

The previous issue of NORTH DAKOTA HISTORY included an article entitled "The Fort Buford Diary of Pvt. Sanford." By error we failed to acknowledge the owner of the diary of Wilmot P. Sanford. The manuscript is in the Western Americana Collection of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. We wish to apologize for this error and thank Mr. Archibald Hanna, Curator of the Western Americana Collection at Yale, for his great courtesy in this matter.



With the United States still fighting on a global scale, with talk of "hawks" and "doves", with draft-card burners, and with many voices warning of danger from the "enemy within", public opinion remains a matter of grave importance. In this article which is part of the research for a master's degree, Mr. Watne has carefully explored the frame of mind of North Dakotans as expressed in one of the state's leading newspapers during part of the First World War. This survey is a fine example of the careful research now being done by many young scholars, and *North Dakota History* is proud to be the first to publish Mr. Watne's work.

Joel Watne is a Graduate Assistant in the Department of History, Moorhead State College. He formerly taught at Eveleth, Minnesota, and at Arusha, Tanzania, during the first two years of that nation's independence.

PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD NON-CONFORMISTS AND ALIENS DURING 1917,

AS SHOWN BY

THE FARGO FORUM

By JOEL ANDREW WATNE

The design on this page is from a publication of Governor Lynn J. Frazier's address at farewell ceremonies in honor of the First and Second Regiments, North Dakota National Guard. Frazier had been attacked in the newspapers for being soft toward the aliens and non-conformists. . .



Courtesy of Century Co. Louis Raemaekers
What kind of an American is this?



Courtesy of Century Co. Louis Raemaekers

Uncle Sam: "What are they doing?"
 Putting anti-English and pro-German
 propaganda in the well of public opinion



Courtesy of Century Co. Louis Raemaekers
In the office of a German newspaper in America

"My tear yellow, do not forget to wave
 now and again a leedle American flag,
 but 'keep on with the good work of
 poisoning the people's minds"



Courtesy of Century Co. Louis Raemaekers

"Go, my peace doves to my enemies, your charms
 may prove more fatal than my armies."

The popular cartoons of Louis Raemaekers were published all over America, expressing an attitude and encouraging American suspicion of subversive elements in this country.

North Dakota did not manage to escape the problem created by wartime increases in public intolerance of those who are different, as a glance through newspapers of the World War I era, such as the *Fargo Forum*, will show. Its pages were filled with articles which revealed distrust of and hostility to German-Americans, pacifists and others who were identifiably "different". A veteran *Forum* staffer confirmed that there had been much hostility to the German-Americans, but insisted that this had been a reaction to their sympathies for the Central Powers.¹

During the summer of 1914, public opinion, as represented by the newspapers, was involved in a frantic shifting of gears. This was not accomplished without a certain amount of grinding. The assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and of his wife, Sophia, was reported with great sympathy for the royalty.² The account of the assassination was quite thorough, and the two assassins who took part, Gavrilo Prinzip and Gabrinovics, are portrayed as ignorant and fanatical hoodlums who barely escaped "lynching by the infuriated spectators" before they were seized by the police who "afforded them protection." Prinzip was described as a fanatical, 18-year-old eighth grader who gloried in his feat.³

Late in July, there was a front-page article admiring the Duchess of Brunswick, the Kaiser's daughter, for insisting on caring for her own baby. It appeared that the royal nursemaids were very frustrated by her insistence and appealed to the royal physician, who philosophically explained that "in the case of a first-born, even among royalty, it is difficult to get a mother to turn her child over to nurses."⁴

Less than a week later, the war broke out. The *Forum* did not seem to be entirely dismayed by the prospect, for the declaration was announced with a triple banner headline reading:

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY DECLARED WAR TODAY ON SERVIA —
 ENGLAND AND GERMANY BEGIN MOVING WAR VESSELS —
 AMERICAN WHEAT PRICES LEAP AS RESULT OF NEWS⁵

The good news was that the price of September wheat had closed nine cents above opening quotations.⁶ Two days later, this ambivalent view was expressed once more. Under another treble banner which began "World Catastrophe Imminent in Opinion of England," were two stories on wheat prices. One was headlined "Wheat Shot Up to Dollar a Bushel

¹Interview with Earl Bitzing, August 12, 1964. I was introduced to Mr. Bitzing by another staffer, who, in the context of the 1964 political campaigns, described Mr. Bitzing as a staunch "conservative." The way in which he spoke about events in 1917 indicated that he had probably been in agreement with public opinion.

²"Assassination of Heir to Austrian Throne and Wife Causes World-Wide Sensation," *Fargo Forum*, June 29, 1914, p. 1.

³*Ibid.*

⁴"Kaiser's Daughter Refuses to Permit the Nurses to Care for Her First Baby," *Fargo Forum*, July 23, 1914, p. 1. The Duchess Louisa Victoria still lives in her castle in Brunswick, where her son still claims the Kaiser's throne with some support from West Germany's new National Democratic Party. The baby, Sophia, became the wife of King Paul of Greece, the Duchess' cousin, in a dynastic marriage.

⁵*Fargo Forum*, July 28, 1914, p. 1.

⁶*Ibid.*

on Chicago Board” and the other optimistically predicted “If Russia Becomes Involved Dollar Wheat Will Be Rule.”⁷

Until the declaration of war, sentiment seemed to favor Austria and condemn the disorderly Serbs. As soon as war was declared, sympathy for the underdog reversed the situation. The process began with the publication of a picture of a Serbian infantryman on the first of August. The caption began “Here is the Servian soldier who must fight

⁷*Fargo Forum*, July 30, 1914. p. 1.



Though less artistic than Raemaeker, Phifer made his point equally clear.

Another Startling German Plot Is Exposed*

*Eight-column banner head, page one, Sept. 21, 1917, *The Fargo Forum*.

one of the six great powers of Europe. There are not more than 240,000 of him, but there are more than 2,000,000 Austrians . . .”⁸

The reporting quickly became so anti-German and anti-Austrian that letters objecting to the practice began to come in. George Lutz of Jamestown complained of the application of double standards to the actions of the Allies and Central Powers, to the latter’s disadvantage, because they were always portrayed as villains. He pleaded for the application of a single standard in judging both sides.⁹

A few headlines serve to illustrate his complaint:

“Germans Destroyed Beautiful Belgian City of Louvain”¹⁰

“Graphic Account of Brilliant Sea Fight Given by British”¹¹

“Women Brave in the Face of Death”¹²

This pro-Ally sentiment soon resulted in the establishment of a “Belgian Relief Committee” in North Dakota.¹³

Determining the attitude towards Germans themselves is difficult, for the stories and editorials seem to be divided and confused. Sometimes the Germans are portrayed as savage and sadistic barbarians, and sometimes they are portrayed as good, solid people. In regard to the Germans in Europe, the *Forum* seems to have begun with the premise that a German in uniform was a bad guy and that the German peasant, who paid the taxes which kept him in the field, was a good guy. Later, this was to be modified somewhat, with officers being bad guys and ordinary soldiers being almost-good guys. This attitude is illustrated in an editorial dealing with the prospects for post-war immigration. It begins with a long quotation from the *New York World*, which reported that the Franco-Prussian and Russo-Japanese wars had both been followed by waves of immigrants, and speculated that the present war, which involved all the great nations of Europe, would surely result in an inundating deluge of peasants which the United States should be prepared to direct, utilize and restrict. The *Forum* agreed that this was likely, and predicted that most of “the people who will come will be a hardy type of peasant from central and northern Europe. It is a type to welcome to this farming country.” The *Forum* suggested encouraging as many as possible to settle in North Dakota, for it has “vast stretches of

⁸“Servian Soldier to Fight Austria-Hungary,” *Fargo Forum*, August 1, 1914. p. 9.

⁹“A Plea for Fairness,” *Fargo Forum*, August 27, 1914. p. 4.

¹⁰*Fargo Forum*, August 31, 1914. p. 4.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹²*Fargo Forum*, September 7, 1914, p. 10. This referred to the women of Paris, which was far from the front, and it was one of the articles which prepared the way for the lurid tales which were later ground out with such monotony.

¹³“North Dakota Belgian Relief Committee Now Organized,” *Fargo Forum*, November 24, 1914, p. 1.

untilled lands that could be made to produce millions of dollars of wealth annually."¹⁴

The ambivalent policy towards the war — dismay at the carnage involved and glee when counting the profits accruing to North Dakota — continued. It is reflected in the New Year's Day editorial of 1917, which read in part:

The year that died with midnight has been a momentous year in the world's history, but the year that was born today promises to eclipse it.

It is estimated from official reports that 3,000,000 men were killed in battle during the twelve months just ended. From the same source, it is estimated that 6,000,000 were wounded. As this is written, there is every cause to fear that this horrible record will be surpassed in 1917.

The new year dawns with little hope of peace . . .

The year has been one of remarkable business prosperity in the United States . . .

Despite a short grain crop North Dakota has had a great year. The high prices prevailing for every product which is raised in the state has brought a great influx of wealth. There is every reason for North Dakota to look forward hopefully for another record-breaking year of growth and development along all lines.¹⁵

In early 1917, Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare stirred up violent controversies between the pacifists of various stripes and the militarists, who denounced the pacifists as "un-American." The *Forum's* policy towards pacifists and their ideology at this time was still ambivalent, though destined to radical alteration in the following months. An editorial on February 28th called for "good sense and moderation" in the dispute, and quoted from the *New Republic* the following "sane comment":

Un-American is a word which should not be applied to the pacifist groups who are seeking by argument to influence the government's behavior in this crisis but to those of their critics who accuse them of conspiracy, refuse to recognize their good faith and do not answer their arguments. . . . a sincere desire for peace even under extreme provocation is in itself more respectable than the overbearing manner which we detest in Prussian junkers and endure in American militarists.¹⁶

The *Forum* then added:

Nevertheless, we must in turn ask the pacifists themselves to face the facts dispassionately, and not to be led through blindness or emotion seriously to embarrass the government in a delicate situation. If anyone . . . has conveyed directly to Germany the idea that the nation is ready to take up negotiations again without a prior cessation of unrestricted submarine warfare, he has undermined the effectiveness of the action by the president

¹⁴"Coming Immigration," *Fargo Forum*, September 26, 1914. p. 4.

¹⁵"The Old Year and the New," *Fargo Forum*, January 1, 1917. p. 4.

¹⁶"Time For Good Sense and Moderation," *Fargo Forum*, February 28, 1917. p. 4.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

Publications Must Not Impugn Motives of the U. S. Government.*

*The Fargo Forum, Oct. 10, 1917, p. 3.

U. S. Jails 100 Germans: Plots Against Plants Believed Broken*

*The Fargo Forum, Sept. 27, 1917, p. 1.

The next day came a bombshell in the form of the Zimmermann note. The *Forum* said little about it at first, but quoted an anonymous "pro-German" as saying:

If the officials of the German government have actually been plotting to involve Mexico and Japan in war with the United States, if the published copy of Zimmermann's instructions to Von Bernstorff is genuine, then the United States should not wait five minutes in declaring war on Germany.¹⁸

The man was identified merely as "one of the strongest pro-Germans in Fargo." The *Forum* voiced its approval and averred that the same view would be held by "millions of German-Americans." Great faith in the German-Americans was proclaimed in the following words:

The Germans in the United States are loyal to this country and proof of that loyalty will be shown if it is proved beyond question that the German government has been guilty of this traitorous intrigue.¹⁹

This statement may have been an attempt at self-re-assurance, for the *Forum* soon struck another chord in regard to Germans in the United States. The news was suddenly full of stories of plots and intrigues involving Germans. One of the first reported the arrest of Fritz Kolb in Hoboken and his confession that he had taken part in the Black Tom explosion and was involved in a conspiracy "to blow up President Wilson."²⁰ It also reported that a German reserve lieutenant, Werner Horn, had lost his case before the Supreme Court. He had dynamited a bridge on the Maine-Canada border in 1915, and was claiming immunity from prosecution on the grounds that it was an act of war against Canada, not involving the United States.²¹

Anything involving Germans became front-page news, such as the arrest of Capt. Alfred Fritzen in California without mentioning any charges,²² and the sentencing of some German officers who had scuttled their ship in Charleston harbor.²³

The readers of dime novels were able to get their thrills each day in the items of cloak-and-dagger content. One great "German plot" un-

¹⁸"The Zimmermann Note," *Fargo Forum*, March 1, 1917. p. 4.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰"Plot to Blow Up Wilson," *Fargo Forum*, March 5, 1917. p. 1.

²¹"Werner Horn, German Reservist, Lost Appeal to U. S. Supreme Court," *Fargo Forum*, March 1, 1917. p. 1.

²²"German Officer Nabbed," *Fargo Forum*, March 9, 1917. p. 1.

²³"Eight German Officers Who Sank Steamer Were Sentenced to U. S. Pen," *Fargo Forum*, March 10, 1917. p. 1.

covered involved the smuggling ashore of chronometers. They were carefully inspected to see if the dials contained secret messages, and then impounded for fear that they were to be used in time bombs.²⁴ Apparently it did not occur to anyone that any cheap alarm clock could be used for the purpose.

Less than two weeks later, there was a report of the installation of searchlights near coastal batteries in Maine following the sighting of unidentified prowlers and the fatal wounding of Private John Poor by a prowler.²⁵

Reports of distant and mysterious misdeeds were clearly not sufficiently exciting, and the stories began to get closer to home. Charges of disloyalty and sedition were hurled about with increasing freedom as the terms became ever more fuzzily defined. Ostentatious displays of "patriotism" were required.

On March 27, 1917, "local representatives of the United States Army" filed a complaint on the basis of a denunciatory letter from unknown quarters charging that "anti-recruiting riots," "illicit drilling of troops," and "sedition" were rife in the western part of North Dakota, where there was a heavy German population.²⁶ The same issue carried a story in which Mayor Mitchell of New York, a super-patriot, accused Robert F. Wagner of New York City, the Democratic leader of the state senate, of working in the interests of Germany by blocking the acquisition of land on Rockaway Point for a fort.²⁷

It appears that quite a few people became rather hysterical. They could see German agents behind every bush. The proper antidote for such poison was a stiff dose of patriotism — which was to be defined as flag-waving, sloganeering, and opposition to anyone who criticized anything deemed to be "American" or failed to praise it enough. The *Forum* came out with a page one editorial entitled "Show Your Colors," attractively framed with portraits of Washington and Lincoln, American eagles, flags and other clichés, exhorting everyone to fly flags:

Up with Old Glory!

Let the Stars and Stripes wave from every flag-pole in Fargo; let them grace your store, your office, and your home.

Let every citizen wear a flag on the lapel of his coat.

Isn't it time to "Show Your Colors?"

America — the "Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave" — stands today at the brink of war.

All over the nation there is sweeping today a gigantic wave of patriotism. In the east it has taken on a form more intense than has probably been displayed in a century.

²⁴"U. S. Secret Service Men Uncover Another German Plot May Be of Nationwide Import," *Fargo Forum*, March 13, 1917. p. 1.

²⁵"Use Great Lights in Combatting Work of Night Prowlers," *Fargo Forum*, March 24, 1917. p. 1.

²⁶"Charges of Sedition and Anti-American Demonstrations Against N. Dakota Citizens," *Fargo Forum*, March 27, 1917. p. 1.

²⁷"Mitchell Accused N. Y. Senator of Working in Interests of Germany," *Fargo Forum*, March 27, 1917. p. 1. John Purroy Mitchell was only 37 in 1917, and had presidential aspirations.

United States to Name Men Receiving German Money*

State Department Ready for More Startling Disclosures

Lansing Ready to Dispose of Denials That May Come From Those Involved in Intrigues

*Lead story, *The Fargo Forum*, Sept. 24, 1917, p. 1.

Some of North Dakota's own soldiers have been called into service. Others, no doubt, will be called to the colors later.

Surely, if ever there was a time to "show your colors," it is now.

Let Old Glory tell your story, let Old Glory speak of the patriotism you feel in this hour when the United States of America stands at the threshold of probably the most momentous step she has taken since the days of 1861-1865, when, guided by that master statesman, Abraham Lincoln, she fought for the doctrine of unity, or since the days of the Revolutionary war, when George Washington carried the hopes of the colonists through Valley Forge, and through the dark days of that period, to ultimate victory and national freedom.²⁸

The symbolism of the flag became central to the cult of patriotism which swept the area, helped along by the newspapers. Two days after the above editorial, the *Forum* printed a letter from a German-American which said, in part:

If actual war ever exists it will be because Germany, in an unwise moment, forced the issue upon us. It is for us to be loyal to the grandest flag in the world, a flag which our ancestors saw in the distance like a star of hope through a cloudy sky.²⁹

The *Forum* commented, "Here is a real American. His sentiment rings true."³⁰

However, the exhortations did not have sufficient effect to satisfy the more fervent cultists. A few days later, there was an article complaining that not enough flags were being flown in Fargo. A travelling salesman was quoted as saying that almost every house in every town he visited in South Dakota had flags flying, and that while the Fargo business district showed up fairly well, the residential districts were "woefully lacking in flags . . ."³¹ Needless to say, there were merchants in town who were ready, willing and eager to supply the necessary trappings of patriotism.

An editorial on March 28th indicated continued faith in the German-Americans — but with qualifications:

The *Forum* believes with the *Journal of Commerce* that it would be absurd to class all German-born residents of the country as alien enemies. Possibly there are some enemies among them, and from reports from the

²⁸"Show Your Colors," *Fargo Forum*, March 27, 1917. p. 1.

²⁹"Letters," *Fargo Forum*, March 29, 1917. p. 4.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹"Fargo Is Backward on Flags," *Fargo Forum*, April 2, 1917. p. 1.

western part of the state it appears that government agents have found some evidence of alien enemies in North Dakota, but the vast majority of the German-born residents of the United States will be loyal. . . .

There are millions of German-Americans in the country whose sympathies in the European struggle naturally have been with the "Fatherland." As between the Teutonic powers and the entente powers they could not be expected to favor the enemies of the land of their birth. But when it comes to a clear-cut issue between America and Germany they will be found loyal to the land of their adoption. . . .³²

As evidence of this loyalty, the *Forum* quoted the Roman Catholic bishop of Bismarck, the Right Reverend Vincent Wehrle, as to the nature of the "illicit military drills" previously mentioned. It appeared that in two parishes of the diocese there were drilling societies of young men who liked to occasionally wear uniforms and drill, who sometimes marched in church holiday processions and fired salutes — a sort of glorified Boy Scout troop. Said the bishop: "It looks like a capital joke to connect them with sedition and intimations that they needed special watching by Uncle Sam."³³

This did not entirely quiet fears and suspicions, which were soon to be heightened by the false "revelation" by Representative Miller of Duluth, a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, that the Zimmermann Note had not been fully revealed. He alleged that an unpublished paragraph offered to establish a submarine base "in a Mexican port," to supply Mexico with "unlimited quantities of arms and ammunition," and to send German reservists to Mexico. Miller further "revealed" that three German schooners had landed "on the western coast of Mexico," and that Villa's troops were being drilled by Germans. The situation in Carranza's army was said to be "not much better."³⁴

The hostility made Germans rather anxious, with the result that Mayor Seger of Passaic, New Jersey, asked the State Department for reassurances that no harm was to befall German-Americans. The reassurances were sent.³⁵ This was followed by some blunt "advice" to German citizens by the Attorney-General following the declaration of war: "Obey the law: keep your mouth shut."³⁶

An editorial on April 5th gave an intimation of the general attitude which was unfolding: "It was Mayor Mitchell of New York who said that there are now but two classes of people in this country — 'Americans and traitors.'³⁷ This was followed soon by another, defining the term "alien enemy" and stating:

³²*Fargo Forum*, March 28, 1917. p. 4.

³³"Bishop Wehrle Scouts [sic] Idea That Drilling Clubs Are a Menace," *Fargo Forum*, March 28, 1917. p. 1.

³⁴"More Details of Zimmermann Mexican Plot Unfolded — Representative Miller of Duluth Springs Sensation," *Fargo Forum*, April 5, 1917. p. 1.

³⁵"German Citizens Are Assured Immunity If They Behave Themselves," *Fargo Forum*, April 5, 1917. p. 1.

³⁶"Obey the Law; Keep Your Mouth Shut," Curt Command of Officials," *Fargo Forum*, April 5, 1917. p. 10.

³⁷"Only One Party in America," *Fargo Forum*, April 5, 1917.

Slimy Teuton Intrigue Revealed In All Its Frightfulness*

Official Expose Details List of Activities in U. S.

Judge, Writers, Inventors, Lecturers Named as German Aides — Fomenting of Ill Feeling Between Nations at Peace, Bombing of Ships and Destruction of Life, Held Proved.*

**Fargo Forum*, Sept. 24, 1917, p. 4.

These alien enemies will be under suspicion. They will not have that freedom of action and movement which will be accorded Americans and citizens of other nations, but they will not be molested, and, on the other hand, they will be fully protected, as long as they behave themselves.³⁸

It would soon be proved that these aliens would not be fully protected and that they would be molested — but this would all be done in the name of patriotism. In a brief surge of hysteria, it was suggested that North Dakota change the name of its capital. The *Forum* conceded that this was going a bit far, and quoted from the *Duluth Herald*:

Restaurants are changing the names of "German fried potatoes" and other familiar dishes with Teutonic titles.

Being as silly as that is almost as bad as war itself!

• • •

It would be as sensible to burn all books in our libraries that may happen to contain the work of Goethe, Heine or Schiller because, forsooth, they were Germans!

Our war is not with the German people or German customs or German cooking. We are not fighting German fried potatoes but . . . Hohenzollern medievalism. . . .³⁹

However tolerant the *Forum* may have been to German place-names or potatoes, it was quick to see plots behind possibly unrelated events. Two grain elevators burned in the Twin Cities, and two more in North Dakota. There were reported attempts to blow up bridges over the Mississippi and a rumored plot to dynamite St. Anthony Falls.⁴⁰ The *Forum* concluded that it was "apparent that the enemy within the gates is getting busy" and that the war was getting uncomfortably close to

³⁸"An Alien Enemy," *Fargo Forum*, April 7, 1917. p. 4.

³⁹"Why Be Silly About It?" *Fargo Forum*, April 11, 1917. p. 4.

⁴⁰There appears to have been a mania for dynamite, for there were frequent reports and rumors of dynamitings, and even one of a suicide — apparently accomplished by holding the dynamite in the teeth and blowing the head off.

home.⁴¹ When someone tried to burn a railway bridge near Magnolia, N. D., it was apparent that something would have to be done.⁴²

Affirmations of loyalty seemed to be the universal panacea. Fargo's Irish Fellowship Club apparently got the ball rolling by endorsing a resolution calling for a "Loyalty Day."⁴³ A few days later, the mayor issued a proclamation, announcing that April 19th had been designated as a nationwide "Loyalty Day."⁴⁴ The idea caught on and local groups and towns kept on having sporadic demonstrations of loyalty.⁴⁵

Disloyalty was not to be tolerated, and the term was very broadly defined. In Chicago, Oscar Heath, a teacher, was fired for issuing an anti-war pamphlet. The president of the school board told him that the "slackers over at the marriage bureau are red-blooded patriots beside you."⁴⁶ As to the gentlemen referred to, who were hurriedly leaping into matrimony to avoid leaping into trenches, recriminations came from the *Chicago News*: "Any young man who would marry to avoid war is likely to get what he deserves."⁴⁷ The War Department then announced that men who married after the declaration of war would not be exempted from military service — a very low blow to the alleged "slackers."⁴⁸

Patriotism was also to be ostentatiously displayed, and a businessman at Max, North Dakota, apparently topped everybody. He could not find a single pole or building in town high enough to fly his flag satisfactorily, so he built a kite, attached his flag, "and now Old Glory is waving as high in the sky as at any place in the northwest."⁴⁹

The flag was an extremely touchy subject of conversation, particularly if the speaker were German, and said anything that could be regarded as unfavorable. Dick Hoeft, a former German artilleryman, found out the hard way. A farmer at Marmarth, in the extreme southwestern part of North Dakota, he was hauled before a federal district judge in Fargo and sentenced to five days in prison for "joking" about and "threatening" the flag. He was the first alien convicted in the state following the declaration of war.

It appeared that Frank Gibbs, a hardware merchant in Marmarth, had announced that he was going to put up a flag outside his store. Hoeft said that he would tear it down if it was put up. Later, in the pool hall, some local gentry told him that the soldiers would arrest him when they came to guard the bridge over the Little Missouri. Hoeft riposted that he would get 300 of them before they could get him.

In sentencing, Judge Charles F. Amidon said that while he had done nothing overt to carry out his threat, that while he may have been

joking, "The American flag is a very poor subject for a German to joke about at this time."⁵⁰

Fargo had its Loyalty Day on April 19th as announced, and the featured speaker was Tracy R. Bangs of Grand Forks. He enunciated the new line on pacifists and pacifism, lumping them together with pro-Germans as "enemies of the country."⁵¹ The next day came a report that the Germans were behind a campaign being carried on in the Russian-American papers for a separate peace for Russia.⁵²

As a result, it became especially necessary for Germans to proclaim loyalty, and great emphasis was placed on these declarations:

Constant reiteration of the contention that western North Dakota lacks in loyalty was given the lie at a tremendous celebration in Dickinson, with 3000 people in the loyalty parade; with 5000 others witnessing the parade, and with 1000 school children participating.

"All Nationalities, But All Americans" was one of the banners carried by the German population. . . .

Three thousand people marched from the center of the city, taking in the south side, where the German children of the public and parochial schools showed their loyalty by pledging their allegiance to the flag, and in singing the national anthem.⁵³

Teutonic farmers of this, [Lefor, N. D.] one of the strongest German communities in North Dakota, wired to President Wilson their support of him in the present war on Germany. A big mass meeting was held in this city when patriotic resolutions were adopted.⁵⁴

To make sure that Norwegians weren't suspected, the main speaker at the Syttende Mai (Norwegian Independence Day) celebration felt constrained to proclaim that "The patriotism of the Norwegian race has never been questioned."⁵⁵ His statement may have been motivated in part by any one of a number of current rumors and reports that Scandinavian ships were being used by Germans for smuggling.⁵⁶

Soon came the draft law and the necessity for registration. This provoked a great deal of controversy, for pacifists and others were opposed to compulsory military service, and "patriots" equated all opposition with treason. A young farmer at Wilton, N. D., Albert Marquise, who had left Poland to avoid military service, brooded over the situation, and finally evaded the draft by hanging himself.⁵⁷

⁴¹"The Enemy Within the Gates," *Fargo Forum*, April 11, 1917. p. 4.

⁴²"Incendiary Attacks Big N. P. Bridge," *Fargo Forum*, April 13, 1917. p. 1.

⁴³"Endorse Loyalty Day Idea," *Fargo Forum*, April 13, 1917. p. 2.

⁴⁴"Loyalty Day Proclamation," *Fargo Forum*, April 16, 1917. p. 1.

⁴⁵"Great Loyalty Demonstration at Dickinson," *Fargo Forum*, May 4, 1917. p. 3; "Scots of Northwest to Observe Loyalty Day," *Fargo Forum*, May 8, 1917. p. 10.

⁴⁶"Anti-War Teacher Fired," *Fargo Forum*, April 14, 1917. p. 1.

⁴⁷"The Marrying Slackers," *Fargo Forum*, April 14, 1917. p. 4.

⁴⁸"Married Slackers Foiled," *Fargo Forum*, April 19, 1917. p. 1.

⁴⁹"They Use a Kite," *Fargo Forum*, April 16, 1917. p. 2.

⁵⁰"Flag Poor Subject for Joke," *Fargo Forum*, April 20, 1917. p. 1.

⁵¹"Pacifists and Friends of Germany in Same Class, Says T. R. Bangs," *Fargo Forum*, April 20, 1917. p. 1.

⁵²"Unearth German Intrigue in Ill.," *Fargo Forum*, April 21, 1917. p. 1.

⁵³"Great Loyalty Demonstration at Dickinson," *Fargo Forum*, May 4, 1917. p. 3.

⁵⁴"German Farmers Back Wilson," *Fargo Forum*, May 10, 1917. p. 3.

⁵⁵"Patriotism of Norsemen Never Failed the Test," *Fargo Forum*, May 18, 1917. p. 5.

⁵⁶"German Spies Used Mexico," *Fargo Forum*, June 5, 1917. p. 8.

⁵⁷"Kills Self When Facing Service in United States Army," *Fargo Forum*, June 6, 1917. p. 1.

Other sources give the name as Albert Maruske.

Opposition to the draft came from many different quarters, and was based on a variety of motives, but was generally equated with pro-Germanism by those who saw all issues in terms of black and white and refused to admit the possibility of alternatives.

Much of the opposition came from legitimate pacifists and Socialists, and attention slowly shifted emphasis to include the various types of pacifists and other war opponents. The *Forum* was of the opinion that A. C. Townley, head of the Nonpartisan League, should be in prison, deplored the fact that no lawman had the "backbone" necessary to put him behind bars, and hoped that when Townley came to Fargo the Home Defense League would keep him from uttering any more "seditious statements."⁵⁹

Anarchists began to take up attention, and the New York conviction of Louis Kramer for conspiracy to distribute anticonscription literature made the local front page.⁶⁰

The Industrial Workers of the World were the subject of nationwide hysteria that summer and were dealt with in sundry manner. In Duluth, a judge ruled that membership in the I.W.W. was sufficient evidence for a conviction on a charge of vagrancy.⁶¹ In Arizona, the good citizens of Bisbee rounded up a thousand Wobblies, packed them into cattle cars at gunpoint, and sent them clattering down the rails.⁶² Down the track, at Columbus, the citizenry formed an "army" to drive off the starving Wobblies from Bisbee, should they but appear.⁶³

In Butte, Montana, masked men grabbed an I.W.W. organizer from his hotel room, gave him no time to dress, dragged him to a car and drove off. His body was found hanging from a trestle.⁶⁴ The *Forum* did not approve of this and termed it "murder — inexcusable murder." However, this did not indicate any sympathy for the victim. The same editorial said that the I.W.W. "have no right to make seditious remarks. . . . Let's try to find a Fargo method that is within the law, that is based on the principles of fairness and justice and yet is efficient."⁶⁵

Back in Arizona, the Loyalty League of America was organized for the avowed purpose of exterminating the I.W.W.⁶⁶

Some Minnesota Germans caused a flurry of excitement in July. A meeting was held in New Ulm which protested the sending of American troops to Europe. The protest was signed by a number of German-Americans. The *Forum* was displeased, but did not do more than imply that there was treason afoot:

⁵⁹"Still Out of Jail," *Fargo Forum*, June 9, 1917. p. 4.

⁶⁰"Stiff Sentence for Anarchist," *Fargo Forum*, June 13, 1917. p. 1.

⁶¹"Any I.W.W. Is a Vagrant Under Duluth Ordinance," *Fargo Forum*, June 29, 1917. p. 2.

⁶²"Bisbee Citizens Load 1000 I.W.W. Into Cattle Cars," *Fargo Forum*, July 12, 1917. p. 1.

⁶³"Columbus Army to Repel Bisbee Refugees, Desperate of Hunger," *Fargo Forum*, July 13, 1917. p. 1.

⁶⁴"I.W.W. Executive Is Hanged for Insult to Army," *Fargo Forum*, August 1, 1917. p. 1.

⁶⁵"Bisbee, Butte and Fargo," *Fargo Forum*, August 2, 1917. p. 4.

⁶⁶"Form New League to Exterminate I.W.W.," *Fargo Forum*, August 7, 1917. p. 1.

That protest registered in New Ulm against sending American soldiers to the European battlefields would fall a little more pleasantly on the ears if it came from men bearing different names.

"Albert Pfaender," "Albert Steinhauser," "F. H. Ratzlaff," "Rev. John Wagner," and "Dr. Adolph Ackerman" may be loyal American citizens, and their protest may be made in good faith and for reasons which to their minds are sound, but men bearing such names immediately place themselves under suspicion when they connect themselves with any enterprise calculated to handicap the prosecution of the war against Germany.⁶⁷

The protest about the protesters had its effect, and New Ulm held a mass meeting to proclaim its loyalty in "an earnest effort to blot out the stain of the recent draft protest meeting."⁶⁸ This was not enough, and Governor Burnquist suspended Mayor L. A. Fritches and City Attorney Albert Pfaender pending an investigation of their loyalty. They resigned.⁶⁹

Some of the Socialists were quite outspoken, and their remarks were not appreciated. Mrs. Kate Richards O'Hare, a Socialist, was arrested following a lecture at Bowman, N. D., where she was reported to have said that the men who had volunteered for the army were "only fit for fertilizer" and that mothers who permitted the army to take their sons "were no better than brood sows." For entertaining Mrs. O'Hare after the lecture, the postmistress at Bowman, Mrs. Lillian Totten, was denounced before the Senate as "disloyal" by Senator Porter J. McCumber.⁷⁰ Mrs. O'Hare was ultimately sentenced to five years by a judge who told her:

This is a government of majorities. The conceited minority must give way to the will of the majority or be crushed by the majestic power which is America. They must yield to the patriotism which means obedience to the established law, which is the people, or they must be crushed as traitors.⁷¹

The Nonpartisan League came in for much attention. The *Forum* reported the following treatment of a League organizer at Boyd, Minnesota:

The younger Teigen is an organizer for the Nonpartisan League. In a speech at Boyd, he attacked the government, state officials, the army and the conscription laws.

Some of Teigen's auditors were not pleased with his utterances. They decided that a lesson in patriotism might well be administered. They obtained a large American flag and forced the speaker to kiss the flag and to apologize for his unpatriotic utterances.

⁶⁷"The New Ulm Protest," *Fargo Forum*, July 27, 1917. p. 4.

⁶⁸"New Ulm Will Hit Trail," *Fargo Forum*, August 23, 1917. p. 1.

⁶⁹"New Ulm Officials Tender Resignations," *Fargo Forum*, September 14, 1917. p. 3. The resignations were not accepted by order of the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, which wanted to make examples of them. After an investigation, both were removed from office by Governor J. A. A. Brunquist.

⁷⁰"Mrs. Kate O'Hare Before Federal Court for Anti-Recruiting Talk," *Fargo Forum*, July 30, 1917. p. 1.

⁷¹"Mrs. O'Hare Gets Five Years for Opposition to Nation's Plans," *Fargo Forum*, December 15, 1917. p. 1.

. . . The people of Boyd say that they are loyal and will insist that Nonpartisan "leaguers" must be the same if they visit in Boyd.⁷³

Spontaneous private action was unsatisfactory to some, and several groups were established to pursue their self-appointed task of maintaining national security and patriotic enthusiasm, etc. One of these, the National Security League, with headquarters in New York, sent circulars to all German-American organizations "suggesting" that they could help the national war effort by public proclamations of "loyalty." Some of the organizations circularized felt insulted, which seemed to amaze the *Forum*. Julius Moersch of St. Paul, the President of the German-American Alliance of Minnesota replied very stiffly:

The German-American Alliance of Minnesota does not need and resents the arrogation of your society to advise them in regard to conduct by German-Americans in this war.⁷³

The pacifists were chiefly represented by the People's Council, and the *Forum* expressed its vehement disapproval through accusatorial editorials, sarcastic comment, and open approval of the extra-legal suppression of their right to speak. The *Forum* approvingly noted that "Four-Minute Men" were going to begin telling people just what the People's Council was up to, and that they would "dwell on the mischief that they say it is likely to cause. . . ."⁷⁴

Pacifists were scathingly blistered in a hysterical editorial:

Why be mealy-mouthed about it? In these days there are just two classes of citizens, patriots and others. Call them "spiritual aliens."

Every day that passes draws the line more sharply between them.

The day that America entered the war, pacifism was changed from a tenable political theory with very excellent arguments to support it to active disloyalty. The landing of American soldiers in Europe increased the degree of disloyalty.

But in many ways the work of hindering Uncle Sam goes on

It may be in the form of the parrotlike repetition of the question "What are we fighting for?"

It may be in the form of seditious propaganda through newspapers, German-American and others.

The law will not reach all these "spiritual aliens." Public contempt will, however.

Let us keep this thought clear. Our own young men, right from Fargo, our brothers, sons and good chums will soon be facing German bullets. . . . What shall we say of the soft-handed, long-haired, paid agitator who distracts our attention from the business in hand. . . ?⁷⁵

The sober gentlemen of the Cass County Bar Association also took up the cudgel, and passed a resolution declaring that any member of the

⁷²"Lesson in Loyalty Is Administered Teigen, Nonpartisan Organizer," *Fargo Forum*, August 6, 1917. p. 1.

⁷³"German-Americans Express Resentment," *Fargo Forum*, August 6, 1917. p. 3.

⁷⁴"Four Minute Men to Picture Aims of Peace Talkers," *Fargo Forum*, August 9, 1917. p. 2.

⁷⁵"Patriots and Others," *Fargo Forum*, August 10, 1917. p. 4.

bar who criticized or obstructed any facet of the war effort, or otherwise rendered any form of aid and comfort to the enemy was unworthy of American citizenship.⁷⁶

When the People's Council sought to rent the Fargo Auditorium for speeches by Max Eastman and Jenkins Lloyd Jones, the board of directors refused to rent it, to the *Forum's* deep satisfaction.⁷⁷

A pacifist rally at Ada, Minnesota, was reported thus:

The peace meeting scheduled for Heiber park was held on the Norman County fair grounds here on Sunday and was a very tame affair. Whether the promoters felt the signs in the air or whether they feared to start something is not known, but it was a genuine Socialist meeting, and the speeches were of the sort usually heard when a street speaker harrangues a crowd.

M. A. Bratland, lawyer-politician, presided and in his opening talk said that the speakers were loyal citizens. He waved the Socialist flag in his speech and intimated that nothing rash would be attempted. After several speakers and story tellers had had their chance, a collection was announced and a majority of the crowd left. It is claimed that \$275 was the amount collected for the national organization.⁷⁸

Intolerance for the German language and German newspapers began to become more apparent. The *Forum* embarked on a campaign to get the German papers either to shut down or to publish translations of their articles. When the *Nord Dakota Herald*, of Dickinson, announced it would begin publishing translations of important articles, the *Forum* indicated its approval — and hostility:

The *Forum* has advocated that German language newspapers at least be compelled to publish translations of their articles. In other countries, when war broke out, the use of the German language was forbidden entirely and it could not be spoken over the telephone. The United States has made no effort to restrict the use of the German language, but the attitude of most of the German newspapers has been such that action can not be delayed much longer.⁷⁹

Without batting an eye, the same editorial continued:

The *Forum* is not familiar with the editorial policy of *The Herald* on the war — translation of the German script being a slow and laborious task —

Economic reprisal against Germans was also urged. As a war security measure, President Wilson had barred Germans from the fields of marine and war list insurance. However, Richard M. Hurd, the "chairman of the board of trustees of the American Defense Society," wrote to Wilson, asking him to extend the ban to all fields of insurance.⁸¹

Entertainment became very patriotic, and the *Forum* was exultant about Mary Pickford's latest movie:

⁷⁶"Unworthy Privilege of Citizenship, Says Bar, of the Disloyal," *Fargo Forum*, August 11, 1917. p. 2.

⁷⁷"Auditorium Refused to People's Council," *Fargo Forum*, August 11, 1917. p. 2.

⁷⁸"Peace Meeting Is Tame Affair," *Fargo Forum*, August 13, 1917. p. 2.

⁷⁹"German Editor Sees Light," *Fargo Forum*, August 13, 1917. p. 4.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹"Wants Germans Barred From Insurance Field," *Fargo Forum*, August 20, 1917. p. 2.

Packed houses at every performance at the Garrick Monday and Monday evening greeted "America's sweetheart," Mary Pickford, in her latest offering, "The Little American." In this production the star would seem to have reached the climax of her wonderful acting, for not only her art but her intense patriotism are involved, and the scenes are such as to awaken the indignation of every true American against the German atrocities of the present war. . . .⁸²

Despite the hostile atmosphere, Max Eastman did come to Fargo for his scheduled speech, and was granted last-minute permission to use the auditorium. The directors perhaps considered it patriotic to take the pacifist's money and still keep them from speaking. The *Forum* printed the following "objective" report on the rally:

Cheers for America, the Stars and Stripes, and the singing of the national anthem and a genuine patriotic demonstration that surpassed in enthusiasm any ever previously staged in Fargo, brought to a close Tuesday evening a "peace" meeting at the Civic Center, addressed by Max Eastman, editor of *The Masses*, a Socialist publication, the disloyal utterances of which recently caused the government to take action by closing the mails to at least one edition.

Eastman had been permitted to proceed only to the point of insinuating that America's course in the world war was being directed by Sir Arthur Balfour, when the crowd that filled the little building, secured for the meeting just a few minutes before the time it was scheduled to be held, took charge of the proceedings.

Eastman . . . withdrew from the platform, while soldiers and members of the Fargo Home Guard took possession. . . .⁸³

The editor crowed "Bully for Fargo!", proclaimed Fargo loyal — and stated that Fargo "possesses sanity and a saving sense of humor." What he was so delighted about was that the "itinerant preacher of sedition" had been prevented from holding his meeting, and that this had been accomplished without bloodshed, merely "good humored banter such as would be heard at a gathering of college students."⁸⁴

Much to the *Forum's* displeasure, Governor Lynn J. Frazier was furious and said that the people of Fargo should be ashamed of themselves, and that the People's Council was entitled to the protections of the First Amendment.⁸⁵ This drew a wrathful editorial blast from the *Forum*.⁸⁶

The same day, the *Forum* published a letter from an "Anxious Subscriber" who wanted to know the constitutional rights of a man or group

⁸²"Stirs Patriotism," *Fargo Forum*, August 21, 1917, p. 2.

⁸³"Fargo Soldiers and Citizens Put Patriotism Into Pro-Kaiser Meet," *Fargo Forum*, August 29, 1917, p. 1. As a result of the disorder, the national convention of the People's Council for Democracy and Terms of Peace, scheduled to open in Fargo a few days later, after having been banned from Minnesota, was cancelled. After many frustrations, the convention met hastily in Chicago at the invitation of demagogic Mayor William Hale ("Big Bill") Thompson, before troops sent by Governor Lowden could disperse them.

⁸⁴"We Recommend the Fargo Method," *Fargo Forum*, August 29, 1917, p. 4.

⁸⁵"Governor Frazier Scores Fargo Action Against Eastman Meeting; Guarantees to Protect People's Council in Dakota," *Fargo Forum*, August 29, 1917, p. 1.

⁸⁶"What About North Dakota's Guarantee?" *Fargo Forum*, August 30, 1917, p. 4.

opposed to the government in time of war. The *Forum* had a very caustic reply:

Offhand we would say "funeral rights."

It all depends on the construction of the expression giving aid and comfort to the enemy. Who is going to construe that term when the speakers of the People's Council come to North Dakota?

The *Forum* holds that any attempt to create distrust in the conduct of the present war, or to agitate against it while we are in the midst of it, is "giving aid and comfort to the enemy." Under that construction, these wandering pacifists would have no rights but those of immediate arrest and trial.⁸⁷

The *Forum* soon instituted a new department in the paper, the "Loyalty Department," devoted to the promotion of Americanism in its broadest, vaguest sense. Possibly a result of Governor Frazier's surprising concern for civil rights, it was announced with a very belligerent editorial:

The Hun, apparently, must be found in America as well as in Europe.

The forces of Americanism in the United States have been on the defensive too long. They have suffered insults to their government and their flag. They have permitted itinerant agitators of the most sinister type to openly preach treason and sedition. These agitators have hidden behind the sacred right of free speech and a free press, and from this shelter have carried on their vicious campaign.

The time has come to take the offensive against the Hun in America, and to stamp out disloyalty wherever it shows its head. Loyal citizens have been browbeaten and intimidated too long. Constitutional rights are not a monopoly or even the property of the disloyal. The traitor has no constitutional rights.

Fargo has just escaped the disgrace of playing the host — even though a most unwilling one — to the organized forces of sedition. It is a reflection on the city's loyalty that it should even have been considered for such a mark of dishonor. It is not enough to drive these German agents from one city to another. They should be interned until after the war or shot for treason if convicted after a fair trial.

The *Forum* has instituted a new department known as its Loyalty Department, to help inaugurate this new "drive." It wants the help of every red-blooded American within the reach of its voice; every good two-fisted fighter who has ideas and ideals and is not afraid to stand up for them. In turn it pledges its whole-hearted support to any movement that has this purpose in view. . . .⁸⁸

To assert divine sanction for its stand, the *Forum* reprinted a sermon by Dr. Beard of the Congregational church in Fargo, headlined "Right of Free Speech Doesn't Shield Treason Says Dr. Beard."⁸⁹

A number of other patriotic projects were also indulged in. One of the first of these was the scrapbook campaign. The *Forum* published

⁸⁷"Constitutional Rights," *Fargo Forum*, August 30, 1917, p. 4.

⁸⁸"Fighting the Hun in America," *Fargo Forum*, August 31, 1917, p. 4.

⁸⁹"Right of Free Speech Doesn't Shield Treason Says Dr. Beard," *Fargo Forum*, September 3, 1917, p. 8.

detailed instructions as how best to prepare scrapbooks to be sent to the soldiers overseas.⁹⁰ Later on came the "Keep a Goat" campaign⁹¹ and the "Baccy fund."⁹² The latter aimed to provide free tobacco for soldiers, and the *Forum* printed the necessary blanks to clip out and send in with contributions. The exhortation which accompanied the blank contained the following plea: "Hundreds of American boys are going to France every day, and more and more money will be needed to keep the stream of tobacco across the sea as large as the demand."⁹³ Considering the amount of tobacco chewed at that time, the "stream of tobacco" was perhaps less a figure of speech than it was intended to be.

The Red Cross and Liberty Bond drives were also used as "loyalty tests," and special attention was paid to German-Americans, many of whom were placed under rather great pressure to be generous.⁹⁴

It was not long before the schools were suspected of being the spawning grounds of sedition and subversion. "Mary Austin of the Vigilantes" noted that German-Americans were less devoted to America than any other group, and traced this to the fact that many of them went to schools where the German language was used extensively and where they read German literature, some selections of which praised the Fatherland and the Kaiser.⁹⁵

Soon after, the East Grand Forks City Board of Education banished the textbook *Im Vaterland* from the schools. "Several chapters in praise of the German emperor, and other matter, was deemed obnoxious."⁹⁶

The Minnesota Superintendent of Public Instruction, C. G. Schultz, set up a special committee which reviewed nearly 300 German-language texts being used in Minnesota schools. Eleven were immediately banned and the rest appeared to be on probation. "Die Wacht am Rhein" was one of the songs which also came under the ban. The committee also noted that the attitude of the teacher is sometimes more significant than the content of the text.⁹⁷

Subversive teachers were quickly hunted out. Edith Hoppe, a teacher of French and German at Grand Forks High School, was forced to resign by the school board on charges that she had pro-German sympathies.⁹⁸ Then, as now, there were people who were convinced that the universities are hotbeds of hotheads. Carl Vrooman, the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, cast aspersions upon the loyalty and leadership of the University of Wisconsin. The dons hurriedly organized a branch of the Wisconsin Loyalty Legion to dispel fears as to their patriotism.⁹⁹

⁹⁰"How to Make Scrapbooks for Soldiers," *Fargo Forum*, May 9, 1917. p. 3.

⁹¹"'Keep a Goat' Latest Appeal to Patriotic," *Fargo Forum*, September 11, 1917. p. 4.

⁹²"'Boys at Alkabo, N. D.' Contribute \$15.75 for Soldiers' Smoke Fund," *Fargo Forum*, December 5, 1917. p. 6.

⁹³*Ibid.*

⁹⁴Real Loyalty Test, Support of the Red Cross, Is Up to Every Citizen of Fargo," *Fargo Forum*, September 12, 1917. p. 1. There will be more on this aspect in the next pages.

⁹⁵"German Propaganda in the Schools," *Fargo Forum*, September 18, 1917. p. 4.

⁹⁶"German Textbook Is Banished from Schools," *Fargo Forum*, October 15, 1917. p. 4.

⁹⁷"Many German Textbooks Are Objectionable," *Fargo Forum*, November 8, 1917. p. 10.

⁹⁸"Charge Teacher With Hun Love," *Fargo Forum*, December 1, 1917. p. 1.

⁹⁹"Loyalty Course for Wisconsin University," *Fargo Forum*, November 27, 1917. p. 1.

Some of the measures adopted to deal with "traitors" which cropped up could hardly have enabled their originators to claim any higher level of civilization than the "Huns" they scathingly denounced. In Cincinnati, a "committee of patriotic citizens" set up stocks and threatened to put any "disloyal" people they could find in them.¹⁰⁰ The *Forum* appeared to approve of this. However, they did think it was a bit silly when the people of Youngstown, Ohio, cancelled a concert by Metropolitan Opera soprano Frieda Hempel for alleged pro-German sentiment and tried to cancel the engagement of Fritz Kreisler, the violinist, because he was believed to be an Austrian army officer.¹⁰¹

The *Forum* welcomed extra-legal mob coercion so long as there was no bloodshed. This was reflected in a number of incidents, such as the following, from Billings, Montana:

In a roundup of alleged pro-Germans and financial slackers here last night, a delegation of citizens headed by the "third degree" committee appointed incident to the Liberty Loan campaign, forced Curtis C. Oehme, a local architect, to resign as a member of the state board of architectural examiners and also forced the resignation of Alderman Herman Schwanz as a member of the city council.

Accompanied by the "third degree" committee, Oehme was escorted to a telegraph office, where he wired his resignation to Governor Stewart. Schwanz tendered his resignation at a special meeting of the council last night. No acts of violence attended the demonstration.

Oehme is alleged by members of the "third degree" committee to have been guilty of pro-German utterances. He is a native of Germany and a former German soldier. In divorce proceedings filed here recently, his wife accused him of strong pro-German sympathies. During the demonstration he was forced to carry an American flag through the streets.

Schwanz was accused of refusing to purchase a Liberty Bond. He has subscribed recently, however, it is said.

Edward J. Kortzeborn, proprietor of a local meat market, who it was charged, tore up a Liberty Loan subscription blank when it was presented to him, was forced to kiss the American flag and publicly declare his allegiance to the United States in the lobby of a local hotel to which he was escorted by the committee. Kortzeborn insisted that he has been a loyal American citizen for the last 40 years.

German-Americans of this city, who have demonstrated their loyalty by supporting the government, were roundly cheered in last night's demonstration.¹⁰²

The search for subversives rapidly got out of hand. A federal marshal was sent to Anamoose, N. D., with warrants for the arrest of eight German-Americans on charges of conspiracy and sedition on the basis of a letter received. One of the men was arrested as he was finishing a speech exhorting his fellow citizens to contribute generously to the Red Cross. The marshal reported that the men charged with con-

¹⁰⁰"Ridicule in the Public Stocks for Traitors in Cincinnati," *Fargo Forum*, September 18, 1917. p. 3.

¹⁰¹"German Musicians Are Not Welcome in Youngstown," *Fargo Forum*, November 9, 1917. p. 1.

¹⁰²"Billings has 'Round-Up' of Pro-Germans," *Fargo Forum*, November 9, 1917. p. 4.

spiracy were all stunned. For one thing, several of them could not tolerate each other and had not spoken for years.¹⁰³

The height of sheer nonsense was reached when a small carrier pigeon was found exhausted on a farm near Brisbane, N. D. It has two bands on its legs, and the numbers are high: AJ14946 on one leg and 4813 on the other. A cashier at the local bank examined the bird and promptly reported the finding to the federal authorities in Fargo, volunteering his opinion that the bird was a "German agent," and that the numbers were a secret coded message. The federal officials then solemnly decreed that the suspect be "interned for the duration."¹⁰⁴

Meanwhile, the *Forum* exulted that

The offensive against the "Hun at home" is gaining a decisive result. One by one the German and the disloyal papers are dropping out of existence. Itinerant preachers of sedition are finding it more and more difficult to get a hearing. . . .¹⁰⁵

At Kenmare, North Dakota, Kasper Wrede was arrested on a charge of sedition for stating that German aircraft were superior to Allied planes and that Finland would be better off under German than Russian rule. It developed that he was a nobleman and an aviation instructor, with some knowledge of his subject. The case was dropped.¹⁰⁶

The *Forum's* feelings about Germans were revealed in one news item relating to the theft of some dynamite from a mine at Medora, North Dakota: "Somewhere in the Bad Lands' two rabid Germans are running wild. . . .¹⁰⁷ Like emotions were involved whenever the I.W.W. were mentioned. In early November, 1917, the *Forum* ran a detailed account of what some black-gowned and hooded "Knights of Liberty" did to seventeen Wobblies seized from the non-resisting police of Tulsa. They were taken into the brush, stripped, flogged with a cat-o-nine-tails, anointed with hot pitch "in the name of the outraged women and children of Belgium," and driven off through the brush at gunpoint, naked, tarred and feathered, and warned never to return.¹⁰⁸

The *Forum* deplored such lawlessness, but editorialized:

Let us keep our sense of proportion and let us not slip into the belief that the tarring and feathering of a few I.W.W. expiates the offenses of all of them or justifies their existence as an organization.¹⁰⁹

Other violence and vandalism closer to home was treated as a big joke.

At Granville, N. D., some people decided that Bert Folstad, a Norwegian cobbler, was insufficiently patriotic. They took the town fire engine in the middle of the night and hosed down his place of business, which was also his home, breaking the windows and thoroughly soaking

everything. After the "bath," Folstad was dragged to the city hall in his underwear and forced to kneel before a hundred people and kiss the American flag. The *Forum* appeared to consider this quite hilarious.¹¹⁰

Near Hawley, Minnesota, lived a German farmer, George Peters, who had not discussed the war, the Kaiser or President Wilson with his neighbors, preferring to strictly mind his own business and avoid possible trouble. But Mr. Peters failed to take down from the wall a picture of the Kaiser's family that had come as a supplement to a German newspaper and had been hanging there for nearly thirty years. In his absence, a number of local superpatriots broke into his house and burned the picture. The law-abiding German was understandably indignant, and demanded that the Clay County Attorney institute criminal proceedings against the men. He was reluctant to do so, and appealed to the Attorney General for a ruling.

Attorney General Smith of Minnesota, expressing regret that official opportunities for demonstrating his patriotism were "only too few," ruled against prosecution. In his ruling, he said:

I do not sympathize with any violations of law . . . but am of the opinion that at the present time it would not be advisable to bring charges against persons who, through excess of loyalty and zeal, without wisdom, have taken a picture of the Kaiser and destroyed it.

It is a time when the repression of men who think a 25 cents picture of the Kaiser is worth \$100 is more in keeping with American citizenship than is the arrest and trial of persons who have destroyed such pictures.¹¹¹

The *Forum* seemed to be surprised that Peters should object.

The anti-German campaign got up a fresh head of steam in January, 1918. All in one issue, the *Forum* reported the arrest of a German editor on charges of perjury (his "English translations" of German articles differed in content), that Frank Bruner, an employee of the Illinois Central at Waterloo, received a severe beating from his fellow workmen, was painted yellow from head to foot, and fired by the company — for allegedly saying that "eighty-five per cent of American soldiers are bums."¹¹² The editorial page included a letter from a North Dakota soldier alleging that in Belgium, one Belgian girl would be given to every two German soldiers, to wash their clothes and "do anything for them that they may wish." If she was pretty, the German officers got her. "It is a system of slavery more horrible than anything the world has ever witnessed."¹¹³ The editor himself painted the German character a bit more darkly under the heading "Polygamy in Germany." It alleged that all single girls in Germany who could not get a single man were

¹¹⁰"Granville Folks Bathe Cobbler," *Fargo Forum*, November 20, 1917. p. 1.

¹¹¹"Hawley Citizen Wants Kaiser's Picture Burners Placed in Jail," *Fargo Forum*, January 5, 1918. p. 1.; "Prosecution of Hawley Men is Frowned on by State Official," *Fargo Forum*, January 12, 1918. p. 1.

¹¹²"German Editor Is Arrested On Perjury Charge," *Fargo Forum*, January 4, 1918. p. 4.
¹¹³"Coat of Yellow Paint for Slur on U. S. Soldiers," *Fargo Forum*, January 4, 1918. p. 8.

¹¹⁴"Indignities Practices on Belgian Girls," *Fargo Forum*, January 4, 1918. p. 4.

¹⁰³"Espionage Cases to be Probed by U. S. Attorney," *Fargo Forum*, October 10, 1917. p. 3.

¹⁰⁴"Intern Pigeon at Brisbane; Suspect It a German Agent," *Fargo Forum*, July 30, 1917. p. 1.

¹⁰⁵"The High Cost of 'Free Speech,'" *Fargo Forum*, October 10, 1917. p. 4.

¹⁰⁶"Federal Case Is Dismissed," *Fargo Forum*, November 3, 1917. p. 10.

¹⁰⁷"Germans With Dynamite Out in Bad Lands," *Fargo Forum*, December 4, 1917. p. 2.

¹⁰⁸"I.W.W. Kidnapped, Flogged, Tarred and Feathered by Masked Men," *Fargo Forum*, November 10, 1917. p. 1.

¹⁰⁹"The Right Proportion," *Fargo Forum*, November 12, 1917. p. 4.

required to contract "lateral marriages" with all the available married men in order to raise up more soldiers for the Fatherland, that such children were deemed legitimate, took their mothers' names, and became wards of the state if the mother was unable to support them.¹¹⁴

By this time, hysteria had become so general that any person or group which did not conform to the approved ideas came under attack. The *Forum* began to print a series of articles exposing the dangers of the Nonpartisan League:

Unless the patriotic people of the middle west fight back, they will awake some day to the realization that socialism, with all its anti-government, anti-society teachings, has become firmly entrenched in one-third of the states of the Union.¹¹⁵

The papers were filled with reports of Germans being arrested for various offenses. One of the more weird cases involved the arrest of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Rausch at Glen Ullin, N. D., on a charge of using their influence to prevent Edward Adolph from registering for the draft. They were implicated by Adolph. The federal officials then revealed that it was the Rausches who had provided the information which had previously led to Adolph's arrest. Somebody, somewhere, must have been a bit confused.¹¹⁶

It cannot be doubted that many of the victims of these events were entirely innocent of any wrongdoing or evil intent. One such innocent fellow was Albert Soroviec, a Fingal, N. D. farmer, hauled into court for failure to register for the draft. It was claimed that he was 26 years old, and therefore liable, since only those over 27 were exempt. He stated that he was born in Galicia, and that he was 32 and thus exempt. But he was not positive as to his age. He was convicted and sentenced.¹¹⁷

The anti-German hysteria finally resulted in the announcement that North Dakota was joining the "forces of the nation" by banning German from the schools.¹¹⁸ The hysteria resulted in five minutes of hysterical cheering at a meeting in Bismarck when a man named Russell urged that the "disloyal" be hanged or shot.¹¹⁹

Overall, it appears that the people had lost their collective heads, their sense of proportion, their sense of humor, and their sense of responsibility. Hysteria reigned supreme, egged on to ever newer and grander manifestations by an indulgent press which found itself entranced by the conspiracy theory of history, which could be summarized as follows:

Treason can be found anywhere and everywhere. Nobody can be trusted but me and thee — and I frequently have great doubts about thee.

¹¹⁴"Polygamy in Germany," *Fargo Forum*, January 4, 1918. p. 4.

¹¹⁵"Socialism of Nonpartisan League Menaces One-third of States in the Nation," *Fargo Forum*, December 8, 1917. p. 4.

¹¹⁶"Husband and Wife Arrested," *Fargo Forum*, January 4, 1918. p. 1.

¹¹⁷"Second Slacker Case in Court," *Fargo Forum*, August 8, 1917. p. 2.

¹¹⁸"German Will Be Banished From State Schools," *Fargo Forum*, January 12, 1918. p. 6.

¹¹⁹"Rifle or Rope for Disloyal, Russell Urges," *Fargo Forum*, February 26, 1918. p. 4.

Much of this super-patriotic hysteria can be credited to the very clever and effective use of propaganda by the Allies and the blunders of the Central Powers, but much can also be credited to the mass adoption of the conspiracy theory of history and the resulting siege mentality.

This flowering of hysteria was by no means the only such happening in our history. The previous century had similar manifestations of mass ignorance, hostility, suspicion and hysteria in the "Know Nothing," "Anti-Mason" and other movements, such as the search for the "Molly Maguires." The present century has seen other examples also, most notably in the treatment of Japanese-Americans during World War II and more recent outbreaks of racist feeling.

A study of what happens when the masses get carried away by the conspiracy theory of history and begin to trample on individual liberties is a rather sobering experience. When these events could take place in this bastion of democracy, with its respect for the ideals of the Constitution, one wonders what might have happened if a hostile armed force had been encamped at Winnipeg, or the United States had been invaded. We can hardly justify the smug and superior attitude with which we have observed human behavior elsewhere, saying that it could not happen here.