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The Minnesota Farm-Labor Party: The Role of Third Parties in the Americanization of European Labor Radicals in the Great Lakes Region

Paul Lubotina

During the first two decades of the 20th century, successive waves of immigrant laborers moved to the mining districts surrounding Lake Superior. Instead of finding streets paved in gold and personal riches, they endured harsh working conditions, low wages, and long winters in isolated mining communities. This caustic environment ignited a series of clashes between thousands of angry immigrant workers and American supervisors who acted on behalf of large corporate entities, such as the United States Steel Corporation along Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range and the Calumet & Hecla Mining Company operation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The strikes that broke out in 1907, 1913, and 1916, pitted an assortment of radical political and labor organizations from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean against corporate giants supported by state and federal government. Among the immigrant populations, the Finnish Socialist Federation (FSF), Scandinavian Socialist Federation (SSF), South Slavic Socialist Federation (SSSF), and the Italian Socialist Federation began life independently, then joined forces under the umbrella of the Socialist Party of American. Other immigrant and American laborers, who had held more radical beliefs, flocked to labor unions such as the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) or the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a syndicalist organization that had strong support in Italy, France, and the United States.

All of the members of these organizations shared similar experiences of political isolation during the process of gaining American citizenship, along with repression by civic, governmental, and corporate entities because of their ethnic origins. Furthermore, mere membership in a labor union or in a radical political party lead to arrest or death, especially

during the First World War when organizations such as the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety and the Ku Klux Klan sought to protect Americans from the dangers posed by the vast immigrant population in the region. By the summer of 1918, intimidation, mass arrests, and murder had cowed the immigrant groups into momentary submission, but the situation would soon change in the town of Hibbing, Minnesota, which had been an epicenter of turmoil during the previous two decades. The majority of labor leaders remained in jail, leaving local Socialists and Syndicalists in confusion and unable to act on behalf of apprehensive miners. As a result of the repressive measures and impotency of labor leaders, most miners distanced themselves from the radical organizations. Many of them still wanted comprehensive reforms in wages, working and living conditions, but had nowhere to turn.

At the time, Hibbing's Mayor Victor Power remained on the Mesabi Range as one of the few leaders still willing and able to support the immigrant miners' objectives. Since 1913, Power's Progressive Party had waged a series of battles with the Oliver Mining Company over the control of Hibbing's government and the taxation of ore exported from the city's mines. During the struggles, local Socialists and Syndicalists refused to support the Power administration. The situation changed in 1916, however, when the IWW led a massive strike on the Mesabi Range. Power gained popularity among immigrant miners by negotiating with mining executives, publicly supporting the strikers during the labor unrest, and defending IWW leaders in their subsequent murder trials. By 1918, the miners had become increasingly reliant on Power, leading to widespread working-class cooperation with the Progressive Party.

Hibbing's immigrant middle-class population also backed the Power administration. Since 1904, both the American and immigrant populations of the town had been building a modern community of electric lights, paved streets, indoor plumbing, and parks. Middle-class

immigrants also desired to create a civic society of well educated, religious, and sober people, who also recognized the need for universal suffrage. Beginning in 1913, with the first election of the Power administration, these political and social goals led to a series of political battles in the state legislature, predominantly over the issues of taxation and temperance. Mayor Power and a coalition of Swedish, Finnish, and American reformers ultimately won their legal cases. By 1916, the state legislature forced the mining companies to pay corporate taxes to Hibbing's government and imposed prohibition in the eastern half of St. Louis County. In the process, Hibbing's immigrant populations learned a valuable lesson about American society. Political action through coalition parties led to significant reform, whereas support for radical Socialist and Syndicalist movements resulted in repression and social exclusion.

The experiences of immigrants and Americans in the state legislature and with radical labor organizations led to a confluence of interests for Hibbing's merchants and miners. Both groups, regardless of ethnic origins, sought to continue the reform processes begun before America's entry into the First World War. They shared several common goals, including the regulation of business practices, expanded suffrage, increased educational opportunities, and civic improvements in Hibbing. Even though the populations shared common goals, political differences among the Progressive Party, Socialist Party, and the Industrial Workers of the World precluded any possibility for united reform activities. The arrest of key leaders such as William Haywood, Eugene Debs, and Leo Laukki, however, provided an opportunity for greater cooperation across both class and ethnic lines.

The burgeoning political relationship among Victor Power's middle-class Progressive Party, the leaderless working-class Socialist Party, and remaining members of the IWW, culminated in their combined support for a new third party, the Nonpartisan League. Between

1918 and 1922, the Nonpartisan league forged alliances with significant portions of Minnesota's Republican Party, Progressive Party, Socialist Party, the American Federation of Labor, Industrial Workers of the World, and the suffrage movement. The coalition later transformed into the Farm-Labor Party, which emerged as the leading voice for several underrepresented groups in Minnesota politics.

By the end of the 1920s, Hibbing's immigrant population, especially the Swedes and Finns, became a major force in the burgeoning Farm-Labor Party through the establishment of new political coalitions. In the process of supporting the Farm-Labor Party, the town's ethnic political groups became even more integrated with each other and with the American population. Along with ethnic integration, Americans demonstrated their political flexibility by accepting many of the immigrants' reformist ideas, which became part of mainstream Minnesota society.

While Minnesota's Farm-Labor Party emerged in the 1930s as the largest third party in the United States, the organization actually began with a small group of Socialist Party reformers in the grain-fields of North Dakota. During the First World War, a school teacher named Arthur C. Townley rose to prominence in the North Dakota Socialist Party. Townley sought ways to alleviate farmers' anger with the corporate monopolies. North Dakota farmers believed that the Great Northern Railroad, the Minneapolis Grain Exchange, and the port-city of Duluth constantly drained the profits out of the wheat markets.

¹ Both the Socialists and farmers also blamed North Dakota's Republican Party-dominated state government for not protecting the rights of laborers from corrupt business practices. Townley created the third-party, Nonpartisan League to mobilize farmers and enact the legislation needed to limit corporate excesses that neither the Democratic nor Republican Party addressed in the state.

By 1915, the Nonpartisan League's reform campaign led to friction with the leadership of the Socialist Party. Friction escalated into a fracture when Townsley, along with numerous members of the Socialist Party, left to pursue an independent reform movement. The Socialist core of the Nonpartisan League established an alliance with IWW members, who controlled the harvest labor in the state. The league also adopted the IWW's use of collective bargaining with corporate entities. Whereas the IWW still eschewed political participation, the league continued to support legislative reform. The expanded Nonpartisan League called for the state ownership of grain elevators, mills, packing houses, and cold storage plants, along with non-profit banks and crop insurance for farmers. Within the next few months, the organization successfully created a state bank, a program that provided cheap housing for destitute farmers, and established an eight-hour workday and minimum wage for women.² All of these improvements enhanced the popularity of the Nonpartisan League among farmers and led to the organization's rapid rise in power.

These early victories contributed to Townsley's decision to wrest control of the state away from the Republican Party. Rather than lead a Socialist revolution, he decided to work within the Republican Party to effect changes. By offering Nonpartisan candidates with alternate political views on the Republican ticket, he hoped to split the party. A divided Republican Party would allow Townsley and the farmers to wrest control away from business supporters and permit a new era of reform to emerge in North Dakota. To achieve their goal, the Nonpartisan League published numerous political pieces in the rural press. The league charged membership dues to pay for instructors to visit communities and give lessons in political activism and enumerate the party platform among members. Farmers also received political and biographical information on Nonpartisan candidates, so that voters could identify and vote for fellow league members. The

Nonpartisan organizers also received cars and money to visit isolated hamlets and further expand membership.³ This multi-faceted approach allowed Townley to gain power rapidly in North Dakota and then begin spreading the Nonpartisan ideology to surrounding states.

The Nonpartisan League expanded into Minnesota in 1917, among workers, farmers, and isolationists who were disillusioned by their perceived outcome of the war as a victory for the industrialists. The Minnesotans, who held beliefs similar to the North Dakota farmers, also blamed Wall Street, big business, and the two national parties for failing to bring freedom and democracy to the American people. As a result of the similarities of thought between the citizens of both states, Townley's plan to replace the Republican Party with the Nonpartisan League attracted numerous supporters in Minnesota.

Since the Nonpartisan League worked in politics to usurp power from the Republican Party, Minnesota politicians turned against the league. Minnesota's Republican Party, led by Governor Burquist, viewed the Nonpartisan League as a greater threat than the IWW, which had just led three major strikes in Northern Minnesota but stayed out of state politics.⁴ Whereas the IWW fervently opposed American participation in the First World War, the Nonpartisan League demonstrated their patriotism by supporting the Red Cross and promoting the sale of war bonds. The league vehemently denounced large corporations, which they labeled "war profiteers." Townley publicly chastised these profiteers for needlessly promoting international conflict in order to increase their yearly earnings. This stance brought an attack against the league for disloyalty from the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety (MCPS). The commission's leadership and Governor Burnquist condemned the league as a subversive organization. Together, the governor and MCPS officers began a campaign to eradicate the threat posed by the Nonpartisan League to Minnesota's Republican Party and the American war effort.

Governor Burnquist inadvertently contributed to the expansion of the league through his repressive tactics and heavy-handed approach to labor relations. In 1918, Governor Burnquist, with the help of MCPS, unilaterally announced a policy where the state government would not interfere with labor unions, if workers neither created new unions nor staged any strikes. The governor wanted to ensure a steady supply of war material and prevent the recurrence of the Mesabi Range strikes. Labor leaders objected to the unilateral declaration, because it prevented their ability to act independently in contract negotiations. The situation led to a rift between the American Federation of Labor (AFL) controlled Minnesota Federation of Labor and the Republican Party. As the rift widened, organized labor turned to the Nonpartisan League for political representation in state politics.⁵

Initially, Townley formed a personal alliance with William Mahoney, a leader in both the Minnesota Socialist Party and Minnesota Federation of Labor. Mahoney, who advocated the public ownership of industry and the creation of an effective government to manage the economy for public ends, made an ideal candidate for membership in the ideologically similar Nonpartisan League. The new coalition united elements of Minnesota farmers and laborers. The result was the creation of a farm-labor movement within the Nonpartisan League. Additionally, Mahoney received a great deal of support from Socialists in his hometown of St. Paul and on the Mesabi Range.⁶ Thus, Mahoney provided an important lynchpin between the Nonpartisan League and social reformers of both sexes on the Mesabi Range. The reformers included Victor Power whose Progressive Party had already initiated contacts with members of the IWW and local immigrant Socialist parties.

In the 1918 gubernatorial election, the Nonpartisan League chose Charles Lindbergh, Sr., a reformist Republican Party member, to run against Governor Burnquist.⁷ The league also

needed support from the immigrant Socialists, Syndicalists, and Progressive Party members from the Mesabi Range to win the election. Similarly, the immigrants who wanted the freedom, equality, and justice promised to them by the “American Dream” sought to ally themselves with the Nonpartisan League.⁸ As a result, the Nonpartisan League chose to include Victor Power on Lindbergh’s ticket as state auditor, thereby beginning a longstanding relationship between Hibbing politicians and Minnesota reform politics.⁹ During the election, the Nonpartisan League ran on a platform advocating the creation of a democratic world government to prevent wars, the end of monopolies, public ownership of transportation and communication, unemployment relief through public works, the complete enfranchisement of women, and an end to all wartime laws that impinged on civil rights.¹⁰

The liberal platform appealed to wide variety of voters and included the primary goals of Mesabi Range immigrants, whom the Nonpartisan League wished to recruit. For example, throughout the 1920s, Finnish Socialists and Communists, many of whom had been members of the IWW, gave their complete support to the Farm-Labor movement as a means to combat capitalism.¹¹ During the 1916 Mesabi Range strike, mining police shot or arrested more Slovene and Serbian immigrants than other ethnic minorities. The repressive actions motivated the South Slavs to campaign to end the state- and corporate-sponsored violence perpetrated against their communities. Italians had pledged their support for Victor Power, who led the movement to end the Oliver Mining Company’s hegemonic control over Hibbing. Many of immigrants who lost their jobs as of result of strike activity, needed to feed their families and turned to league for support. The Nonpartisan League’s platform united large portions of Hibbing’s ethnically and politically diverse populations, by attracting the leaderless Socialists and Syndicalists, along with members of Mayor Power’s Progressive Party. Membership in the Nonpartisan League

represented the creation of a new *folkrörlsesamverken* political relationship for Hibbing's immigrant and American populations.

The Nonpartisan League's liberal platform helped turn the 1918 gubernatorial election into a particularly rancorous debate between two Swedish immigrants who held opposite political views. Charles Lindbergh and the Nonpartisan League portrayed the Republican Party as a tool of Wall Street, while Governor Burnquist accused the league of alliances with socialism and communism. These same allegations would be repeated in Minnesota elections for the next three decades. Politicians on both sides quickly learned however, that the party that successfully evaded the accusations usually won the elections.¹² Governor Burnquist overcame Lindbergh's denunciations and won. Nevertheless, the election returns illustrated a massive split in the Republican Party. Although Governor Burnquist emerged victorious with 199,000 votes to 150,000 for Lindbergh, the results came as a surprise since the Nonpartisan League had only 50,000 official members.¹³ Over the next four years, the Nonpartisan League continually eroded the Republican Party's majority, thereby illustrating the growing power of immigrant voters in Minnesota politics.

After the election, Governor Burnquist's authoritarian-style government led to the solidification of William Mahoney's personal alliance with the Nonpartisan League. In 1919, the Minnesota Federation of Labor concluded a formal merger between the two organizations. In the expanded farmer-labor coalition, labor emerged as the dominant power. The federation had already unionized 50 percent of the state's industrial workforce, mainly in the densely populated areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Since union members provided most of the financial support for the Nonpartisan League, they wielded a great deal of political power in the

organization.¹⁴ As a result, in 1924, the Nonpartisan League formally changed its name to the Farm-Labor Party. This reflected the growing importance of labor in the coalition.

On the Mesabi Range, rapidly changing demographic patterns among the region's immigrant populations contributed to their support of the emerging Farm-Labor Party. The end of the First World War caused a recession when foreign governments stopped buying American steel. Mesabi mines began to lay off large numbers of their unskilled immigrant laborers, who then left the region. As the number of unskilled immigrants declined, support for the IWW also diminished among miners. Many of the immigrants who remained benefited from the transition to mechanized mining that occurred during the First World War. Italian and Slovenian laborers who had been denied skilled positions based on the racial prejudices of mining supervisors finally obtained lucrative work operating heavy machinery in the mines. By 1924, the skilled miners earned \$4.20 per-day, which amounted to an approximately 50 percent pay raise for Southern European immigrants over their 1916 salaries. The extra income allowed immigrants to become more active in local politics.¹⁵

While increased wages allowed more time to work in politics, education provided immigrants with the skills they needed to thrive in the United States. During the First World War, the American government passed federal immigration legislation that required immigrants to take educational exams to earn citizenship. On the Mesabi Range, the failed 1916 strike stirred mining companies and local reformers into offering night classes to immigrants to expedite the naturalization process. The programs also provided a secondary benefit by teaching immigrants to work within the democratic process, thereby thwarting the possibility of any new labor unrest. Hibbing's Lincoln High School provided free reading, writing, and math classes

for both sexes. In addition to their basic skills, immigrants could also learn sewing, furniture building, or other foreign languages.¹⁶

The children of immigrants also benefited from one of the leading educational programs in the state.¹⁷ The 1923 opening of the new, 4 million dollar Hibbing High School afforded up to 3,000 junior and senior high school students the opportunity to study in a building designed to emulate a European castle. The school also contained an affordable junior college that allowed students to obtain a two-year college degree while still living at home. The yearly expenditures on each student attending Hibbing High School amounted to 827 dollars, whereas the national average was only 487 dollars. Teachers also received the second highest wages in the nation. Both male and female educators in Hibbing averaged 1,415 dollars each year, compared to the 882 dollars paid to other teachers in the state. To obtain an academic position, however, an acceptable candidate needed a bachelor's degree and two years of teaching experience. As a result of the high standards and pay, the school attracted the brightest and most innovative educators.¹⁸

The Hibbing High School faculty stressed a policy of non-discrimination for all students. They encouraged multi-ethnic group activities to promote the idea of the United States as a melting pot for all people. The Junior Red Cross advocated the importance of "living together in communities, in nations, and nations within nations" as a theme to unite the region's youth population.¹⁹ Students commonly made friends with people of different ethnic origins, but spoke only English as a common language while in class. Outside of school, students frequently learned their friends' native languages, songs, and favorite foods. Faculty members continued to reinforce the commonality of students while they studied the core subjects of English, social studies, mathematics, science, and foreign languages which were required to graduate from the

program. Extra-curricular activities, such as baseball, theater, music, or art also united students who shared common interests.²⁰ These positive multi-ethnic experiences helped break down ethnic prejudices and Americanize second-generation immigrant students, preparing them to participate in the democratic process when they reached voting age.

The leaders of immigrant communities recognized the importance of the naturalization classes and their children's education. Community leaders understood the power wielded by voters in the democratic process after the tumultuous period of the First World War. In the early 1920s, Finnish, Swedish, Italian, and South Slavs organized naturalization clubs to protect and promote the rights of individuals in their communities. For example, the American Yugoslav Association, Finnish Americanization Club, Scandinavian Club, and the Italian Americanization Club all shared a desire to teach immigrants the importance of voting in the American democratic process.²¹ The clubs also worked in conjunction with the school board to ensure their children received a proper education. As a result of the educational and organizational successes that began during the First World War, the naturalization rates of immigrants increased throughout the 1920s, thereby stimulating immigrant political participation across the Mesabi Range.²²

The ethnic naturalization clubs also affected local politics by encouraging immigrants to participate in block voting. Hibbing's immigrants first used block voting in 1904 to elect Mayor John Power. By the 1920s, the number of naturalized immigrants meant an even greater ability to sway elections or place representatives of ethnic communities into public office. Moreover, the education provided by the American naturalization process and ethnic Americanization clubs increased the number of immigrants interested in politics and also voted. During the same period, second generation immigrants, who often received education in Hibbing high schools,

reached voting age and augmented the strength of ethnic political blocks. The prevalence of political patronage in Mesabi communities further enhanced immigrants' importance in elections. If immigrants backed a successful candidate they expected to receive positions in local governments for their support.²³ By the mid-1920s, immigrants posed a formidable force, which any party needed to address if they sought to obtain office.

The 1920, enactment of female suffrage through the Nineteenth Amendment led to an expanded role for women in politics on the Mesabi Range. From their headquarters in Duluth, the League of Women Voters helped to unite American and immigrant women in common action.²⁴ In 1920, Miss Emily Kunbuhl and Mrs. William Tellefsen conducted a series of citizenship classes for women. At the meetings, the league's representatives called on all women, regardless of class or station, to attend classes and learn about elections, political parties, and civic responsibilities.²⁵ By 1921, Hibbing's women formed the Women's Community Council, made up of the Saturday Club, PTA, Ladies-Aids, school faculty, and the Business Girls Club. Members met to discuss the forthcoming elections and draw up political platforms representing the desires of female voters.²⁶

Hibbing's labor unions also contributed to the rise of the Farm-Labor Party. Victor Power relied on the Hibbing Central Labor Union for major construction projects, such as the Hibbing High School and the new city hall building. As skilled labor union members they belonged to the Minnesota Federation of Labor. Local members' high wages allowed them to spend money on projects such as a new labor temple in Hibbing, which they built from their own funds. The organization frequently met with the State Federation of Labor Secretary Lawson to coordinate activities.²⁷ As members of the Minnesota Federation of Labor, Hibbing's unions made financial contributions first to the Nonpartisan League and later to the Farm-Labor Party through their

parent organization. The political ties between the Minnesota Federation of Labor and the Farm-Labor Party meant that Hibbing's union members added their strength to the much larger movement in Minneapolis and St. Paul, thereby adding more voters to reform politics.

The combination of labor unions, education, ethnic voting blocs, and female suffrage all contributed to Mesabi Range immigrants' support for the Nonpartisan League. Large numbers of immigrants, especially the South Slavs and Italians, feared renewed reprisals for supporting an organization accused of socialist and communist ties by Governor Burnquist and the mining companies. Southern European immigrants predicted that if they supported the Nonpartisan League or Farm-Labor party, the mining companies would "blackball" the miners, thereby causing them to lose their recently acquired positions as heavy-machine operators.²⁸

In 1920, Victor Power and Thomas Van Lear, the former mayor of Minneapolis and leader of the Nonpartisan League, along with State Federation of Labor Secretary Lawson attempted to mitigate the fears of miners in a speech to a crowd of several hundred immigrant workers in Hibbing. Van Lear urged the workers to fulfill their reform ideas through balloting at the local, state, and national levels. He stated that workingmen were good Americans who deserved the rights and freedoms promised to them by the government and mining officials during the war. While Van Lear acknowledged his past participation in the Socialist Party, he distanced the Nonpartisan League from the radical organization. Van Lear, unlike the IWW, characterized Nonpartisan League members as loyal citizens who worked to reform the government. Yet, the league also supported the right of workers to strike. He promised a better future for all people of Hibbing if they joined the Nonpartisan League.²⁹ This speech was important for differentiating the new party from past affiliations.

The Nonpartisan League and Farm-Labor Party garnered new grassroots support by leafleting, distributing buttons, supplying newspaper accounts of meetings, and staging rallies. In Hibbing, members introduced the newspaper *Saint Louis County Independent* as the town's official organ of the Farm-Labor Party.³⁰ The paper provided reformers with information on elections, candidates, and important legislative actions. Furthermore, in 1921, the Farm-Labor movement organized a women's auxiliary to attract female voters. During the early stages of Farm-Labor development, women joined the movement as a means to enter state politics. Often, women sought positions such as state auditor and clerk of the Minnesota Supreme Court. By opening the political door for women, the organization gained approximately 600 reformers who worked diligently to expand the power of the Farm-Labor movement in Minnesota.³¹

When the Nonpartisan League changed names to the Farm-Labor Federation in 1924, members began to reorganize and centralize power by establishing committees in each of Minnesota's counties. Two men, John L. Peterson and William Carss, played an important role in developing the Farm-Labor movement in Saint Louis County. John Peterson, a Swedish immigrant and railroad worker from Duluth, rose to the chairmanship position of the St. Louis County Farmer-Labor Association.³² From his post, Peterson coordinated activities between Hibbing and Duluth. William Carss also chaired the central committee when not serving in Washington as a Congressman for the Farm-Labor Party.³³ His election to Congress in 1918, helped to galvanize support for the Farm-Labor movement in Saint Louis County. While in Congress, he actively supported the Farm-Labor platform of workers, and women's rights, along with prohibition and a national social security system.³⁴

In Hibbing, A. H. Kleffman, a local merchant, emerged as a key leader in both the Nonpartisan League and later in the Farm-Labor Party. Even though Kleffman began his

political career as the village recorder in the conservative administration of Mayor Weirick (1907-1912), Kleffman continued to endorse union membership throughout the turbulent period of the First World War. In 1920, the Nonpartisan League endorsed Kleffman for district representative in the upcoming state elections.³⁵ While defeated in his early attempts for state office, Kleffman continued to work for Hibbing's government. From 1922 to 1924, Kleffman was a member of the special city charter commission to oversee the incorporation of the "locations" surrounding Hibbing. The commission created the Township of Stuntz, which expanded Hibbing's borders by several miles. By incorporating the "locations," Hibbing's government could collect additional taxes from nearby mining properties.³⁶

In addition to Kleffman, a local Farm-Labor activist named Ray Kries eclipsed Victor Power and his Progressive Party as the leading reformer in Hibbing. The process began in 1922, when Power came under increasing attacks by local conservatives who accused the mayor of corruption and extravagant spending on projects such as the Hibbing High School.³⁷ In 1922, Victor Power lost a close electoral race to a lawyer named John M. Gannon, a candidate backed by the mining companies. During the campaign, Mayor Powers defended his government to a crowd of approximately 16,000 people.³⁸ Despite the huge turnout, Gannon sealed the election with a small majority of only 686 votes. Inheriting over 6 million dollars in debt from the Power administration, Mayor Gannon began a program of fiscal responsibility. The new mayor initiated a per-capita expense limit, supported by the mining companies, who did not want to pay for new civil projects. He also discontinued all relief programs for the poor in the city.³⁹ The lowered taxes and reduced spending infuriated many citizens, who reacted to the situation by electing Power for another term in office the following year. Power's inability to sustain his position, however, resulted in the 1924 return of the Gannon administration. Power's electoral

defeat inaugurated the beginning of a decade of corporate dominance in the city. The era of major building projects ended, along with mayoral support for the working-class population of the city. As a result, Ray Kries' Independent-Progressive Party, which belonged to the Farm-Labor alliance, became the reform organization in Hibbing.⁴⁰

Between 1924 and 1930, the administrations of Hibbing Mayors John Gannon, Roy E. Mickelson, and Dr. Weirick earned an unfavorable reputation among the city's immigrant population for their support of the Ku Klux Klan. Using interviews of former Klan members conducted in the 1930s, the anthropologist John Syrjamaki concluded that the Klan controlled the government and school boards of both Hibbing and Virginia until the onset of the Great Depression. Syrjamaki identified the power behind the Klan as a clique of powerful townspeople, including mining officials, who wanted to maintain their power in the region. The Klan attempted to limit the rising political power of immigrants, especially Italians and South Slavs. The preponderance of immigrants on the Mesabi Range however, made open racism among public officials particularly dangerous. Klan members skirted the problem by manipulating the nativistic and racist sentiments of the region's Protestant populations. In 1926, approximately 1700 people attended a Klan rally led by W. Williams of Duluth, stated that the Klan wanted to make America safe for Americans. Williams wanted to rid the region of Catholics and communists, who opposed American Protestant values.⁴¹ The political situation in Hibbing contributed to the fears of the Southern European immigrants, but did not stop their support for the Farm-Labor Party.⁴²

As support for the Farm-Labor movement gained momentum in Saint Louis County, the region began to have an effect on state politics. By 1922, the Farm-Laborites achieved a major victory by electing two members from the party to the United States Senate. Moreover,

Scandinavians began to dominate the key leadership positions in the movement. Henrik Shipstead, a second-generation Norwegian dentist from Minneapolis, conducted a lively campaign that unseated the Republican incumbent, Frank Kellogg.⁴³ Shipstead's victory placed the first Farm-Labor member in the Senate. Magnus Johnson, an immigrant from Karlstad, Sweden, initially ran in the gubernatorial contest against the incumbent, Governor Jacob Preus. Once again, the campaign turned into a mud-slinging match where Preus accused the Farm-Laborites of disloyalty, in addition to affiliating with the IWW, communists, and socialists.⁴⁴ Preus won a close election, achieving less than a two percent majority over Johnson. Even in defeat, Johnson won a small victory for the Farm-Labor movement by making such a strong showing for the reformers. Within a few months of the election, Senator Knute Nelson died. Instead of appointing a replacement, Governor Preus decided to hold an election to fill the empty seat. Preus wanted to ensure that a Republican represented Minnesota alongside the Farm-Laborite, Senator Shipstead. The governor announced he would run against Magnus Johnson. In the second race between the two political foes, Magnus Johnson won a landslide victory over Preus.⁴⁵

The 1922 elections showed the growing power of immigrants, especially Scandinavians, in the Farm-Labor Party. In four years, from 1918 to 1922, the Farm-Labor movement had placed officials, such as William Carss, in Congress, along with both Henrik Shipstead and Magnus Johnson in the Senate. Magnus Johnson had also nearly won the governor's seat, losing only by a small margin. Immigrants played a key role in these electoral victories. The liberal Farm-Labor platform attracted naturalized and second-generation immigrants of both sexes to the movement, many of whom had just achieved the right to vote. The party not only vocalized immigrants' reform ideas, but also conformed to the American democratic process. Thus, the

Farm-Labor movement provided a middle ground between traditional American republicanism and earlier attempts at radical reform through Socialism and Syndicalism. Entering the arena of state politics, the immigrants who had struggled against the might of the Oliver Mining Company during the First World War had moved beyond local battles. At the state level, immigrants began to achieve results through their affiliation with the Farm-Labor Party, while simultaneously imparting their political ideologies on a more receptive American audience.

After the successes of 1922, the Farm-Labor coalition entered a period of stagnation as members debated the correct way to continue the movement's rapid growth. Individuals such as William Mahoney wanted to consolidate the party's infrastructure. He sought to strengthen ties among the various factions of the alliance. Groups such as the Nonpartisan League and the independent progressive voters feared that a consolidation would limit their power within the coalition, while strengthening the position of Mahoney and organized labor. Furthermore, Mahoney had become reliant on a core of communist trade unionists as negotiators on behalf of Minnesota's trade unions. The fear of a communist takeover of the coalition and the rising strength of the unions caused an internal power struggle within the Farm-Labor movement. In early 1924, Mahoney finally gained enough support for his ideas to achieve his centralization plans, which resulted in the creation of the Farm-Labor Federation. The new federation created a hierarchy of local clubs and county commissions that met at state conventions. Within the hierarchy, union members controlled financing, and therefore the campaign funding and the direction, of the Farm-Labor Federation.⁴⁶

In 1924, Mahoney used his new authority to steer the Farm-Labor Federation toward expanding the Minnesota movement across the United States. Senators Shipstead and Johnson helped to convince Wisconsin Senator Robert La Follette to run for president as a third-party

candidate. Mahoney hoped to unite a coalition of state movements into a national third party. The venture failed when neither man could agree on a coherent campaign strategy. Furthermore, Mahoney's ties to communism led to an insurmountable rift between the two men. In the fallout from the failed venture, Mahoney's centralization plans came under renewed attacks by members of the Farm-Labor Federation. Many members feared a communist takeover of the federation and forced Mahoney to officially sever all ties with the American Communist Party. After the ban however, communists still participated in Farm-Labor activities. The defeat of La Follette and renewed concerns over possible communist infiltration led to statewide malaise among Farm-Labor supporters, accompanied by a loss in support for the movement.⁴⁷

During the period from 1925 to 1928, the Republican Party beat the Farm-Labor Federation in a series of gubernatorial and congressional elections. Hibbing's voters however, continued to support for the Farm-Labor Federation. In the 1926 gubernatorial race between the Farm-Labor Federation's candidate Magnus Johnson and the Republican Party's Theodore Christianson, a majority of Hibbing's voters chose Magnus Johnson. Election results showed that Johnson garnered 2477 votes to 2390 for Christianson. Nevertheless, Christianson won the statewide election for governor. In the same election, Hibbing's Farm-Laborites overwhelmingly supported Minnie Cederholm's bid for Clerk of the Supreme Court. At the time, female politicians coveted the clerkship position as one of the few public offices open to women. The Farm-Labor movement sought to include women in the organization and also endorsed equality, regardless of race or gender. Cederholm's 2361 votes over Republican candidate Grace Kaerchcher's 1894 votes illustrated a strong commitment among Hibbing's citizens for women's rights. Unfortunately for the Farm-Labor movement, Kaerchcher won the overall election.

By 1928, the Farm-Labor Federation began to experience a resurgence of power and a renewed commitment to place members in state offices. In Hibbing, local members of the organization suffered under a city government controlled by Mayor Weirick and members of the Ku Klux Klan. Mayor Weirick's first administration of Hibbing, from 1907 to 1912, had provided unmitigated support for the mining companies operating in the city. When he returned to office in 1927, with the support of Klan members, the city government reverted to old alliances with the mining companies. The combination of racism and a repressive administration helped to motivate Hibbing's Farm-Labor movement to shift in a new direction. In 1928, Hibbing's Farm-Labor club announced a decision not to take part in local politics. Instead, the organization committed itself to statewide legislative reform, through Farm-Labor appointments to congressional, state, and national offices.⁴⁸ In effect, Hibbing's reformers transcended local repressive power structures by reinforcing alliances with the Minnesota's statewide Farm-Labor movement. With the help of the Farm-Labor movement, immigrant reformers could still make changes at the state level, as they did during the Power administration with the struggle for temperance, until the political climate changed in Hibbing.

Between 1928 and 1930, the leadership of the Farm-Labor movement tried to recreate the commitment and enthusiasm of members, which had led to the 1922 electoral victories of Magnus Johnson and Henrik Shipstead. In part, the Farm-Labor Federation suffered from a loss of support by cooperating with both the Democratic and Republican Parties in their rapid rise to power. However, the cooperation alienated some of the more radical elements in the coalition, such as the Socialists. To address these problems, Farm-Labor leaders directed all members not to vote for any candidates who did not take a direct stand on the principles of the Farm-Labor Federation.⁴⁹ The organization also attempted to reclaim Socialist Party support by making the

Farm-Labor party platform more amenable to their goals by pledging to wage war against injustice, greed, and intolerance. In 1928, Hibbing's Farm-Labor newspaper, *The Saint Louis County Independent*, released a statement announcing that if the Socialist Party endorsed the new platform, the Farm-Labor movement would endorse Socialist candidates for public office.⁵⁰ These changes failed to entice voters back to the Farm-Labor movement, and the party continued to decline in power.

The Farm-Labor movement's political power remained precarious throughout the summer of 1929, until Floyd B. Olson announced his plan to run for governor. Olson began his political career in 1922, when the citizens of Minneapolis elected him to the post of Hennepin County Attorney. Using his office to end Ku Klux Klan activity in Minneapolis, he indicted the key leaders of the organization on numerous charges. This action gained him a reputation as a liberal reformer. He garnered further acclaim among Minneapolis' workers by defending wrongly accused union members in a bombing case and helping to lower freight rates on coal shipments to the city. By 1923, Olson had joined the Farm-Labor movement and decided to run for governorship of the state. The Farm-Labor leadership had already endorsed Charles Lindbergh, Sr., for the position. During the election the senior statesmen died of a brain tumor, leaving the door open for Olson's bid for governor. In the campaign against the Republican candidate, Theodore Christianson, Olson failed to evade unsubstantiated charges of communist allegiances and lost the race. Afterwards, Olson remained committed to the Farm-Labor movement and continued to participate in many political campaigns. During the campaigns he made numerous friends among prominent reformers across the state, including the leadership of the League of Women Voters. These ties helped to make Olson a prominent Farm-Labor leader, and propelled him to make second bid for the governorship of Minnesota.⁵¹

By 1930, Olson's candidacy benefited from the stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression. While the full effects of the Depression had not yet struck Minnesota, workers' wages and the price of grain fell, adding to the apprehensions of voters. In April, 1930, the Farm-Labor Party endorsed Olson for governor, while Republicans chose Ray P. Chase, the state auditor, to represent their party. Chase had a long history of virulent opposition to the Farm-Labor movement, dating back to the inception of the Nonpartisan League. He made numerous charges against the league, proclaiming the organization opposed private property rights, religious freedom, and the institution of marriage. Chase's accusations made him unpopular among the Farm-Laborites, while his reputation as a person unable to cope with crisis distanced many Republican voters. In contrast, Olson repeated two themes throughout the campaign. He called for moderate reforms and good government. As a result of Chase's inadequacies and Olson's popularity, the Farm-Labor Party appeared to many voters as the favorite win.⁵²

When Olson announced his ticket, he included a Hibbing activist. The nomination of Elmer G. Johnson, a railroad engineer, for Warehouse Commissioner helped to galvanize support for the Farm-Labor movement, especially among Scandinavian immigrants in the region.⁵³ Once the campaigning began, Farm-Labor activists made frequent stops in Hibbing to drum up votes for the party. The Farm-Labor leadership feared that the mining companies in the region might intimidate the region's population into voting for the Republican Party, as they had done in previous elections.⁵⁴ Hibbing thus became a major battleground between the two parties.

In May, E. G. Hall, the new president of the State Federation of Labor, arrived in Hibbing to rally union support for the Farm-Labor movement. In an address to several citizens at the Central Union building, Hall called for closer co-operation between local unions and the state

officers.⁵⁵ Hibbing's Farm-Laborites followed up the visit by calling a meeting to formulate plans for an aggressive campaign for the entire Farmer-Labor state ticket.⁵⁶ Soon after, Elmer Johnson and A. H. Kleffman, another Hibbing candidate who was running for senator, addressed a large crowd at a joint meeting of the Hibbing Farm-Labor Club and the Workers' Welfare Club. They called on Hibbing's citizens to support the Farm-Labor ticket and to nourish an intensive statewide campaign.⁵⁷ The campaigning continued throughout June, finally culminating with Olson's arrival in Hibbing for a picnic sponsored by the Federated Farm Clubs of the Town of Stuntz and the Scandinavian Fraternity of America. Over 1,000 people gathered at the annual Scandinavian picnic to hear speeches by Olson and congressional candidate William Carss. In his speech, Olson stressed the importance of giving more attention to civic and governmental affairs. He also urged the attendees to exercise their independence in voting, a right guaranteed by the Constitution.⁵⁸ Even though the event included politicking, the Scandinavians enjoyed a day of music and sports. Local newspapers commented on the festivities enjoyed by all the participants, including the children.⁵⁹ By involving entire families in the political events, Olson continued his meteoric rise in popularity among Hibbing's residents.

Local Farm-Laborites Ray Kries, Arnott Widstrand, and John Edman were appointed to oversee publicity for the fall campaign. Kries, the perpetually unsuccessful mayoral candidate during the height of Klan power in city, helped organize additional speeches by Olson and Carss.⁶⁰ Hibbing's female reformers responded to the new initiatives by forming the Independent Women Olson-for-Governor League. Over 181 women composed an extensive list of reasons why they supported Olson. The women asked fellow females to focus on Olson's reputation as a man and not on his party affiliation, since "too many unworthy candidates have

been elected to office because the male population has voted for labels instead of the man.”⁶¹

Olson returned to the Mesabi Range on the final leg of his campaign trail. The Farm-Labor Party’s concerted effort in Hibbing, led to Olson’s overwhelming victory in the city.⁶²

Olson’s crushing defeat of Chase, with a lead of 475,154 to 289,000 votes, helped propel the Farm-Labor party to the heights its of power.⁶³ In the aftermath of victory, Olson bestowed numerous accolades and appointments on his supporters in Hibbing. State Representative R. W. Hitchcock escorted Governor Johnson to the inauguration. Elmer Johnson became Railroad Commissioner, while A. H. Kleffman received continual endorsements for State Treasurer until 1934, when he finally obtained office. Even Arnott Widstrand, who helped head the publicity campaign in Hibbing, received an appointment as District Commissioner of the Farm-Labor party.⁶⁴ In short, Governor Olson rewarded the people of Hibbing for their support.

Governor Olson continued in office for two additional terms. During that time he helped enact several new laws that benefited men and women across the state. These included a progressive income tax, a social security program for the elderly, equal pay for women, the right to bargain collectively, unemployment insurance, and a minimum wage. He was unable, however, to pass legislation that allowed for state ownership of grain elevators, meat packing plants, public utilities, or the iron mines. Olson’s programs provided relief for many citizens during the height of the Great Depression, even predating many reforms instituted by Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. In 1934, Governor Olson helped negotiate an end to a bloody trucking strike that enveloped Minneapolis. Olson received support from President Roosevelt, who threatened to cut off all federal aid to Minneapolis businessmen unless they negotiated a settlement with the truckers. In the aftermath of the Minneapolis strike, Roosevelt enacted the Wagner Labor Relations Act to improve workers’ negotiating rights and prevent further

bloodshed. Olson's popularity propelled him to national attention and a possible bid for the presidency in 1936, although he later decided to run for senator. What started as an illustrious career ended abruptly in 1936, when stomach cancer claimed his life.⁶⁵

Olson's victory culminated nearly thirty years of ethnic, racial, gender, and political assimilation. Between 1918 and 1930, Hibbing's immigrants made the important integrative step from local to state politics. Immigrants of different ethnic backgrounds and political affiliations joined American reformers and transformed Minnesota state politics. During this transformative phase, immigrants benefited from increased wages, job promotions, education, and expanded suffrage. Southern European immigrants finally received promotions to well-paying jobs. Naturalization rates increased through educational programs, often supported by ethnic Americanization and political clubs. These changes led to more voters being able to participate in the electoral process. Women finally achieved the right to vote, thereby increasing their power to effect reform. With the addition of second-generation immigrant voters, ethnic groups built powerful voting blocks to increase their ability to sway elections.

These changes helped to move immigrants away from the radical reforms envisioned during the First World War. After the repression of the 1916 strike and ensuing Red Scare, socialists and syndicalists lost most of their key leaders to mass arrests. As a result, Victor Power and his multi-ethnic Progressive Party emerged from the strife as the most powerful political party in the city. More importantly, Victor Power's 1918 decision to support the Nonpartisan League helped to unite immigrants across class, political, and ethnic lines.

Immigrant reformers embraced the Nonpartisan League's liberal political platform. The league's desire to limit the excesses of capitalism, support workers' rights, protect small businesses, and enforce civil rights made the organization popular among both immigrants and

Americans. Furthermore, by actively recruiting immigrants and women, the Nonpartisan League opened the door to political participation for many people who had never voted in the past. As a result, the Nonpartisan League bridged the gap between traditional republicanism and immigrant reform goals.

In effect, the immigrants joined the Nonpartisan League to create broader political coalitions, thereby expanding reformist efforts from the local to the state level. Swedish and Finnish immigrants provided invaluable support for both the Nonpartisan League and the Farm-Labor Party. Swedish immigrants also contributed many of the key leaders of the organization, including Magnus Johnson, Arnott Widstrand, and Elmer Johnson. Similarly, Finnish immigrants contributed many votes during elections through their affiliations with socialist, syndicalist, and communist movements.

Italian and South Slavic immigrants proved more reluctant to join the Farm-Labor movement. In the 1920s, memories of repression following the 1916 strike and the strong presence of the Ku Klux Klan in Hibbing inhibited their open support for any reform movement. Klan members played on the fears of Southern Europeans by forming secret voting societies that purportedly espoused reform platforms. Only in the 1930's, when Southern European immigrants learned that the Klan had organized these voting societies, did they too join the Farm-Labor movement in large numbers.

The Klan also inadvertently propelled immigrant reformers to move beyond Hibbing and into state politics. With the mining companies and the Klan in firm control of Hibbing's government, the local Farm-Labor movement had little chance to effect necessary changes. As a result, local Farm-Laborites created a plan to elect state officers who could formulate change

beyond the reach of the town's officials. An opportunity to implement the plan arose in 1930, when Floyd B. Olson decided to run for governor on the Farm-Labor ticket.

During the 1930 gubernatorial election, Hibbing and the Mesabi Range turned into a major battleground between the Republican Party and Farm-Labor Party. Olson and other key Farm-Labor officials repeatedly visited the town. In order to garner votes in Hibbing, Olson also placed Elmer Johnson on ticket. Through this adroit campaigning, along with including both immigrants and women in the process, Olson won a resounding victory.

Once in office, Olson rewarded his Hibbing supporters with several appointments. More importantly, he also began to enact changes desired by Hibbing's diverse populations. During his tenure in office, Olson implemented poverty relief, collective bargaining, and a minimum wage, while also supporting workers in their struggles to unionize. Furthermore, women became politically active and received Farm-Labor endorsements to attain public office. Olson also enacted legislation to provide women with wages equal to men. Thus, Hibbing's immigrants achieved many of the goals they had sought since 1907, when they staged the first massive strike to reform working and living conditions on the Mesabi Range.

¹ Charles Edward Russell, *The Story of the Nonpartisan League* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1920), 140-143.

² Richard M. Valelly, *Radicalism in the United States: The Minnesota Farm-Labor Party and the American Political Economy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 18.

³ Richard M. Valelly, 17-19.

⁴ Richard M. Valelly, 21.

⁵ Richard M. Valelly, 25-27.

⁶ John Earl Haynes, *Dubious Alliance: The Making of Minnesota's DFL Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 9-10.

⁷ In 1859, Charles Lindbergh, Sr., was born in Sweden to Ola Månson, a member of the Swedish government from the district of Skåne. Ola Månson gained a reputation as a liberal reformer in the 1850s for helping to abolish public floggings in Sweden. By the late 1850s, Månson's political enemies mounted a legal and propagandistic campaign against the reformer, which had caused him to flee the country and ultimately change his last name to Lindbergh.

Charles Lindberg Sr. grew up in Central Minnesota, attended law school at the University of Michigan before his 1907 election to Congress. In 1916, Minnesota Republican Party voters elected Lindbergh to the Senate. By 1918, Lindbergh joined the Nonpartisan League and headed the farm-labor coalition bid for governor, thereby becoming one of the leaders of the new organization. Lindbergh continued to support the Farm-Labor Party until 1924, when he died of brain tumor. Bruce L. Larson, *Lindbergh of Minnesota: A Political Biography* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973), 4-5, 279-281.

⁸ Laura K. Auerbach, *Worthy to be Remembered: A Political History of the Democratic-Farm-Labor Party, 1944-1984* (Minneapolis: Democratic-Farm-Labor Party of Minnesota, 1984), 17.

⁹ Robert L. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922* (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1974), 188.

¹⁰ Robert L. Morlan, 216.

¹¹ C.E. Ruthenberg, "Our Policy in the Farmer-Labor Party: A Letter to a Group of Comrades," *Daily Worker* 24 (May, 1924): 5.

¹² Steven J. Keillor, *Hjalmar Petersen of Minnesota: The Politics of Provincial Independence* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1987), 59.

¹³ Richard M. Valelly, 27.

¹⁴ Richard M. Valelly, 34-35.

¹⁵ Edward James Marolt, *The Development of Labor Unionism in the Iron Mining Industry of the Virginia-Eveleth District* (master's thesis, University of Minnesota, 1969), 112-115.

¹⁶ "Hibbing Night School Is Aid To Foreigners," *The Hibbing Daily Tribune*, January 13, 1920.

¹⁷ In the spring of 1920, Hibbing Lincoln High School student body consisted of, 129 American, 78 Swedish, 70 Finns, 29 Italians, 28 English, 19 Canadians, 19 Jews, 17 Norwegians, 16 Germans, 12 French, 12 Irish, 11 Slovenians, 5 Swede-Finns, 4 Austrians, 3 Croats, 3 Tyrolese, 3 Scotch, 2 Danish, 1 Belgian, 1 Serbian, 2 Swiss, 1 Welsh, and 1 Hungarian. "23 Different Nationalities Are in High School," *The Hibbing Daily Tribune*, April 8, 1920.

¹⁸ Mary Louise Van Winkle, "Education and Ethnicity in the 1930s in a Minnesota Mining Community" (PhD., diss., Harvard University, 1982), 157, 162-167.

¹⁹ Mary Louise Van Winkle, 170.

²⁰ Mary Louise Van Winkle, 172-173.

²¹ Syrjamaki, 359.

²² During the period from 1915 to 1925, the yearly naturalization rate of Slavs on the Mesabi Range increased from 89 to 156, Finns 84 to 88, Swedes 20 to 27, and Italians 32 to 41. Syrjamaki, 357, 400-401, 406-407.

²³ Syrjamaki, 360-361.

²⁴ Eight women from Hibbing's Saturday Club attended the League of Women Voters conference in Duluth. Mrs. Fred Holladay, Mrs. L.W. Dawson, Mrs. D.E. Harkins, Mrs. F.R. Wildes, Mrs. T.S. Silliman, Mrs. George McWhinney, Mrs. John Eastman, and Mrs. L.C. Newcombe. "Hibbing Women to Conference," *The Hibbing Daily Tribune*, April 27, 1920.

²⁵ "Will Educate Women Voters," *Mesaba Ore and The Hibbing News*, June 10, 1920.

²⁶ "Women's Mass Meeting Called," *Mesaba Ore and The Hibbing News*, February 19, 1921.

²⁷ “Central Labor Board Meets at City Hall,” *The Hibbing Daily Tribune*, January 13, 1920.

²⁸ Richard M. Valelly, 56.

²⁹ “Labor Meeting Well Attended,” *The Hibbing Daily Tribune*, January 16, 1920.

³⁰ Mike Holm, *The Legislative Manual of the State of Minnesota, 1927* (Minneapolis: Harrison and Smith Company, 1927), 406.

³¹ Richard M. Valelly, 39-40.

³² William Leighton Carss Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

³³ William Leighton Carss was born in 1865, at Pella, Iowa. Carss grew up in Des Moines, where he attended public school and later studied civil engineering. In 1893, he moved to Proctor, near Duluth and obtained a position as a locomotive engineer for the Duluth, Missabe & Northern Railway. While employed as an engineer, Carss also became involved in union activities through his affiliation with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Mike Holm, 460.

³⁴ “William Carss,” *Duluth Labor World*, July 2, 1932.

³⁵ “Kleffman To Be Endorsed,” *The Hibbing Daily Tribune*, May 8, 1920.

³⁶ “Minutes of the Charter Commission, 1922-1924,” Hibbing Historical Society.

³⁷ “Mayor Power Riddles Charges of Opposition,” *Mesaba Ore and The Hibbing News*, March 12, 1922.

³⁸ “Power for Mayor Parade Sets High Water Mark In History Of Political Turnouts In City,” *Mesaba Ore and The Hibbing News*, March 12, 1922.

³⁹ “Gannon Seeks To Have Per Capita Expense Limit Apply April 4,” *Mesaba Ore and The Hibbing News*, April 8, 1922.

⁴⁰ During the early 1920s, the Nonpartisan League occasionally used Independent Progressive Party as an alternative name for the organization. “Constitution of the Farm-Labor Party,” March 25, 1934. Farm-Labor Party Collection, Minnesota Historical Society. “Gannon Amasses 412 Majority,” *Mesaba Ore and The Hibbing News*, March 24, 1924.

⁴¹ “Klan Speaker Talks to 1700 Here Last Night,” *Mesaba Ore and The Hibbing News*, September 3, 1926.

⁴² During the Great Depression, the Klan disappeared from public view, though the same political clique remained in power but changed tactics. Instead of overt Klan activity, the political elite organized Masonic-style secret voting societies for immigrant voters. Former Klan members constructed cells of 32 to 48 members made up of various ethnic groups. Instead of nativistic propaganda, members discussed the failing economic system and the power of the mining companies, thereby convincing members that they had joined a reform movement. In reality, the sole purpose of the organization was to break the power of ethnic voting blocs. In 1934, the secret societies elected A.B. Timmerman’s Unity Party, which remained in power for two years. However, personal rivalries and competing political ideas led to the breakdown of central control as groups pursued independent agendas. When immigrants realized they had been deceived in 1936, they helped to elect S. Edward Twigg of the Farm-Labor Party as mayor of Hibbing. Syrjamaki concluded that the political leaders of the Klan and secret voting societies inadvertently forged political ties among the immigrant groups, thereby contributing to the integration of Southern Europeans. Syrjamaki, 367-371.

⁴³ Frank Kellogg continued in politics as Secretary of State under President Coolidge. He helped negotiate the Kellogg-Briand Pact in 1927, which earned Kellogg the Nobel Peace Prize.

⁴⁴ The G.O.P Principles By Preus, *The Hibbing Daily Tribune*, June 10, 1920.

⁴⁵ Richard Valelly, 41.

⁴⁶ Richard Valelly, 43-45.

⁴⁷ Richard Valelly, 46-49.

⁴⁸ “Farmer-Laborites Taboo Taking Part (sic) in Local Politics,” *St. Louis County Independent*, April 6, 1928.

⁴⁹ “Farmer-Laborites Endorse Kleffman Commissioner,” *St. Louis County Independent*, March 9, 1928.

⁵⁰ “Independent National Farmer-Labor Party is Progressive Goal,” *St. Louis County Independent*, August 17, 1928.

⁵¹ Floyd B. Olson was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1891 to Swedish and Norwegian parents. As a youth he worked in the grain fields of North Dakota and then attended the University of Minnesota. John S. McGrath and James J. Delmont, *Floyd Bjornsterne Olson: Minnesota’s Greatest Living Governor* (Minneapolis: McGrath and Delmont, 1937), 20-26. George H. Mayer, *The Political Career of Floyd B. Olson* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1987), 25-36.

⁵² George H. Mayer, 51-52.

⁵³ “Harmony Prevails at State Farmer-Labor Convention,” *St. Louis County Independent*, April 4, 1930.

⁵⁴ George H. Mayer, 36.

⁵⁵ “Co-Operation is Key-Note of Talk Tuesday Evening,” *St. Louis County Independent*, May 9, 1930.

⁵⁶ “Farmer-Laborites to Hold Meeting on Thursday Eve,” *St. Louis County Independent*, May 16, 1930.

⁵⁷ “Farmer-Labor Club Takes Up Campaign Work,” *St. Louis County Independent*, May 30, 1930.

⁵⁸ “Floyd B. Olson Addresses Large Gathering Sun.,” *St. Louis County Independent*, July 25, 1930.

⁵⁹ “Farmer-Labor Group to Start Active Campaign,” *St. Louis County Independent*, October 3, 1930. “Shipstead-Carss Address Large Audience Sat.,” *St. Louis County Independent*, November 2, 1928.

⁶⁰ “Farmer-Labor Group to Start Active Campaign,” *St. Louis County Independent*, October 3, 1930.

⁶¹ “Ask Patriotic Women of State Vote for Olson,” *St. Louis County Independent*, October 31, 1930.

⁶² “Town of Stuntz Shows Majority for Farmer-Labor,” *St. Louis County Independent*, November 7, 1930.

⁶³ George H. Mayer, 56.

⁶⁴ John S. McGrath and James J. Delmont, 68, 103.

⁶⁵ For detailed information of the career of Floyd B. Olson see John S. McGrath and James J. Delmont’s *Floyd Bjornsterne Olson: Minnesota’s Greatest Living Governor* (Minneapolis: McGrath and Delmont, 1937) or George H. Mayer’s *The Political Career of Floyd B. Olson* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1987).