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# IMMIGRANT VOTERS AND THE NONPARTISAN LEAGUE IN NEBRASKA, 1917-1920

BURTON W. FOLSOM, JR.

Many people have wondered why socialism never came to America. Some think that life in the factories and on the farms was often so poor that Americans should have been ripe for a socialist government. Political historians have recently shown that radical movements in America had two insurmountable hurdles: strong ethnic loyalties and religious ties. During America's age of capitalist expansion, cultural divisions prevailed when waves of immigrants poured into urban factories and onto mid-western farms. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, immigrants and natives fought intense local battles over prohibition, woman suffrage, and compulsory school laws. The economic debates over the tariff, monetary policy, and farm income were also important; but they seem to have excited less local interest than did cultural issues, which perhaps impinged more directly on the day-to-day lives of immigrant and native alike.<sup>1</sup>

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The real test of the potency of ethnic and religious divisions in American politics is to look at their staying power during a time of economic crisis and class-oriented appeals. Do immigrant farmers, for example, respond to the politics of agricultural unrest more as immigrants or as farmers?<sup>2</sup> In this essay I will explore the political reaction of German, Swedish, and Czech immigrants in Nebraska to the Nonpartisan League, a militant farmers' organization that agitated during the World War I period for increased farm income through widespread state socialism.

An heir of the Populist party, the Nonpartisan League was founded in North Dakota in 1915. It quickly became a farm lobby eager to improve farm conditions by active state intervention in the economy. Arthur C. Townley, a former socialist organizer and the league's master strategist, campaigned to boost farm income. To do this he wanted to reduce the farmers' dependence on urban businesses and on those economic forces in Minneapolis that determined the pricing of North Dakota grain. By flailing against "Big Biz" in the form of bankers, railroad operators, flour millers, and food processors, Townley soon attracted an immense rural following—well beyond his

original band of "soap boxers, socialists, IWW, or other born again radicals." Transforming invective into a political program, the Nonpartisan League endorsed the state ownership and operation of terminal elevators, flour mills, packing houses, and cold-storage plants; a state hail insurance plan; the exemption of farm tools from taxation; and cooperative rural banks. As one author has observed, "Here, with undisguised rancor, was a class organization with a class program and a class strategy." This "class strategy" was the political takeover of the state government of North Dakota.<sup>3</sup>

Refusing to become tainted by a close relationship with either major party, since both parties associated promiscuously with "Big Biz," the Nonpartisan League instead embraced only those candidates who were lured by the attraction of state socialism. From 1916 to 1922 it won astonishing political victories throughout North Dakota, and as a result, much of its political program became state law. Anxious to spread the gospel of socialism, the Nonpartisan Leaguers expanded their operations to other Great Plains states to forge a regional political alliance. In no state, however, did they match their North Dakota successes.

Political enemies impugned its patriotism and common sense, but the Nonpartisan League won a few congressional and state elections throughout the Midwest before disappearing in the early 1920s when, ironically, farm distress became even more acute. The purpose of this essay is not to evaluate the league's programs or to assign credit or blame to it for any of its activities. Others have performed these tasks with remarkable diligence and, in some cases, with the intensity and vitriol of the leaguers and their opponents.<sup>4</sup> Instead, this essay will focus on the impact of the class appeals of the Nonpartisan League candidates on various ethnic groups in Nebraska.

As one of the larger states in the Great Plains, Nebraska became an important target for Nonpartisan League organizers. After careful planning they arrived in Nebraska in May

1917 and immediately began the systematic recruitment of members. Capitalizing on widespread farmer discontent, the Nonpartisan League secured more than thirteen thousand memberships for sixteen dollars each and established a newspaper, the *Nebraska Leader*, to promote the campaign for state ownership of stockyards, packing houses, flour mills, terminal elevators, creameries, beet-sugar factories, and the telephone system.<sup>5</sup>

The American declaration of war against Germany in 1917, however, dramatically interrupted the league's recruitment of Nebraska farmers. The National Council of Defense, which President Wilson set up to help prosecute the war, demanded that Americans drop political rivalries and channel their energies and attention toward winning the war. To the state Council of Defense in Nebraska, mobilizing farmers for class-conscious political action was not a patriotic contribution to the war effort. A defiant Arthur Townley countered charges of political disloyalty by affirming his devotion to America and offering the services of the league to the government. But he added that "we have been dragged into a war we did not want" and that big business was "ten times worse than the German autocrats." When the Nonpartisan Leaguers in Nebraska circulated a pamphlet attacking "rival groups of monopolists" for instigating the war, the state Council of Defense branded them unpatriotic and forbade them to meet publicly anywhere in Nebraska. Even though the state court eventually restored the league's civil liberties, the loyalty issue put it on the defensive and probably slowed down its mobilizing of disgruntled farmers in Nebraska. The Nonpartisan Leaguers were caught between defending their loyalty and promoting agrarian socialism: they themselves had become the political issue. By the early 1920s they had lost momentum, and as major parties adopted some of their ideas, the league rapidly disintegrated.<sup>6</sup>

The Nonpartisan League waged its most crucial campaign in Nebraska in 1920. The war had ended, the Council of Defense had disbanded, and the league could focus on its

program of inciting class consciousness. Its first act was to hold a convention and nominate a third-party ticket to capture the state government. The league's candidate for governor was Arthur Wray, a lawyer from York, who stumped vigorously for agrarian socialism. Not surprisingly, Wray's rural appeals attracted a rural vote; yet it was also concentrated in two immigrant areas, so ethnicity, not class, explains it best.<sup>7</sup>

The most conspicuous constituency of the Nonpartisan League was the state's German Americans. The gospel of state socialism, however, would not bring the league and the Germans together. Instead, their common struggle to preserve civil liberties during World War I united them in a common cause. The Council of Defense was as irritated by the German Americans' alleged loyalty to the Kaiser as it was by the league's socialistic explanation of the origin of the war. The council therefore denied both the German Americans and the Nonpartisan League the rights to free speech and assembly; it also removed books on Germany and on socialism from libraries across the state. As a result, German Americans and Nonpartisan Leaguers put ideological differences aside to wage a campaign to restore their civil liberties.<sup>8</sup>

The attraction of German Americans to the Nonpartisan League was always peculiar because state socialism had often been a target of their Catholic priests and Lutheran preachers. Earlier agrarian reform movements such as Populism had made little headway in German immigrant communities. Furthermore, the league wanted to give to women the right to vote and take from others the right to drink; such moralistic tinkering offended the personal liberty of immigrants from Germany. In 1914 and 1916, when proposals for woman suffrage and prohibition appeared as referenda on the state ballot, German voters overwhelmingly spurned them both. Yet by 1920 superpatriots in Nebraska had created greater threats to German-American culture by banning the teaching and speaking of German in the schools, by burning "unpatriotic" books, and by apply-

ing yellow paint to the houses of "war slackers." Sensing a sympathetic constituency, league organizers published a special edition of their state newspaper in the German language.<sup>9</sup>

The close connection of German Americans with the Nonpartisan League discredited both even further in the eyes of the superpatriots. Violence and disruption sometimes followed when speech became too free. One official in Minnesota wanted firing squads to remove "the disloyal element." In Nebraska a group of militants assaulted and almost hanged an agent of the Nonpartisan League for handing out German-language copies of the *Nebraska Leader*. A mob in Collinsville, Illinois, actually did hang a German immigrant—after which the *Washington Post* philosophized that "enemy propaganda must be stopped, even if a few lynchings may occur."<sup>10</sup>

In such a heated environment, Nonpartisan League rallies in Nebraska's German areas regularly sparked violence and bloodshed. One such incident happened at a league rally in August 1919 in Beatrice, the seat of Gage County; many German farmers were in attendance, including some from Hanover township, the site of one of the largest German Lutheran rural churches in the Great Plains region. Violence resulted when returned soldiers and self-proclaimed patriots hooted down speakers, provoked brawls, and started a riot. Meanwhile city officials apparently did nothing to restore order. In response, five hundred league sympathizers gathered in nearby Pickrell three weeks later under local German leadership to "protest against any interference with the rights of peaceable assembly and public discussion." They concluded their meeting with a plan to boycott businesses in Beatrice until the governor removed the town's mayor, chief of police, and sheriff for permitting the violence. The editor of the *Lincoln Star* said that "the trouble at Beatrice grew out of . . . the fact that a certain locality in Gage County which manifested pro-German sympathies during the war had contributed a large proportion of the audience." He had insisted earlier that

when returned soldiers are aroused to the point of interfering with and breaking up a meeting of the Townley bund it shows they have not forgotten the disloyal mouthings of the League's leaders when the country was in the throes of a death struggle with Kaiserism, or the fact that the organization got much of its support from disloyal sources.

The *Star* had defined "disloyal sources" earlier as "pro-Germans, anti-war socialists and other disgruntled elements." The feelings evoked by the war lingered long after the armistice; in 1920 Nonpartisan Leaguer Arthur Wray received a mere 16 percent of the vote for governor in Gage County, but he got almost 80 percent of the ballots in Hanover precinct.<sup>11</sup>

An even better illustration of the German-American alliance with the Nonpartisan League in 1920 was the campaign for the state's third congressional seat. In this district both major parties chose candidates hostile to the Nonpartisan League. Marie Weekes, the editor of the *Norfolk Press*, was the league's candidate and one of the first women to run for public office in the state. Weeks believed in prohibition, which was an enathma to Germans, but she also championed freedom of speech and assembly, a national referendum on future American entry into wars, and the League's farm program of widespread state ownership. A vigorous campaigner, she toured northeast Nebraska to spread her ideas. The American Legion and other restrictionist groups were so offended by her "unAmericanism" that they used force to keep her from speaking in several Nebraska towns. Giving her a dose of the "war-time terrorism" she attacked, the Legionnaires and others wore military dress to her gatherings, carried guns, threw eggs, and used physical violence to stop her speeches. By the end of the campaign, Weekes was the center of controversy. Even though she ran third in the race, her unevenly distributed 20 percent of the vote illuminated the contrasting values on agrarian radicalism and civil liberties. The overpowering support, usually more than 60 percent, that she received in German-Catholic and Lutheran pre-

cincts confirms the close association of German Americans with the Nonpartisan League. Saint Helena, for example, a rural German-Catholic enclave in Cedar County, gave her 70 percent of its vote, her strongest support anywhere in that county.<sup>12</sup>

The second of Nebraska's ethnic groups to support the Nonpartisan League was the Swedish Americans. Support for farm cooperatives and state ownership had strong roots in the Scandinavian past. Moreover, the Lutheran church in Sweden was pietistic and urged moralistic intervention in public affairs. By the 1920s, for example, Sweden had enacted national prohibition and state aid for farmers. So in Nebraska, not surprisingly, the Swedes (as well as the Norwegians and Danes) were enthusiastic backers of the Populist party in the 1890s; when the Nonpartisan League picked up its torch a quarter of a century later, the Swedes again supported agrarian reform. The Nonpartisan League began recruiting Nebraska farmers in 1917, and the ubiquity of Swedish names on the membership rolls illustrates the recurring connection between the Swedes and agrarian radicalism.<sup>13</sup>

Germans and Swedes banding together was a novelty in Nebraska politics. The Swedes' tradition of a strong state and the Germans' wish for expanded civil liberties apparently outweighed their past conflicts on the cultural issue of prohibition. On election day in 1920 the Swedes rivaled the Germans in casting ballots for Nonpartisan Leaguers. For example, Phelps County, which had the largest percentage of Swedes in the state, was one of the few counties that Wray carried in his quest for the governorship. Wray held a large and peaceful rally in Holdrege, the seat of Phelps County, and on election day he carried fourteen of the county's seventeen precincts, some by more than 80 percent of the three-party vote. Polk County had the second-largest percentage of Swedes in the state; many Swedish Lutherans had settled in Platte and East Pleasant Home townships, where the town of Swede Home centralized local Swedish activity. These two precincts gave Wray 54 percent of the vote,

more than twice that of the rest of Polk County. Nearby Howard County, the home of the largest concentration of Danes in the state, also went for Wray. Dannebrog, the center of this Danish community, gave Wray 45 percent of the three-party vote. Christian A. Sorenson, the state attorney for the Nonpartisan League, was a second-generation Danish immigrant who, like so many Scandinavians, wanted to bring agrarian radicalism to Nebraska.<sup>14</sup>

The state's third major ethnic group, immigrants from Czechoslovakia, were heavily rural but they were no help for the Nonpartisan League. Their Bohemian heritage did not incline them to favor temperance reform or a strong state. In the 1890s the Populists aroused hostility in Czech communities, where state ownership and moralistic reform repelled these largely Catholic immigrants. In 1914 and 1916 the state's Czech voters emphatically rejected woman suffrage and prohibition, and the Nonpartisan League's association with this cultural tinkering undoubtedly rankled the skeptical Czechs even further. In addition the league's criticism of World War I angered those Czechs who favored the defeat of the Central Powers, for a breakup of the Austro-Hungarian empire meant independence for the Czechs. Like so many other Nebraskans, then, the Czechs felt no urge to defend the civil liberties of German Americans or Nonpartisan Leaguers. In Saline County, for example, which had the largest percentage of Czechs in the state, a mere 7 percent of the voters wanted the Nonpartisan League candidate for governor.<sup>15</sup>

A study of Saunders County helps to show the immigrant response to the Nonpartisan League. Nestled between Lincoln and Omaha in the southeastern part of the state (Fig. 1), Saunders County was settled by a diverse group of immigrant farmers. A colony of thirty families from Horjo Forsamlay, Kristianstad Lan, Sweden, were among the county's first inhabitants. They had traveled by ship and railroad to Nebraska and then by wagon and ferry to Saunders County. They "settled in the south-central part" of the county in 1869, and there they built the town of Swedeburg. In 1870

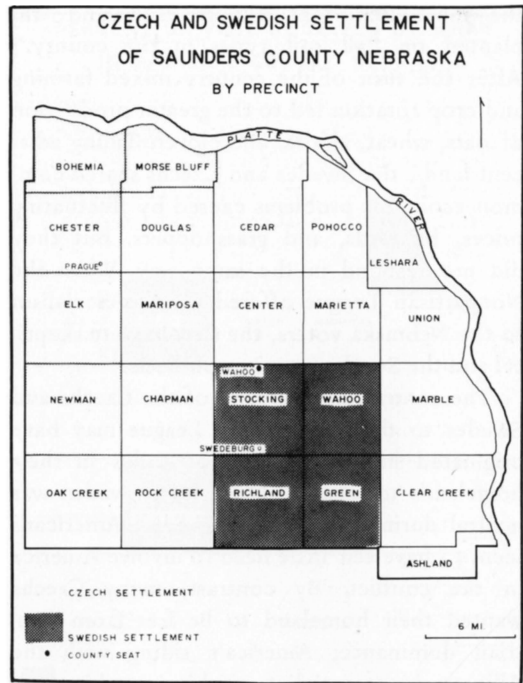


FIG. 1

they were joined by one hundred more Swedish families and together they occupied most of the land in South Stocking, Wahoo, Richland, and Green townships. They adjusted to the hazards of farming on the Great Plains and built three Lutheran churches and a Lutheran college. In 1920 many of their descendants occupied these four townships and parts of others.<sup>16</sup>

Beginning in the 1880s a large group of Czechs settled directly northwest of the Swedes. This mostly Catholic group of Bohemian farmers colonized five townships in the western part of Saunders County and several more in adjacent Butler County. The center for these Czechs was the town of Prague, which was built up around a saloon. They soon added a parochial school, a large Catholic church, a bank, and a grain mill. By 1920 Prague and Swedeburg symbolized two different cultures existing uneasily side by side.<sup>17</sup>

Farming was the hub of economic life in Saunders County. By 1880 corn had become

the most important export crop and was planted on "all soil types in the county." After the turn of the century mixed farming and crop rotation led to the greater production of oats, wheat, alfalfa, and clover. Tilling adjacent lands, the Swedes and Czechs shared common economic problems caused by fluctuating prices, blizzards, and grasshoppers. But they did not respond in the same way. When the Nonpartisan League offered agrarian socialism to the Nebraska voters, the Czechs were skeptical and the Swedes were sympathetic.<sup>18</sup>

The contrasting reactions of the Czechs and Swedes to the Nonpartisan League may have originated in the differing attitudes in their homelands toward the Great War. Sweden was neutral during the war, so Swedish Americans seem to have felt little need to involve America in the conflict. By contrast, many Czechs wanted their homeland to be free from Austrian dominance; America's siding with the Allies was essential to achieving this end. Whatever the case, the Czechs of Saunders County, more than the Swedes, wanted to fight in the war to vanquish the Austrian empire. Czech names abound on the lists of volunteers in the armed forces and the lists of contributors to the Red Cross. Most exuberant of all was Emil E. Placek, the leader of the local Czech community and the chairman of the Saunders County Council of Defense.<sup>19</sup>

The son of a Bohemian farmer, Emil Placek grew up in Milligan, Nebraska, a Czech settlement located fifty miles southwest of Saunders County. He saw the need for education and attended Western Normal School near Lincoln and went to law school at the University of Nebraska, where he was graduated in 1897. The next year Placek fought in the Spanish-American War and shortly afterward moved to Saunders County, where by 1907 he became a prominent lawyer and judge. He was elected state senator on the Democratic ticket in 1910 and 1912. A civic leader in the local Czech settlement, Placek founded the only bank in Prague and a manufacturing company in the county seat of Wahoo. When "duty" called he assumed the presidency of the Saunders County

Council of Defense in 1917. As its spokesman, Placek directly rebuked the Nonpartisan League and indirectly harassed the Swedes in his county.<sup>20</sup>

The Nonpartisan League and the Saunders County Council of Defense had been trading insults almost from the outset of the war. The league recruited hundreds of members in Saunders County, including some Germans in the area and many farmers near Swedeburg. Local superpatriots were aghast and attacked "the aims and purposes of this so-called Nonpartisan League" as "disloyal and pro-German." In a showdown the league and the Council of Defense debated publicly in Wahoo in early December 1917. Richard Metcalfe, an officer in the state Council of Defense, branded the Nonpartisan League disloyal during this debate; later Emil Placek published letters from other leaders of the council, who denounced the ideology and patriotism of the league.<sup>21</sup>

Undaunted by criticisms of their loyalty, the Nonpartisan Leaguers kept on recruiting among the heavily Swedish farm population of Saunders County. They even scheduled a rally in Wahoo on March 30, 1918, to promote agrarian radicalism. Placek countered by banning this and all future Nonpartisan League meetings in the county. The Czech patriarch insisted that the scheduled rally "is resented by all loyal citizens and if allowed to be held may incite riot and lawlessness." An indignant batch of Nonpartisan League organizers, led by state Senator W. J. Taylor, came to Wahoo anyway and there met Placek and protested this denial of civil liberties. A crowd of "patriots" in Wahoo threatened the radicals with bodily harm and chased them out of town. Afterward, one of these patriots immortalized the event with the following verse:

Over the hills to Placek's town  
He and his cohorts came burning down  
Only to meet the patriots true  
And Taylor beat it from old Wahoo.<sup>22</sup>

The leaguers counterattacked: they circulated petitions demanding that Placek be removed as chairman of the local Council of



Defense. Then, banned from Wahoo, they held a league meeting in more friendly territory—a schoolhouse just outside of Swedeburg. A vigilant Council of Defense heard about the gathering, disrupted it, and arrested organizer W. E. Quigley on charges of vagrancy, violating the state sedition law, and holding a meeting without a permit. John Hanson (a Swede), John O. Schmidt (a German), and C. E. Beadle posted the \$1,000 bail bond to free Quigley, whom Placek warned to get out of the county. In the waning days of the war, one of Placek's final schemes was to urge all leaguers in the county to cancel their memberships. If they refused, he warned, "action will be brought against the League (without expense to you) to recover the \$16 paid by you, and whatever may be recovered [will] be donated to the Red Cross."<sup>23</sup>

The feuding in Saunders County over patriotism and civil liberties received state and national attention. Since then several writers have commented on the explicit denial of First Amendment rights to Nonpartisan Leaguers in Saunders County.<sup>24</sup> More subtle, but just as interesting, are the ethnic tensions that kept the county's farmers from uniting. These tensions had originated in conflicts over cultural values and ethnic traditions; they dominated Nebraska politics long before the war and even shaped political responses afterward. In 1920, when the Nonpartisan League mounted another crusade to bring agrarian socialism to Nebraska, this time unencumbered by the war, Saunders County again split along ethnic lines. The cultural differences between the Czechs and the Swedes divided them more than their common economic problems united them.

This ethnic divisiveness might appear startling to some because the Nonpartisan League's quest for a united farmers' party seemed to make sense by 1920. The removal of price supports after World War I drastically slashed the prices of many farm commodities. The league offered its solutions just as farm income was dwindling, land prices were plummeting, and foreign markets were restricted by protective tariffs. In the 1920 campaign the

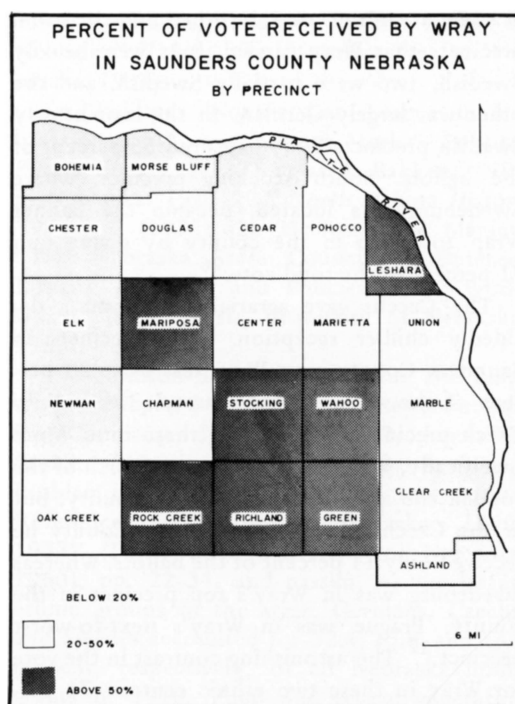


FIG. 2

Nonpartisan League platform advocated low-cost farm credit and hail insurance, no taxes on farm equipment, and state ownership of stockyards, packing houses, cold-storage plants, terminal elevators, flour mills, creameries, beet-sugar factories, and the telephone system. The league's candidates for public office waged vigorous campaigns and scared major party leaders. The agrarian radicals won no state offices, but their 20 to 25 percent of the vote showed acute farm discontent and was respectable for a third party.<sup>25</sup> When their vote is scrutinized by precinct, however, the rural ethnic conflict seems to have shattered the agrarian solidarity.

The information in Figure 2 illustrates the ethnic response in Saunders County to the Nonpartisan League's third-party challenge in 1920. Arthur Wray, the radical farmers' choice for governor, carved out 24 percent of the state vote. In Saunders County Wray received a similar 26 percent of the vote, but as the map indicates (Fig. 2), his support was strong



in some areas and weak in others. Of the seven precincts that Wray carried, four were heavily Swedish, two were partially Swedish, and the other was largely German. In the four heavily Swedish precincts Wray captured 55 percent of the ballots. South Stocking precinct, where Swedeburg was located, became the banner Wray township in the county by giving him 71 percent of the total vote.<sup>26</sup>

The Czechs gave agrarian radicalism a decidedly chillier reception. Nine precincts in Saunders County gave Wray less than 20 percent of the vote, and the county's five heavily Czech precincts were among these nine. More specifically, Wray got roughly one-fourth of the vote in the state and in Saunders County, but in the Czech enclaves of Saunders County he received only 11 percent of the ballots. Whereas Swedeburg was in Wray's top precinct in the county, Prague was in Wray's next-to-worst precinct.<sup>27</sup> The astonishing contrast in the vote for Wray in these two ethnic centers—71 percent in Swedeburg and 9 percent in Prague—symbolizes the two contrasting cultures and how they clashed over agrarian socialism.

Why did agrarian radicalism fail? Historians who ask that question about the Populists, the Nonpartisan League, and the Farm Holiday movement usually assume that economic issues, those impinging on jobs and income, *should* shape political behavior.<sup>28</sup> Once we recognize the importance of other concerns, especially those touching ethnicity, religion, and cultural traditions, an answer becomes obvious. Agrarian radicalism failed because it was so often irrelevant or contradictory to cultural values and traditions cherished dearly by American farmers. A better question would be: how could the culturally fragmented and economically stratified farmers of America ever be expected to coalesce behind an experiment in agrarian socialism? They didn't for the Populists in the 1890s and they didn't for the Nonpartisan League in the 1920s. Self-interest and other interests made unity on economic issues almost impossible.

Nebraska's three major ethnic groups, then, provide good illustrations of varied reactions

to agrarian socialism. The Swedes were almost ideal recruits for the Nonpartisan League. Sweden was neutral during World War I, and the league's radical critique of the war's origins did not violate the Swedish Americans' ethnic loyalties. The Scandinavian tradition of cooperation and an active state was compatible with the goals of agrarian radicalism. Banning the saloon, another goal of the Nonpartisan League, was a popular reform with most of Nebraska's Scandinavian voters; in fact, prohibition became law in Sweden, Norway, and Finland almost at the same time as in the United States. Nebraska's Czechs, by contrast, often viewed the Nonpartisan League with alarm. The league's hostile stance toward the war ruffled those Czechs who perceived an Allied victory as the key to liberating the Czech homeland from Austria. Furthermore, the Nonpartisan League's endorsement of prohibition and woman suffrage alienated Czech voters who opposed any kind of temperance reform or equal-suffrage measure. Nebraska's Germans, both Lutheran and Catholic, had yet another point of view on agrarian socialism. They shared the Czechs' animus against prohibition and woman suffrage, but they agreed with the league's advocacy of civil liberties. Recoiling from persecution on the war issue, Nebraska's Germans found in the similarly harassed Nonpartisan League the only political organization that would welcome them and support their claims to freedom of speech and assembly. Apparently groups that are maligned together align together, because the state's German voters rallied behind the Nonpartisan League candidates at election time.

Recognizing the cultural bases of support for the Nonpartisan League in Nebraska, we can better understand the obstacles to agrarian solidarity. Knowing all this, if we had to devise a formula for a Nonpartisan League triumph, what elements would we include? First, we would have to contrive a large rural state with many farms, no large cities, and few towns. Second, we would populate these farms mainly with immigrants from Germany or Scandinavia. Third, we would probably want a one-crop economy, so that fluctuating prices would

affect most farmers uniformly and unite them on economic goals more easily. We might also include a large marketing, financial, and railroad center located just outside of the state. Then this city and its businessmen could serve as a negative reference point during hard times to rally the entire population. Add to our concoction strong, innovative leaders to stir up the ingredients and we have a recipe for agrarian socialism. As it happened, there actually was a state in which all of these elements were present. In that state, North Dakota, the Nonpartisan League scored a political victory that was as stunning as it was unique.

## NOTES

1. The trailblazing book in the new political history is Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961). Two helpful articles are Samuel P. Hays, "History as Human Behavior," *Iowa Journal of History* 58 (July 1960): 193-206; and Hays, "Social Analysis of American Political History, 1880-1920," *Political Science Quarterly* 80 (September 1965): 373-94.
2. Paul Kleppner, *The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900* (New York: Free Press, 1970); Richard J. Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).
3. Robert L. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 31; Grant McConnell, *The Decline of Agrarian Democracy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), p. 41.
4. Andrew A. Bruce, *Non-Partisan League* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1921); Herbert Gaston, *The Nonpartisan League* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1920); William Langer, *The Nonpartisan League: Its Birth, Activities and Leaders* (Mandan, N.D.: Morton County Farmers Press, 1920); S. R. Maxwell, *The Nonpartisan League from the Inside* ([St. Paul, Minn.]: Dispatch Printing Co., 1918).
5. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, p. 277;
- Elmo B. Phillips, "The Non-Partisan League in Nebraska" (M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, 1931).
6. Phillips, "Non-Partisan League in Nebraska," p. 11, and passim; Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, p. 140; Douglas A. Bakken, "NPL in Nebraska: 1917-20," *North Dakota History* 39, no. 2 (1972): 26-31; Robert N. Manley, "The Nebraska State Council of Defense: Loyalty Programs and Policies during World War I" (M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, 1959).
7. Addison Sheldon, *Nebraska: The Land and the People*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1931), 1:931-72; James A. Stone, "Agrarian Ideology and the Farm Problem in Nebraska State Politics with Special Reference to Northeast Nebraska, 1920-1933" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, 1960), pp. 22-34, and passim. As the largest ethnic groups in the state, Germans, Czechs, and Swedes accounted for 32.4, 13.8, and 13.1 percent, respectively, of all Nebraska immigrants in 1910. First- and second-generation Germans, Czechs, and Swedes made up 16.9, 5.3, and 4.9 percent, respectively, of Nebraska's total population in 1910. See E. Dana Durand and William J. Harris, directors, *Thirteenth Census of the United States: Population* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1913), 3:50; 1:30, 808, 812, 939.
8. Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974); Manley, "Nebraska State Council of Defense"; Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War* (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936); Clifton J. Child, *The German-Americans in Politics, 1914-1917* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1939); Philip Gleason, *The Conservative Reformers: German-American Catholics and the Social Order* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).
9. Burton W. Folsom, "Tinkerers, Tipplers, and Traitors: Ethnicity and Democratic Reform in Nebraska during the Progressive Era," *Pacific Historical Review* 50 (February 1981): 53-75; Gleason, *Conservative Reformers*; Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, p. 73; Frederick C. Luebke, *Immigrants and Politics: The Germans of Nebraska, 1880-1900* (Lincoln: University of

Nebraska Press, 1969); and Phillips, "Non-Partisan League in Nebraska," p. 7.

10. Phillips, "Non-Partisan League in Nebraska," pp. 39-43; Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, pp. 268-69.

11. *Nebraska Leader*, September 6, 1919; *Lincoln Star*, August 10, 12, 30, 1919; *Beatrice Daily Express*, August 9, 11, 30, 1919; Phillips, "Non-Partisan League in Nebraska," pp. 44-46; Election Records, Gage County, Nebraska, 1920.

12. For a description of Mrs. Weekes's campaign, see the *Norfolk Press*, September 1930, to the date of the election; *Nebraska Leader*, June 26, 1920; *Humphrey Democrat*, October 1920; *Randolph Times-Enterprise*, November 4, 1920.

13. Ingvar Andersson, *A History of Sweden* (New York and Washington, D.C.: Praeger, 1968), especially pp. 363-74; Martin Schnitzer, *The Economy of Sweden: A Study of the Modern Welfare State* (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 43-47; Luebke, *Immigrants and Politics*; "Swedish-Americans and the Anti-Saloon Movement," *Nebraska Issue*, November 12, 1909; for the recruitment of Swedes into the Nonpartisan League, see issues of the *Nebraska Leader*.

14. *Holdrege Citizen*, October 7 and November 4, 1920; *Howard County Republican*, October 14 and November 11, 1920; *Polk County Democrat*, November 11, 1920; Mildred N. Flodman, *Early Days in Polk County* (Lincoln, Nebr.: Union College Press, 1966), pp. 124-34.

15. Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 51-78; R. W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Czechs and Slovaks* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965), pp. 250-312; Folsom, "Tinkerers, Tipplers, and Traitors."

16. The Swedish emigration is analyzed in John S. Lindberg, *The Background of Swedish Emigration to the United States: An Economic and Sociological Study in the Dynamics of Migration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1930). For a description of the Swedes in Saunders County, see Charles Perky, ed., *Past and Present of Saunders County, Nebraska*, 2 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915), 1:44-47, 123-27, 195; Albert P. Strom, *Swedish Pioneers in Saunders County, Nebraska* (n.p., 1972); *Swedeburg Covenant Church: Centennial, 1876-1976* (n.p., 1976); Louis Adamic, *A Nation of Nations* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 133.

17. Perky, *Saunders County*, 1:195; *The History of Prague, Saunders County, Nebraska, 1887-1937* (Prague, Nebr.: Prague Herald, 1937), pp. 5, 7, 9-11, 21, 34-35, 47; Gordon M. Riedesel, "The Cultural Geography of Rural Cemeteries: Saunders County, Nebraska" (M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 1979), pp. 14-27.

18. Perky, *Saunders County*, 1:199-203.

19. Perky, *Saunders County*, 2:313; *Wahoo Democrat*, December 6, 1917. For the contrasting views of Swedes and Czechs on World War I, see George M. Stephenson, "The Attitude of Swedish Americans toward the World War," *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association* 10 (July 1920): 79-94; Seton-Watson, *Czechs and Slovaks*, pp. 250-312.

20. Perky, *Saunders County*, 2:313; *History of Prague*, pp. 10, 47.

21. *Wahoo Democrat*, November 22, 29, and December 6, 27, 1917.

22. *Wahoo Democrat*, March 28 and April 4, 1918.

23. *Wahoo Democrat*, June 27, July 4, and August 8, 1918; Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, pp. 205-6.

24. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, pp. 205-6; Phillips, "Non-Partisan League in Nebraska," pp. 22-24.

25. *Nebraska Leader*, July 26, 1919; Phillips, "Non-Partisan League in Nebraska," pp. 96-111; *Nebraska Blue Book, 1920*, Abstract of the Vote.

26. *Wahoo Democrat*, November 4 and 11, 1920; Election Records of Saunders County, Nebraska, 1920.

27. Election Records of Saunders County, Nebraska, 1920.

28. An example of this is Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, *Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951).