't talk about what "we" have done if you are not a worker doing your share.

Comrade White picked up a couple of new ones last week. He is one of the railroad bunch — may the tribe increase.

A card from Arthur LeSueur indicates that he is in the vicinity of the Yellowstone National Park enjoying a well earned vacation.

O. M. Thomason sends in a list of six yearlies which were handed in at a couple meetings in the eastern part of the State.

The Minot Comrades took a hand in the sub getting game last week and as a consequence fifty-one business-men will get the Iconoclast with-out having to borrow from the barber-shop. Comrades Teutsch, Dorma and Eisel took a half holiday and gathered in ten subscriptions each.

Cow Creek Local (Williams County) opened the season by sending in a list of twelve. E. C. Landis the secretary, says that we may expect to hear from that section of the country again before long. Other locals please wake up and take notice.

The expense of installing the new press and folder and moving to larger quarters took all our available cash and when we mentioned it a few of the weak-knees took it for granted that we were "bumped." The "Live-wires" laughed and went Sub-hustling as a result one hundred and fifty one new names are now on our sub list. Can you beat it?

Get-a-sub, get-a-sub, get-a-sub-sub?

APPENDIX 2-3

At The Front

ARTHUR WILLIAMS

A river in Brazil is to be named Roosevelt. Doubtless it has a mouth bigger than its head.

Spring is here. Get busy, farmers, and sow the crop the bankers will harvest this fall.

Westby comes right back with a promise to prepare for summer speakers. Ole Hjelm is at the helm. Nuff said.

Twelve per cent.—Shucks! Stick four dollars into five Iconoclast sub cards and make twenty-five per cent right off the bat.

Remember Capitalism does not stop when spring comes. It works night and day the year around. The Socialist must do the same.

That man Todd at Williston must be a human dynamo. Keep it up, Comrade, we only wish we had more of the Todd tribe in our state organization.

For every man who succeeds in winning out nineteen aspire to do so—and all twenty are thus kept in lifelong bondage at the expense of one fortune.

The worst evil of poverty is not the want of material things, but in the stunting and distortion of the higher qualities.

Frederick has more than one hustler, but Comrade Carl F. Solem keeps up pretty close to the head of his class. We look for some big results out that way this year.

Everyone in your neighborhood is a Socialist but don't know it. A pamphlet, a paper, or even a word from you, may change opposition into co-operation. Try it.

We don't hear much from Fargo these days. What's the matter, comrades, has the Forum managed to make you believe in their brand of prosperity?

A half million human beings in North Dakota would be benefitted by government owned banks. A half a hundred greedy inhuman beings stand in the way—because the half million eat them. Of which class are you?

THREE GREAT SPEAKERS TO START SOCIALIST 1916 CAMPAIGN



GEORGE R. KIRKPATRICK



RYAN WALKER



EMIL SEIDEL

Here are the faces of the three great speakers who will start the 1916 Socialist campaign in October. They are well known among Socialists as well as non-Socialists. They have been booked to appear in 17 cities during the fall, winter and spring, not only to give lectures on Socialism, but also

to lead their workers in the campaign of preparation now under way to put the Socialist party organization in good shape for an energetic presidential campaign next year. George R. Kirkpatrick is the author of "War—What For?" the greatest book ever written in this country against militarism,

Emil Seidel is the former Socialist mayor of Milwaukee, Wis., and the Socialist vice-presidential candidate in 1912. Ryan Walker, the creator of Henry Dobb, is one of the best known revolutionists of the country. His lecture on "The New Adventures of Henry Dobb" is an eye opener to Socialists and non-Socialists alike.

These Men Will Tour North Dakota

Here is a Chance to Hear The Greatest American Socialist

As a speaker Debs has no superiors: his personality is irresistible and to hear him is to love him whether you believe him or not.

Come to Minot on June 14th. Train service is good.

COME AND HEAR
DEBS
 THE MATCHLESS ORATOR
 AND **LABOR CHAMPION**

Order tickets right now. Time is short. Hurry!

Will Speak In
MINOT
 AT
DORMAN PARK
MON., JUNE 14
 Admission 50c. The **ICONOCLAST** 6 Months Free

Every person interested in this great worldwide movement should come to this lecture. The tickets are ready. Send for a bunch and sell them to your neighbors. Every ticket is good for the lecture and six months subscription to The Iconoclast. Write at once for tickets.

ADDRESS
THE ICONOCLAST MINOT, N. DAK

PRINTERS' INK - the best author-
ity on advertising costs.
A labor paper, for example, has-
ing 1,000 subscribers is not more val-
uable to the business man who adver-
tises in it than any ordinary paper
with 6,000 subscribers.

THE ICONOCLAST

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF LABOR

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION
WILL HELP SUPPORT OURS FOR
"PROGRESS YOUR OWN"
NO. 167

VOL. 9 - NO. 15

MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA, JUNE 11 1915

50 PER COPY - 415 1/2 PER YEAR

DEBS COMES TO MINOT, MONDAY, JUNE 14

June 14 will be biggest day in history of movement in State — Hundreds coming — Big Banquet and Reception — Base Ball Game in afternoon — Lecture at 8 P. M.

An' there's 'Gone Debs, a man 'at stands,
An' jest holds out in his two hands,
As warm a heart as ever beat
Twist here and the judgment seat.

James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier poet, penned the foregoing lines in honor of his devoted friend, Eugene Victor Debs. Debs has been the ruler, four times, of nearly a million American people to the highest office in their gift.

Dating from the Pullman strike at Chicago in 1894 and his incarceration in Woodstock jail, 'Gone Debs, as he is affectionately known, has been a national character.

He is the most bitterly hated man in America, and also the most beloved man in America.

With his marvelous eloquence, his veridic pen and his whole-hearted devotion to the cause of labor, Debs has done more to arouse the laithers of the nation and awaken them to a determination to wrest from the hands of the Master class a larger measure of justice, than any other one man.

Debs is an orator without a superior on the American platform. His earnestness and undoubted sincerity grips and holds his auditors and his irresistible logic drives home his points so that even the most skeptical is convinced of the righteousness of his cause.

Every person interested in the great and growing movement to the end that labor shall come into its own and toil shall receive its just reward will be glad to hear this great man. To all such, in the vicinity of Minot, that opportunity is approaching.

Debs will be here on Monday, June 14th and will speak in the Grand Stand at Durman park at 8 o'clock P. M. It is expected that two thousand people will hear him upon this occasion.

Comrade Debs will arrive from Williston at 4 o'clock p. m. and will go at once to his hotel. At six o'clock there will be a reception and banquet at Labor Hall, given in his honor, to which all visiting comrades, local comrades and friends and the general public is invited. Supper will be served by the ladies of the local.

Let every Socialist and friend of the movement to emancipate labor from the thongs of wage-slavery help to make this the greatest day in the history of the movement in North Dakota. If you are in reach of Minot, it will well repay you to make the trip and spend the day here. Hundreds of Socialists from all over the Northwest part of the State will be here. They will come



on trains, by strike and in wagons and loggins. This will be the opportunity of your life to meet this great man, catch the spirit of his incomparable eloquence and drink in an inspiration that will send you back to your faces with your eyes and ears open and expectant work in this great cause. You will meet by contact with hundreds of enthusiastic comrades from all over the country and you will rejoice in the fact that you are a part and parcel of a world-wide movement that seeks to overthrow tyranny, injustice and exploitation; remove the cause of commercial strife, social discord and industrial warfare—as well as the cause of international wars and to put the world in the grip of the civilized world and threaten to bring the rest of the world.

You are anxious to help overthrow the system that breeds social and industrial wars, that breeds crime, graft and needless prostitution, child labor, wage slavery and exploitation and establish in its stead a system that will give to every man or woman who toils, the full social value of their labor, that will give to every person who is able and desires to work a chance to work and provide themselves with the comforts, conveniences and luxuries of life.

You want to end the system that keeps half the world in subjection to the other half, that gives a few of the people the power of life and death over many, that does and fattens upon the sweat and toil of the many and that forces that many to live in poverty and degradation and deprives them of all that really makes life worth living.

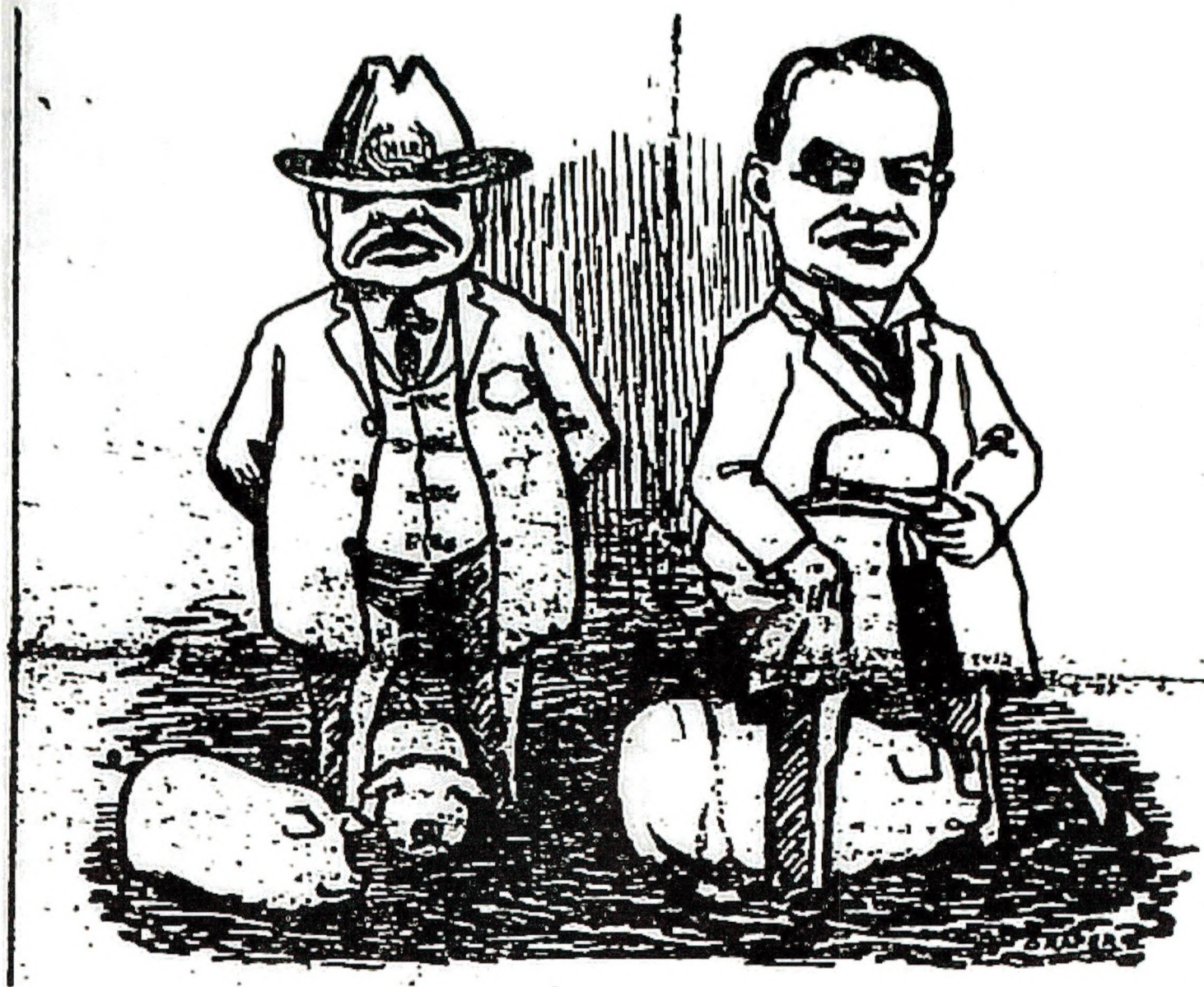
When you are out on your farm, hard at work for the capitalist, you often get discouraged because you do not know and realize how the great movement is growing. But if you will take a day off and come to this great meeting, you will realize as never before the wonderful magnitude and strength of the movement and you will go home with a greater determination to tell the message to your neighbors and to do more to spread and propagate the great cause.

Therefore let us urge you to take this one day off, come to Minot and catch the spirit of this great movement.

There will be a big baseball game at the park in the afternoon, if you like base ball, and then there will be the big reception and banquet at Labor Hall at six o'clock, followed by a summer parade to the Park and then Debs' great speech.

If you miss this treat, you will always regret it. If you take it to you will always rejoice in the fact.

APPENDIX 3-1



APPENDIX 1-5

On Wednesday evening someone who may be remembered the most vivid, Japanese and barroom style that has not been registered against the Japanese police. Several young fellows who attempted to equal me the street were immediately set upon by three wild and wild men in a manner to arouse even the most cold-hearted. At once a number of women rushed toward the police, who were just in the point of leaving the life out of the young man, and tried to prevent these brutes from carrying out their criminal purpose. When the police saw the women coming they at once turned from the men whom they were dragging in a most unbecoming manner and began beating the women instead. The officials and police of Alton have proven beyond a doubt that they are no more beneath manhood as the latter are beneath womanhood. There is nothing so low, brutal, lawless or criminal that the police, at the behest of the city administration, would not commit. One of the women, after being clubbed, was taken to jail and refused bail.

Such is the character of Alton's present administration! How long citizens are you going to put up with this state of things?

