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LaFollette's Legacy
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LaFollette's Legacy

AMERICA'S OLDEST MONTHLY OPINION MAGAZINE: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WAR COVERAGE IN *THE PROGRESSIVE* MAGAZINE WHICH INCLUDES WORLD WAR I, WORLD WAR II, THE VIETNAM WAR AND THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

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ABSTRACT

LaFollette's Legacy
AMERICA'S OLDEST MONTHLY OPINION MAGAZINE: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WAR COVERAGE IN *THE PROGRESSIVE* MAGAZINE WHICH INCLUDES WORLD WAR I, WORLD WAR II, THE VIETNAM WAR AND THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

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Founded in 1909 by Progressive Wisconsin Governor Robert M. LaFollette, *The Progressive* magazine was initially used by its founder as a platform with which to reform the American political system to better represent the public interest. It was called *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine* then and survives today as *The Progressive*, America's oldest monthly opinion magazine. The purpose of this study is to discover some reasons why LaFollette's magazine has survived for eighty-five years. A primary issue addressed by LaFollette was his opposition to military intervention as a means of resolving human conflict. He opposed American involvement in World War I. This study analyzes selected war coverage of *The Progressive* to reveal that the magazine survived, in part, because of its consistent opposition to military intervention and a dedication by LaFollette's successors to his progressive legacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was enhanced by the cooperation of *The Progressive's* staff. I thank them for their assistance in exploring some of their publications colorful history. I would also like to thank Dr. Lucinda Davenport for her guidance through the life of this project, as well as my committee members, Dr. William Cote and Dr. Stan Soffin for their constructive comments in the shaping of the final product. Special thanks go to Professor Steve Sheppard for his patience, editorial assistance and friendship.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

> *There is no independent mode of existence. Every entity is only to be understood in terms of the way it is interwoven with the rest of the universe.*
> - Alfred North Whitehead

Rooted in American political history, *The Progressive* magazine was initially used by its founder, progressive politician Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Sr., as a platform with which to reform the American political system to better represent the public interest. As the First World War approached LaFollette turned his attention to developing a position on American involvement. His editorial opinions, and those of other leading progressives published by LaFollette, opposed American intervention. These two issues, representative government and non-intervention, more than any others, formed the basis for *The Progressive's* editorial agenda.

Media historian Jean Folkerts has suggested a broad context for assessing media content:

> . . . the essays in this book treat the media not as a monolithic institutional structure with a singular history, but as myriad messages and forms of messages that precipitated, reflected and interacted with other forces in determining cultural, political, economic and intellectual life in the United States. . . . The media become participants as well as observers and mirrors in the patterns of historical development.[1]

This thesis uses Folkert's approach in a study of *The Progressive* magazine. An analysis selected war content of the magazine provides a useful example of Folkert's theory

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[1]Jean M. Folkerts, *Media Voices* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), xi.

because the magazine's editors specifically intended that *The Progressive* be a participant as well as an observer in the patterns of historical development regarding militarism and war.

The Progressive is distinct. Founded in 1909, it continues to survive as the oldest monthly opinion magazine in the United States. In viewing the magazine from Folkert's perspective, with war coverage as a central theme, an overall picture develops that provides an understanding for why *The Progressive* continues to survive.

Robert M. LaFollette based his magazine, then called *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, in his hometown of Madison, Wisconsin, and it continues to be published there today. From its inception, *The Progressive* has developed a reputation for providing information and perspectives that are not typically found in the commercial media. Erwin Knoll, current editor of *The Progressive*, talked about this reputation in an interview in July 1993:

> When LaFollette founded this magazine he was very explicit about wanting to overturn the interests of the mass media. There were certain things that he felt the mass media could not, would not, say that he wanted this magazine to say. Those, for the most part . . . included positions on militarism–his uncompromising positions on militarism–and a profound suspicion of corporate business. In LaFollette's day those were the banks, the railroads, the trusts, the insurance companies. In our day it's the great multi-national corporation. [Other issues the magazine addresses today include] an interest in protecting the environment [and] a commitment to civil rights. . .[2]

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[2]Erwin Knoll, interview with author, July 13, 1993, Madison, Wisc.

Thesis Objective

The Progressive marked its eightieth birthday in 1989. Knoll, entering his eighteenth year as editor, observed the occasion in his February 1989, Memo from the Editor column:

> When this issue goes to press on January 9, it will be eighty years to the day since Volume I, Number 1 appeared. It was called *LaFollette's Weekly* then, and the founding editor, Robert M. LaFollette Sr., believed he had to start his own magazine because there was no way to get the commercial press of his time to report truthfully on issues that involved a conflict between private greed and public interest.[3]

In Volume I, Number 1, LaFollette addressed "the inevitable struggle" between special privilege and equal rights, which occurred in every attempt to establish free government. He said that America had become engrossed in material development and neglected all its institutions. The country, blinded by this "vast richness," was startled to find, when its eyes were finally opened, that the great industrial organizations had control of politics, government and natural resources. These organizations managed political conventions, made platforms, dictated legislation and ruled the country through the politicians elected to represent the people. The "chief task" of *LaFollette's Weekly* was to help people regain the complete power over government they once held. The truth was the principle weapon LaFollette would use in the struggle. LaFollette acknowledged that mistakes would be made and that readers might not agree with everything printed in the magazine. "But the cooperation necessary to permanent

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[3]Erwin Knoll, "Spry Octogenarian," *The Progressive*, February 1989, 4.

progress can be secured only through intelligent discussion."[4] Eighty years later Knoll wrote of this last sentence: "When it comes to devising a credo for *The Progressive,* we couldn't do much better today."[5] This portion of LaFollette's editorial from the first issue, reprinted by Knoll eighty years later, was used to illustrate the consistency of *The Progressive's* editorial stance throughout the years. Knoll continued:

> The fundamental principles that undergird this magazine's editorial stance have been remarkably consistent over the years: rejection of militarism and war as ways of resolving human conflict; exposure of corporate and governmental abuse; protection of the environment; defense of civil liberties. But within that broad context, *The Progressive* is always changing and, I hope, will always continue to change.[6]

Using these words as a backdrop, specifically the reference to militarism and war, the researcher has examined the magazine's content to test the validity of Knoll's claim that the principles undergirding the magazine's editorial stance have remained consistent over time.

LaFollette's ideals regarding militarism laid a foundation for his successors. This thesis examines LaFollette's foundation as well as the loyalty of his successors to his ideals. This examination, thus, considers the philosophical approach LaFollette employed in opposing militarism; the vehemence of his opposition to militarism and war; the representation of his beliefs in the pages of *LaFollette's Weekly* (from the first

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[4]Robert M. LaFollette, *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, January 9, 1909, 3.

[5]Knoll, "Spry Octogenarian," 4.

[6]*Ibid.*

issue in 1909 to the end of the First World War); and the reflection of his beliefs about militarism by his successors, William Evjue, Morris Rubin and Erwin Knoll.

William T. Evjue was installed as editor in 1928 by Robert LaFollette's sons, Robert Jr. and Philip LaFollette. The brothers had assumed editorial responsibility for the magazine after their father's death in 1925. With the change in editorial leadership came the change in the magazine's title. In 1929 *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine* became *The Progressive*, renamed after the political movement to which LaFollette Sr. devoted his life. Evjue served as editor through the beginning of the Second World War, when he left the magazine after a dispute with the LaFollette brothers over the magazine's position on the war.

Morris Rubin took over as editor of *The Progressive* in 1940 amidst an international conflict which embroiled most of the nations of the world. Rubin's perspective about military intervention was reflected both during World War II and, because he served as editor until 1973, during the Vietnam war.

Erwin Knoll worked as the Washington editor for *The Progressive* from 1968 until he took over from Rubin as editor in 1973. Knoll's ideals were revealed to a lesser extent during the Vietnam war and more fully during the Persian Gulf War.

Thus, the objective of this study is to outline LaFollette's position on militarism and war during World War I, and then to analyze the magazine's editorial content to reveal in what way, if any, the magazine's editors changed *The Progressive's* stance on this issue over the following decades.

Magazine content during the Korean war was not analyzed because the researcher selected war periods which coincided with the editorial leadership of each of the magazine's editors. Morris Rubin, *The Progressive's* longest serving editor, was editor during World War II, the Korean war and the Vietnam war. *The Progressive's* opinions regarding war were assessed at the beginning and end of Rubin's tenure (World War II and Vietnam war) because the researcher believed that these periods would sufficiently illustrate the consistency of the magazine's opinions during Rubin's tenure.

Justification

These factors of change and growth in the eighty-five-year history of *The Progressive* provide a wealth of information. Although much has been written about LaFollette, his family and the Progressive party, the magazine itself has never been studied. This study reveals significant information about how editorial agenda are formulated that will contribute to future media studies.

By maintaining a commitment to LaFollette's ideals, while adapting those ideals to the changes taking place in society, *The Progressive* has built a consistent framework from which it addresses issues its editors deem significant to the magazine's readers. An analysis of that framework–which has proven successful for *The Progressive*–from the perspective of the magazines' four editors, LaFollette, William T. Evjue, Morris H. Rubin and Knoll, provides valuable information about the factors that contribute to the longevity of American opinion magazines.

Method

This study examines 59 issues of *The Progressive*, beginning with its first issue in 1909, when it was called *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, and continuing through four distinct periods in American history--World War I (1914-1918), World War II (1939-1945), the Vietnam War (1960-1975) and the Persian Gulf War (January-April 1991). These eras were chosen to illuminate an essential legacy left by founding editor Robert M. LaFollette, his "rejection of militarism and war as ways of resolving human conflict." LaFollette was vehement in his opposition to U.S. involvement in World War I. He addressed this issue both in the Senate and in the magazine, and his political fortunes suffered.

To review the editorial content, the researcher systematically sampled magazine issues from each wartime period. To understand how events were covered, the sample reviews one year before and after each war, as well as the years of conflict. This is necessary to understand what types of issues the magazine covered from a general perspective, as well as to understand what kind of concerns were discussed as the United States moved closer to involvement in a particular war. Editorial content is defined as articles, columns and editorials. Each piece of editorial content was read and the opinion of each piece was recorded in an index of topics created by the researcher. Each topic, and the magazines opinion on it, is qualitatively explained in the body of the thesis. This method for presenting the results of the content analysis was chosen because it is the researcher's preference to present information qualitatively, rather than quantitatively.

The time periods and editorships cover the following years: World War I - 1913 to 1919 (LaFollette); World War II - 1938 to 1946 (William T. Evjue and Morris H. Rubin); the Vietnam war - 1959 to 1976 (Morris H. Rubin, Erwin Knoll-Washington editor), and the Persian Gulf War - 1991 (Erwin Knoll). The sample begins with the first week's issue in January 1913 and continued with the second week's issue in February 1914. The magazine was published as a monthly from November 1914 to December 1928, returned to a weekly format in 1928, and switched back to a monthly format in 1948. Therefore, during World War I, the sample continued with the March 1915 issue, then the April 1916 issue, and so on. For each new period, the sample started again in January.

During the World War II period, the sample begins with January 1938 and continued to 1946. The Vietnam war sample begins with January 1959 and continued for successive months to 1976. The Persian Gulf War lasted from January to April 1991. Due to the shorter duration of this war, two years of content was examined during this period. This sample begins in January 1990 and continues through December 1991. The researcher also used primary material from conversations with Knoll and other members of *The Progressive's* staff to understand what LaFollette's legacy means to the magazine today, whether the magazine has changed, how the magazine is marketed, and the role the publisher plays in running the magazine.

Chapter Two of the study includes a brief history of the rise of the progressive movement in the United States, a discussion of the muckraking era in American journalism and a review of LaFollette's political career before starting *LaFollette's Weekly*

Magazine in 1909. Chapter Three provides a history of the magazine from its origin as *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine* to its current status as a monthly publication. It is a selected history, however, because it is a review of the magazine's history during the four war periods chosen for analysis and does not cover *The Progressive's* entire publication history. Included in Chapter Three are excerpts from interviews with current *Progressive* editor Erwin Knoll, publisher Matthew Rothschild and managing editor Linda Rocawich, regarding the struggles and triumphs they have experienced running the nation's oldest monthly opinion magazine. Chapter Four provides an overview of the First World War, prior to the United States' involvement; an analysis of the magazine's content during the war; and an analysis of LaFollette's opposition to the war both as a senator and a magazine editor. Chapter Five gives a cursory review of the events that prompted World War II, describes the editorial arrangement that ensued after LaFollette's death and analyzes the magazine's content during the war under the editorial leadership of Morris H. Rubin. Chapter Six uses the same format in discussing the Vietnam war and analyzes the magazine's opinions throughout the war. Chapter Seven analyzes the magazine's content during the Persian Gulf War. Chapter Eight provides a brief summary of the information presented in the previous chapters, as well as both conclusions drawn by the researcher and some ideas for future research.

The Progressive has existed for eighty-five years, and there is a great archive of its context. In the light of the broad historical perspective provided by the life of *The Progressive*, this thesis concentrates on both the magazine's commentary about the

cultural, political and economic life of America while at war, and on what this commentary suggests about the magazine, its editors and readers. These observations, made when the publication grappled with the most pressing issue facing the nation–whether to engage in war–suggest that *The Progressive's* consistent opinion on a variety of social issues resulted in a loyal subscription base, which in turn ensured its survival as the nation's oldest monthly opinion magazine.

CHAPTER 2

The Rise Of Progressivism

All politics are local.
- Thomas P. O'Neill

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, men and women across the United States, interested in advancing reform, formed the progressive movement. Their methods of enacting change were as diverse as their disciplines, which included politics, education, law, economics, industry, religion and sociology. Jane Addams made significant strides in social reform, George Herbert Mead pursued educational change and William Jennings Bryan, early in his political career, succeeded in defining the issues that later developed into the political platform of the Progressive party. Theodore Roosevelt and Robert M. LaFollette were most responsible for developing a party around the issues Bryan addressed initially as a Populist and later as a Democrat. Roosevelt ran for president on the first national Progressive ticket in 1912. LaFollette embraced the party in 1891, ascended to party leadership as governor of Wisconsin from 1900 to 1906 and in 1924 made his own bid for the presidency. Both men lost their respective runs at the presidency as progressive politicians, but LaFollette, for his part, succeeded with his attempts at political reform first as governor and then as a U.S. senator from 1906 to 1925. LaFollette also engaged in "muckraking" journalism, another avenue of reform that emerged at the turn of the century. In 1909, toward the end of the muckraking period,

LaFollette formed his own magazine, *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, used as a political organ by LaFollette and other leading progressives to publicize their reform efforts.

The political development of the progressive movement in the United States began on the Midwestern frontier in the 1860s and 1870s, when the conflict between pioneer ideals and industrial greed, between individualism and collectivism, between reform and reaction, led to a growing attitude of discontent. The democratic principles of Thomas Jefferson in eighteenth century America were failing the test of the nineteenth century's political and economic systems. Reformers believed the eighteenth century's concepts of liberty and equality were rapidly being replaced by the corrupting influence of money and politics. E.L. Godkin, editor of the *Nation*, however, thought that perhaps this was not a wholly undesirable prospect since popular government was "absolutely incapable of dealing with great subjects."[1]

American government in the nineteenth century was not seen as serving the public interest. The overriding view of many Americans during the 1870s was that the government, in cooperation with industry, was perverted and corrupted and served private rather than public interests, that it was becoming more plutocratic than democratic. Politician Henry George, writing in 1879, pointed out the peculiar paradox of a nation that became richer and richer while more and more of its people became poorer and poorer.[2] This sense was keenly felt in the rural areas of the American Midwest.

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[1]E.L. Godkin, *Unforseen Tendencies of Democracy* (New York, 1898), 33.

[2]Russell B. Nye, *Midwestern Progressive Politics* (Michigan State College Press, 1951), 25.

The late political historian Russel Nye characterized the Midwest as the best adapted of any portion of the nation to accept the task of reconciling the ideological struggle that was developing across the country. "The midwestern states, only recently settled as frontier communities and now rapidly becoming semi-industrial areas, were a focal point for a collision of old and new ideologies."[3] The result of this collision was a new regional movement--largely political, but also religious, economic and social--that sought to return the interests of government and business to serving the public good.

The Grange society, founded in 1867, was the seed from which the progressive movement of the twentieth century would grow. Oliver Hudson Kelley organized the secret society among farmers of the Midwest to educate and advance their interests in a wholly unpolitical fashion. Grangers would meet to discuss events of the day from a local perspective, attend book readings and lectures and mingle with fellow farmers. But for many, the issues of the day--freight trains, high taxes, price fixing, credit, monopolies, currency and tariffs--were decidedly political. By 1876, Grange leaders decided that "agitation for desirable legislation was acceptable." Though the Grange never grew into an active political party, a special committee appeared as a lobbying group.[4] Grange members engaged in pressure politics. They called on politicians to "clip the wings" of the railroads, whom they saw as manipulating freight prices for profit. Grangers also demanded educational benefits, including better schools and more extensive agricultural training in them, inexpensive textbooks and better instruction. They lobbied for tax law revisions--no

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[3]*Ibid.*, 26.

[4]*Ibid.*, 42-43.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

exemptions of railroad properties, a tax on mortgages but not mortgaged property, and more equitable burdens on individuals and corporations. And finally, the farmers wanted reduced interest rates, a more liberal credit system and a less expensive but better government.[5] In general terms, the Grange society expressed three major themes that set the foundation, which progressive politicians William Jennings Bryan and Robert M. LaFollette would later build a political movement upon: To remove special interests from government, make government more responsible to people and to broaden governments concept to include economic and social welfare. Grangerism constituted the earliest form of Midwestern Progressivism.

Most of the Grange's political efforts were concentrated against the railroads. They sought to keep railroads out of politics, to reduce their rates and to subject them to popular control as a public service corporation. These efforts resulted in the passage of the "Grange Decisions" of the 1870s and early 1880s, which established two principles that later became fundamental to the progressive movement--the power of the state to control corporations and the use of commissions for their control.[6] However, in the 1890s and 1900s these commissions would themselves be manipulated by the very corporations they set out to regulate.[7] The railroads, for their part, fought back and rendered most of the statutes moot by the late 1880s. The railroads argued that the high rates they charged were necessary to defray the cost of debts and of stock dividends

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[5]*Ibid.*, 44.

[6]*Ibid.*, 47.

[7]*Ibid.*

incurred during the building of the lines and from their maintenance. They complained, successfully, that the laws scared away investors and that interference with business was illegal under the Fourteenth Amendment. The railroads' biggest complaint, however, and one that deeply wounded Grangerism from that point forward, was that the whole debate was un-American, an interference that would become likened to communism.

Though the Grange movement did not succeed in enacting any real reforms, it cannot be considered a failure. The Grange society was the first large-scale attempt to organize farmers and laid the groundwork for the Farmers Alliance, populism, insurgency and Progressivism. The Grange movement set the stage for these groups' future attacks against unregulated development of corporations and, wrote Russel Nye, gave the Midwest a taste of independent politics it did not forget.[8] The idea of state control and regulation–a radical departure from the Jeffersonian concept of weak government–was firmly imbedded in Midwestern politics. Although the inequity of democratic governance played a major role in prompting the development of reform movements, other factors contributed to their growth, as well.

The women and men who constituted the reform movements of the early twentieth century were products of the Victorian era, born and raised in the Anglo-American world, mostly during the last half of the eighteenth century. Born between 1854 and 1874, the first generation of creative progressives absorbed the severe, protestant morals of their parents and instinctively identified those values with Abraham Lincoln, the Union and the Republican Party. Victorian culture possessed strong social

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[8] *Ibid.*

institutions, as well as strict moral standards, and valued individual achievement, responsibility and rectitude, and celebrated progress and civilization.[9] The centerpiece of Victorian sentiment was the individual. Economic success was dependent upon individual efforts, as was social position. Victorians assumed people determined their futures as individuals as well, choosing salvation through their faith and actions.[10]

The reigning philisophical view at the dawn of the progressive era conceived of the individual as free to compete by any means, however ruthless, and also justified the rewards reaped through this competiton by the same theory of individualism. This was the predominant view held by society because society's leaders benefitted from it. English philosopher Henry Spencer famously articulated the theory of individual rights in his book *Social Statics*, published in 1851. Spencer wrote: "Every man has freedom to do all that he wills, provided that he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man."[11]

Although progressives shared the belief that public citizens of a democratic republic should make their decisions as individuals, their reform philosophy arose in response to the Spencerean view. Progressives adopted a counter-philosophy that required an individual to act on behalf of both the public, as well as the private, good. Decisions were made based upon what was best for the country as a whole, independent of self or group interest. As Historian Robert Crunden noted, the progressives not only "internalized

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[9]David B. Danbom, *"The World of Hope" Progressives and the Struggle for an Ethical Public Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 5-7. See also Robert M. Crunden, *Ministers of Reform* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1982), 3-5.

[10]Danbom, 6.

[11]Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics or The Conditions Essential to Human Happiness* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969, first published in London by John Chapman, 1851), 77.

Protestant moral norms" of Victorian society, they made a conscious attempt to apply these norms to "the very real social, industrial, political and aesthetic problems" of American life.[12]

Unlike their parents' generation, whom they deeply respected, young progressives were unwilling to settle for traditional careers such as the ministry. Instead they chose to make their mark in such alternative professions as social work, journalism, academia, law and politics. These careers offered more public platforms from which to preach their doctrine of moral reform within institutions, as well as to individuals.

By the 1890s, just as the crisis over individual self-determination and self-restraint reached a climax, the reform ideas, and reformers, of the post-Civil War years were beginning to find their niche in American society. An increasing number of people, as they faced the last decade of the nineteenth century, felt "a sense of divergence between their consciences and their conduct," noted Jane Addams. "They desire both a clearer definition of the code of morality adapted to present day demands and a part in its fulfillment."[13] Figures like Addams, George Herbert Mead and William Jennings Bryan were emerging as public figures in the areas of social work, education and politics. Addams, who founded Chicago's Hull-House in 1889, pioneered the new career of social settlement work for women and became a pre-eminent role model for the next generation. Addams's

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[12]Robert M. Crunden, *Progressivism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1977), 75.

[13]Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964; first published by MacMillan, 1902), 4.

contribution is vitally important when seen in the context of the problems facing women at the time.

Moreso than the men of their generation, women raised in the Victorian era were increasingly distressed by their available career prospects. They desired to make meaningful contributions to society, but no genuine careers were open to them. Women in the late nineteenth century were expected to marry and have children or become maiden aunts, cultivating beautiful thoughts and the children of close relatives. Women had to fight for admission into colleges and universities. Professional schools were closed to them. If they did manage to obtain a degree, there were few positions as doctors, lawyers or architects available to them. Rather than acquiesce to the social norms of the era, women like Jane Addams and later, Ida Tarbell, broke trails for those who followed. Women found occupations–such as teaching, journalism, social work and reform activity--that satisfied their consciences, which were equally as demanding as those of their male counterparts.

In Hull-House, Addams adapted a concept she had seen applied by Canon Samuel A. Barnett at Toynbee Hall, a London settlement. Toynbee Hall housed a community of university-educated men who lived among the poor applying their knowledge to make a difference in the lives of people in need.[14] With Hull-House Addams brought the problems of U.S. cities–poverty, corruption, greed, intolerance and selfishness–to one place where they could be confronted, classified and organized. Living among the poor, young progressive intellectuals found a definite, personal alternative for action. They

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[14]Crunden, *Ministers of Reform*, 24. See also Danbom, 72.

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c.191

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became sensitive to the environmental factors that contributed to poverty and focused more on easing these pressures rather than treating the individuals who suffered as a result of them. Settlement workers used Hull-House as a means of effecting social justice reform through public housing, public health, occupational safety and social insurance.[15] These reforms often developed from within the emerging social sciences of economics, philosophy and sociology and, once formulated, found their vehicles for expression in the new colleges and universities.

George Herbert Mead played a formative role in the expression of progressive ideology from within the university setting. He is remembered as one of the most original philosophers the era produced.[16] Mead was educated at Oberlin College, Ohio, Harvard University and the University of Berlin, where he was trained as a physiological psychologist. His conversion to Progressivism stemmed from the time he spent in Berlin in 1890 studying German institutions. Mead openly endorsed socialism and felt it had a great deal to offer American society. This position was shared by many progressives who often advocated measures that seemed socialistic, for example, municipal ownership of natural monopolies such as gas, electric, telephone and water supply companies. Mead returned from Europe convinced that only in reform politics could he find meaningful work. Mead's philosophy for reform was to attack problems at the local level. He believed that too many reformers looked only at the federal government in their efforts to change

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[15]Danbom, 72-73. See also Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: 1960, c.1910), 123, 179-80, 210; and Crunden, *Ministers of Reform*, 65-66.

[16]Crunden, *Ministers of Reform*, 25.

society. Mead sought a direction for reform that would remove the machine politics, educate the public politically and introduce social ideals at the local level so that reform might flow upward into state and national politics. Moral development was the key, Mead said, in education, in personal character and in politics.[17] Mead continued to develop and spread his philosophy for reform as an instructor at the University of Michigan and as a professor at the University of Chicago. It was in Chicago that he became involved with Jane Addams and her work at Hull-House, worked quietly to improve the school system, and became an expert on labor problems.[18] Jane Addams and George Herbert Mead worked from institutional settings to influence progressive social and political reforms in the late nineteenth century. In politics, an institution in itself, men like William Jennings Bryan and Robert M. LaFollette took center stage.

William Jennings Bryan was, by all accounts, an unlikely politician. He was neither an intellectual nor adept at public affairs. Bryan was not an independent thinker but instead relied upon others' ideas to further his political career. Large in stature, broad but not fat, Bryan's appeal lay in his voice and his appearance. On a hot July afternoon in Chicago in 1896, when Midwestern state politicians were in a frenzy over the nomination of a candidate for their platform, Bryan took the podium at the Democratic National Convention and swept the nomination for president with a speech that said nothing new, but said it in a way no one else ever had or ever could. "There are two ideas of government," Bryan said.

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[17] *Ibid.*, 35-38.

[18] *Ibid.*, 38.

> There are those who believe that if you will only legislate to make the well-to-do-prosperous, their prosperity will leak through on those below. The Democratic idea, however, has been that if you make the masses prosperous, their prosperity will find its way up through every class which rests on them.[19]

It was the final phrase of Bryan's speech, however, that brought down the convention, "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this cross of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!"[20] The reference hit a chord with both Democrats and Populists, who were competing for control of the party platform.

The debate over currency reform was a contentious issue with a long history. No party had devised a solution, and the argument over gold or silver as the monetary standard was as prevalent as ever in the 1896 election. In a general sense, for the issue was complex, free silver theorists believed that the problems of limited monetary resources and low prices could be solved by increasing the value and amount of coinage available, preferably silver. Silver was at that time valued at 16 ounces of silver to 1 ounce of gold.[21] The depression of 1893 had heightened tension over the issue, and Bryan's speech united the disparate reform elements of the West behind the free silver theory. These were the gifts–oration and presence–that made Bryan, an otherwise mediocre politician, into a memorable one. Although he lost to Republican William McKinley in the election of 1896, Bryan garnered six million votes, and emerged as a political leader. His

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[19]William Jennings Bryan, "The Cross of Gold Speech," Democratic National Concvention, Chicago, Illinois, July 8, 1896. Published in *Great American Speeches*, Gregory R. Suriano, ed. (New York: Gramercy Books, 1993), 118.

[20]*Ibid.*

[21]*Ibid.*, 103.

victory came in uniting two parties, the Populists and Democrats, and then dominating the Democratic party for the next fifteen years. Although he never served as president (he lost again to McKinley in 1900) Bryan's ability to define the issues of progressive politics--the people against money, the people against the machine, public good against special privilege, free silver against the cross of gold--is remembered as equally significant.[22]

Bryan was a national political figure and fought most of his battles in Washington. However, the real impact of progressive politics, echoing the philosophy of George Herbert Mead, was felt largely at the local level, and no politician was more successful at localized progressive reform than Wisconsin's Robert M. LaFollette.

Robert Marion LaFollette Sr., nicknamed "Fighting Bob" by his fellow members of Congress, was, from every indication, a political crusader. He entered politics a naïve member of congress from Wisconsin and emerged as a staunch defender of the democratic ideal of representative government. LaFollette, an independent progressive Republican, governor of Wisconsin from 1900 to 1906, and U.S. senator from 1906 to his death in 1925, caused a sensation in Wisconsin state political history who dominated the state's politics for the next twenty-five years.

For some, LaFollette's influence in the first decade of the twentieth century, not only on the political climate in Wisconsin, but on politics in general, represented an invigorating approach to what had become politics as usual.[23] A theme that runs

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[22]Nye, 113. See also, Crunden, *Ministers of Reform*, 226-228.

[23]Lincoln Steffens, *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931), 455.

throughout the material written by and about LaFollette is his advocacy of the right of free speech and of representative government. According to LaFollette, the two went hand in hand, without one the other could not exist. As he noted in 1912:

> Of one thing I am more and more convinced with the passage of the years–and that is, the serious interest of our people in government, and their willingness to give their thought to subjects which are really vital and upon which facts, not mere opinions, are set forth, even though the presentation may be forbidding. Get and keep a dozen or more of the leading men in a community interested in, and well informed upon any public question and you have laid firmly the foundation of a democratic government.[24]

LaFollette entered politics in 1880 serving two terms as District Attorney in Dane County, Wisconsin, his birthplace. In 1885 he was elected to the House of Representatives as a Republican and served three terms. LaFollette said, that although initially in awe of the great minds that surrounded him, it was this experience that introduced him to the workings of the Republican "party machinery."[25] He left Congress with the desire, as a representative of democratic government, to defeat the "machine" wherever it was encountered:

> The [Republican] party does not consist of a few leaders or of a controlling political machine. It consists of the hundreds of thousands of citizens drawn together by a common belief in certain principles. And it seemed to me then that it ought to be in the power of that great body, the overwhelming majority of the party, to smash the machine, to defeat corrupt leaders, and to drive the officials of every rank who betray the majority out of public life.[26]

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[24]Robert M. LaFollette, *Autobiography* (New York: The County Life Press, 1912), 67.

[25]*Ibid.*, 64-65.

[26]*Ibid.*, 113.

At the turn of the century, when LaFollette was a member of Congress, the United States was emerging as a world power. The Civil War had been a catalyst in the growth and development of the country as an industrial nation. The concentration of economic power in the North, begun during Reconstruction, had progressed rapidly after 1900.[27] Although he entered Congress as a loyal Republican and was essentially a conservative, LaFollette's introduction to party politics and its ties to big business left a distinct impression. As a member of the House of Representatives, he worked side by side with party leaders Joseph Cannon, Thomas B. Reed and William McKinley to develop and help pass the Interstate Commerce Act, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and the McKinley Tariff Act.[28]

The growth of trusts, similar to the monopolies in the 1990s, had placed economic power in the hands of men like J.D. Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan. In the ten-year period between 1900 and 1910, the population of the United States grew at a rate of 21 percent from 85,000,000 to 91,972,266 people--twice the rate of the past two decades combined.[29] However, census figures for this period show that one-eighth of American business employed more than three-quarters of the wage earners and produced four-fifths of products manufactured in the United States. The Morgans, Rockefellers and their satellite companies had incorporated 5,300 individual plants--tobacco, oil, steel, copper,

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[27]Don R. Pember, *Privacy and the Press* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 54.

[28]Robert M. Maxwell, ed., *Great Lives Observed: La Follette*, vol. 4 (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), 4.

[29]*The Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, vol.1 (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1901-02), pt.1, lxxxviii.

sugar and shipping–into 318 trusts.[30] Trusts were the epitome of corruption in the eyes of many reformers. They were formed by buying up small- and medium-sized corporations across the country and uniting them under one large corporation like Standard Oil. The effect, said many reformers, was to rob communities of profits that could be reinvested locally. Instead the trust holders got richer and richer while working men and women got poorer and poorer. Politicians were often under the spell of these trusts and felt crossing the "money men" would end their political career. Thus, corruption filtered into national and local politics in the form of the "machines," many of whose aims were to further the interests of the trusts by passing legislation friendly to the growth and maintenance of corporate business.

LaFollette left Congress in 1890 and returned to Wisconsin with the goal of becoming a leader in the state Republican organization. Once there, however, LaFollette found that the state Republican party was even more involved in "machine" politics than the national party. In 1891 LaFollette, a practicing attorney with political ambitions, broke away from the Republican party platform and began a career as a reform leader and an independent progressive Republican. In the campaign for governor in 1900, LaFollette's ideas were embraced by the people, thanks in large part to the failing of the party machinery to represent the interests of the public in the previous eight years. In the election of 1900, he and the entire Republican ticket won by a landslide.[31] LaFollette,

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[30]Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, *The Press and America* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1992), 450.

[31]Maxwell, 3.

entering his first term as governor in January 1901, was determined to enact reform measures in his home state, which, in his opinion, were also relevant to the rest of the country. Later, as a U.S. Senator from 1906 to 1925, he carried with him some of these same measures and continued his campaign for "decent politics and better government."[32] In January 1909, as a means of obtaining this goal and riding the cresting wave of the muckraking era, LaFollette founded *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine.*

The term "muckrakers" originated with Theodore Roosevelt, and in the history of American magazines the period from 1902 to 1910 is known as "the era of the muckrakers."[33] Roosevelt used the term in a derogatory sense in 1902 when he equated the more sensational writers of the time with the man with the muckrake in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*:

> A man who could look no way but downward with the muckrake in his hands; who was offered the celestial crown for his muckrake, but would neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake the filth of the floor.[34]

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[32]*Robert M. La Follette Papers*, microform edition (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1972), Reel 116, Feb. 11, 1901. Hereafter referred to as *LaFollette Papers*.
LaFollette used this phrase often in his correspondence. This particular letter was written to a constituent, J. Becker, after La Follette's election to his first term as governor, acknowledging Becker's support during the election.

[33]Emery and Emery, 223.

[34]Jean Folkerts and Dwight L. Teeter, *Voices of a Nation* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 323.

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[36] Ny

However, the reformers, who included Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens and Ray Stannard Baker of *McClure's* magazine; and Alfred Henry Lewis and Charles Edward Russell of *Cosmopolitan*, to name a few, accepted the term as a badge of honor.[35]

Although he wrote twenty years prior to the muckraking era, Henry Demarest Lloyd of Chicago is credited as one of the first muckrakers. Lloyd became interested in trusts in the course of his work as a financial editor for the *Chicago Tribune*. In pursuit of this interest, he wrote an article on Rockefeller's Standard Oil. Russel Nye described Lloyd's article, published in 1881 in *The Atlantic*, as marking a turning point in journalistic history because it was the first documented and authoritative study of industrial concentration to appear in a magazine. Seven printings of that issue of *The Atlantic* were run. Lloyd followed with a series of articles in the same vein that included studies of Jay Gould, the Chicago Grain Exchange, the "Lords of Industry" and others that focused national attention on the same problems the Grangers and their followers had discussed for twenty years.[36] In Lloyd's wake followed Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, Ray Stannard Baker and others who were to contribute so much to the progressive uprising after 1900.

McClure's, *Cosmopolitan*, *Collier's*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Everybody's* were considered the most influential of the general interest magazines that joined in the muckraking crusade against big business, against corruption and for social justice during this period. Lesser known, but influential, were *Hampton's* and *LaFollette's Weekly*. Other journals of opinion with relatively small but influential audiences like E.L.

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[35]Emery and Emery, 223.

[36]Nye, 100-102.

Godkin's *Nation*, Albert Shaw's *Review of Reviews*, and Benjamin O. Flower's *Arena*, addressed these issues prior to the muckraking era.[37]

The emergence of Progressivism and its focus on reform coincided with the creation of an ideal market for inexpensive periodicals aimed at a mass audience. When, in 1893, three of the new popular general interest magazines, developed in the mid- to late- 1800s,–*McClure's*, *Munsey's* and *Cosmopolitan*–lowered their prices to a dime, their circulation figures began to rise steadily. After the turn of the century these magazines and others, including the *Ladies Home Journal*, *Collier's*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Everybody's*, had circulations running into the hundreds of thousands.[38] Often referred to as dime magazines (versus the penny press of the 1830s), they joined in the muckraking crusade with great enthusiasm. At the peak of the movement, muckrakers were reaching about 3 million people, primarily urban middle-class readers.[39]

S.S. McClure is credited with initiating the muckraking era in 1902 in the pages of his magazine, *McClure's*. A general interest magazine, *McClure's* catered to a national audience and is described as the first magazine that made a "frontal assault" of real magnitude on issues like trusts, graft and political machines. McClure opened the era with Ida Tarbell's "History of the Standard Oil Company," which pursued Henry Lloyd's lead and exposed the business practices of John D. Rockefeller and the Standard Oil Company. It ran in the magazine over a two-year period from 1902 to 1904. Other

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[37]Emery and Emery, 225

[38]*Ibid.*, 223.

[39]Folkerts and Teeter, 323.

staffers at *McClure's* included Ray Stannard Baker, who began discussing problems of working people, and Lincoln Steffens, whose series "The Shame of the Cities" attacked corruption and state government.[40] Steffens, a close friend of LaFollette's, also contributed to *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine.*

McCormick noted that during the height of the muckraking period–1905 and 1906 in particular–a remarkable number of cities and states experienced moments of discovery that led directly to significant political changes. Business corruption of politics had already become a leading theme of the new magazine journalism created by the muckrakers, and the primary contribution of the muckrakers, according to McCormick and others, was to give a national audience the first systematic accounts of how society operated. "In so doing, journalists like Steffens, Baker, Russell, and Phillips created insights and pioneered ways of describing social and political relationships that crucially affected how people saw things in their home towns and states."[41] These journalists supplied the facts necessary for an intelligent national discussion about reform of society and the political system and became "the publicity [agents] of reform" by publicizing the Progressive movement.[42] Because much of what the muckrakers wrote focused on specific locales, including Steffens's early series, "The Shame of the Cities," these national discussions soon filtered

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[40]Emery and Emery, 223.

[41]Richard L. McCormick, "The Discovery that Business Corrupts Politics: A Reappraisal of Progressivism," *Media Voices,* ed., Jean Folkerts (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 243. The most comprehensive treatment of the muckrakers is found in Louis Filler's *The Muckrakers*, which is a new and enlarged version of his original work, *Crusaders for American Liberalism* (University Park, Pa., 1976).

[42]Louis Filler, *Crusaders for American Liberalism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1939), 53.

down to local politics. As a result, many of the gains made during this era were made at the state and local levels.[43]

LaFollette witnessed this trend and felt he had something to contribute journalistically to the reforms taking place in his state and throughout the country. In a letter dated October 1908, LaFollette asked for support from friends and political patrons in establishing a weekly paper:

> The increasing demands upon me for addresses and for such printed matter on representative government for general distribution have impressed me with the belief that I should establish a weekly paper, published primarily in support of GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE. . . . I shall proceed at once with the regular publication of a weekly magazine devoted to the public interest, upon lines broad enough to appeal to the progressive people of the entire country.
>
> I shall print the words of public officials and political parties on vital questions. I shall discuss men and measures impartially and fearlessly. With the assistance of able writers and correspondents, I will furnish readers a summary of important news, a digest of proceedings in Congress, a report on the progress made on the struggles of self-government in cities and states, and timely and well considered contributions and editorial discussion upon economic, financial and social questions. . . .
>
> The people's cause can never be too well served. The contest between special privilege and the common good is drawing close and becoming more critical. The need of plain speech and sound measures was never greater. I shall make this paper the vigilant champion of True Representative Government. . . .[44]

The first issue of *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine* appeared January 9, 1909, with a banner claiming "YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."[45]

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[43]McCormick, 249.

[44]*LaFollette Papers*, Reel 106, Aug. 16, 1908 - Mar. 31, 1909.

[45]LaFollette adopted this phrase from his first editorial where he wrote, "To the people whose interests it is our ambition to serve, we make the sole promise that so far as LaFollette's can open it to you, 'ye shall know the truth and the truth [we devoutly hope] shall make you free.'"

CHAPTER 3

A Selected History of *The Progressive*

> ***The next thing like living one's life again seems to be a recollection of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible by putting it down in writing.***
> -Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, 1798

A lawyer, husband, father and progressive politician, LaFollette revealed all of these facets of his personality in the pages of *LaFollette's Weekly*.[1] LaFollette's principles--a commitment to free speech, to representative government, an extreme opposition to corporate and political corruption and to war as a means of resolving human conflict--guided the content of *LaFollette's Weekly* through World War I and beyond. Renamed *The Progressive* in 1929, the magazine held fast to its founder's isolationist position throughout most of its history. This chapter is entitled a "selected history" because the material analyzed represents thirty-five years (out of eighty-five years total) of the magazine's content.

In addressing his readers for the first time January 9, 1909, LaFollette thanked them for their support and acknowledged responsibility for the duty he felt had been placed upon him as editor. LaFollette wrote, "The conditions which have called this magazine into being determine its work. LAFOLLETTE'S will be a magazine of progress, social, intellectual, institutional. Moreover, it will be Progressive in the more distinctly

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political sense."[2]

Later editor Erwin Knoll pointed out that, as an editor, LaFollette was both a practician and an optimist. Knoll said he found it interesting that, "in LaFollette's opening editorial, where he talked about why he was starting this magazine, LaFollette hedged it a little bit because he wrote, 'ye shall know the truth and the truth [we devoutly hope] shall set you free.' So it may have had a smidgen of doubt in it."[3] LaFollette may have possessed doubts about how the truth he presented would be interpreted--however, it is apparent in his opening editorial that he had no doubt about what the truth meant to him.

The use of the word "truth" throughout the opening editorial and in the banner of the magazine ("Ye Shall Know The Truth and The Truth Shall Make You Free") begs the question, Whose truth? As far as LaFollette was concerned, there was only one truth, and it was firmly based in the principles of progressive politics, which placed the highest priority on protecting the public interest from corruption in every aspect of society. LaFollette viewed progress in protecting the public interest as not only overthrowing the political power of special interests but in discussing constructive legislation to give an intelligent conception of true progress made in adopting progressive ideals in laws and institutions. LaFollette told his readers that no representative of the people was immune from criticism in *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, but that approval was gladly given to those who commended themselves to it by the proper action in any party or place.

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[2]*LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, January 9, 1909, 3. LaFollette's reference to making the magazine "Progressive" foreshadowed the name change (to *The Progressive)* that took place twenty years later.

[3]Erwin Knoll, interview, Madison, Wisc., July 13, 1993.

In defining the magazine's fundamental principles LaFollette wrote, "It is founded in the belief that it can aid in making our government represent with more fidelity the will of the people."[4] The editor appealed to his readers to join him and the "strong men and women who will contribute their best thought and best word"[5] in battle. LaFollette saw his role of that of a soldier, amassing his troops who "shall hit as hard as we can, giving and taking blows for the cause with joy in our hearts."[6] The battle, as he saw it, was "that of aiding in winning back for the people the complete power over government--national, state and municipal,--which has been lost to them by the encroachments of party machines, corporate and unincorporated monopolies, and by the rapid growth of immense populations."[7]

LaFollette's Weekly Magazine's beginnings were firmly entrenched in progressive politics. LaFollette founded the magazine in response to what he believed was a bias on the part of the media that were failing to report the "truth." In addition, LaFollette founded his magazine to support himself politically. Philip LaFollette, LaFollette's youngest son and later governor of Wisconsin like his father, said:

> People who do not know Wisconsin have never understood the hostility of the press and the bitterness of people of wealth toward Progressives and Progressivism. Throughout my father's life no more than two daily newspapers supported him at any given time. . . . With the press so overwhelmingly against him, my father felt that he must have a paper of

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[4]*LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, January 9, 1909, 3.

[5]*Ibid.*

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]*Ibid.*

his own.[8]

LaFollette's Weekly Magazine emerged during a period of political ferment just before World War I. This was a period of great expectations in America. The country, with assistance from the muckrakers, had examined itself and its conscience was troubled.[9] A legion of reformers, in addition to LaFollette, founded magazines during this period to fight the injustice they perceived weighed so heavily on the American conscience. *The Masses*, *New Republic*, and the *American Mercury* were three magazines that tread a similar path as *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine* in the prewar period of revolt and optimism in the United States.[10] Historian Theodore Peterson remarked that magazines of minority opinion "walked a lonely and precarious road in the 20th Century--lonely because their views were invariably the unpopular views of the minority, precarious because they were chronically in financial distress."[11]

Establishing a magazine of minority opinion was not a money-making venture, as Peterson pointed out. Most opinion-based periodicals were heavily supported by funds from wealthy patrons of their causes. *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine* was no exception. Philip LaFollette said, "Except for two or three years, the magazine had to be subsidized. Friends and supporters helped, but the bulk of the deficit had to be made up by dad's

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[8]Donald Young, ed., *Adventure in Politics, The Memoirs of Philip LaFollette* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 128.

[9]Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964) 421.

[10]*Ibid.*

[11]*Ibid.*, 423.

lecture fees. An unprofitable paper drinks money."[12] Circulation figures for this period are unavailable. However, given that the magazine had a limited audience, and LaFollette spent a minimum amount of time pursuing new subscribers, Philip LaFollette's comments are not surprising. Also, the volatile nature of magazine publishing, where ventures are started every day and consumer titles multiply at a rate of 150 to 300 a year, with only 10 percent surviving a second year of publication, suggests that LaFollette's success was rare because he kept the magazine afloat long past a second year of publication.[13]

An attempt was made in November 1914 to ease the financial burden placed upon the LaFollette family by the magazine. *LaFollette's Weekly* was changed to a monthly format. The name was altered for the second time in five years, to *LaFollette's Magazine*, and the number of pages was doubled, from 16 to 32. LaFollette said in his November editorial that the additional pages would enable the magazine to include a wider variety of interests. But the real reason for the change, it seems, given the financial struggles already addressed, followed in the editor's next sentence. "There will be some economy in manufacture on the monthly basis, which will enable us to put more of our resources (limited because unsubsidized) into enlarging the scope. . ."[14] In other words, it cost too much to publish a weekly.

In addition to his own editorials, LaFollette also printed articles by leading

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[12]Young, 18.

[13]William S. Pattis, *Opportunities in Magazine Publishing*, (Lincolnwood, IL: VGM Career Horizons, 1986), as cited in Sammaye Johnson, "Women's Employment and Status in the Magazine Industry," in *Women in Mass Communications*, ed., Pamela J. Creedon, (California: Sage Publications, 1989), 198.

[14]*LaFollette's Magazine*, November 1914, 3.

progressives written in support of their chosen causes. For example, the February 1914 issue included a contribution by Elizabeth Glendower Evans, who described her recent visit to the White House with a group of suffragists. The women told President Wilson of their desire to represent themselves as citizens of the United States and requested that they be given the vote. The appearance of this article, and of many others that followed about this issue in future editions of *LaFollette's Magazine*, was partially influenced by LaFollette's wife, Belle Case LaFollette. Sen. LaFollette quietly supported the Nineteenth Amendment; however, Belle Case LaFollette actively worked to get the Amendment passed.

Case LaFollette shared responsibility for publishing *LaFollette's Weekly* and it was often a source of stress in her life.[15] Like her husband, Case LaFollette possessed a strong character and a devotion to the principles of representative government. She also possessed an independent spirit and exhibited her independence by embracing certain social causes such as the civil rights movement, a cause that her husband was only remotely interested in, the reform of women's dress habits and world disarmament. Her most cherished cause, however, was women's suffrage.

In 1914, on one of her frequent speaking tours, she addressed audiences on behalf

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[15]Bernard A. Weisberger, *The LaFollette's of Wisconsin: Love and Politics in Progressive America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 35-37. While in Washington, Sen. LaFollette often neglected his promises to provide the majority of editorial content for the magazine. That left the burden to Case LaFollette. Weisberger included correspondence between the LaFollette's which indicated that Case LaFollette was a bit resentful and that her responsibilities with the magazine, in addition to raising four children, produced a fair amount of stress.

of suffrage for sixty-four consecutive days.[16] Although Case LaFollette considered the right to vote as vitally important, she thought it was only the first step toward women's full participation in society; she urged wives to free themselves from their "parasitic" dependence on their husbands, develop their talents, and be of service to humanity.[17] Case LaFollette spoke from experience on this issue. Although married to a powerful politician, she did not live in her husband's shadow, rather she created her own belief system and sought to achieve the goals she set for herself. She was the first woman to graduate from Wisconsin University Law School.

Case LaFollette used her intellect to further her chosen causes. She also used *LaFollette's Magazine*. Case LaFollette's "Home and Education" column appeared in the magazine every month. She conducted the column as a forum in which she related developments on the causes she supported. For instance, the February 1914 edition of "Home and Education" dealt with the Women's Co-operative Guild of England and an appeal by a Tennessee editor on behalf of Southern Blacks. She occasionally used the space to argue for disarmament, as well.

Case LaFollette was a pacifist in the more traditional sense. Although she shared her husband's views about war, Case LaFollette took them further than Sen. LaFollette. Her concern was for humanity, whereas LaFollette's opposition to war was based more on economics. Case LaFollette wanted the world to rid itself of all tools of destruction

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[16]*Patrick J. Maney, "Young Bob" LaFollette* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), 10.

[17]*Ibid.*

whatsoever and believed that world disarmament was the only way peace could be achieved.[18] Because of the non-interventionist views of the magazine's owners, the subject of peace drew much attention in *LaFollette's Weekly*.

LaFollette served as editor of the magazine throughout the First World War and beyond. He died in 1925. After "Old Bob's" death, the responsibility of publishing the magazine fell to his children, Robert Jr. ("Young Bob") and Philip. In 1928 they sought the assistance of one of their father's friends to edit the magazine. Young Bob, Philip and their two sisters, Fola and Mary, then arranged to share control of what was then still *LaFollette's Weekly* with William T. Evjue, editor of the *Capital Times* of Madison. A Norwegian-American and one of LaFollette Sr.'s staunchest backers, Evjue was given half ownership of the magazine and also served as its editor.[19] Later *Progressive* editor Erwin Knoll referred to this period as the "Babylonian Captivity" of *The Progressive*.

> The *Capital Times* had been founded during WWI as a paper to support LaFollette and Evjue, its editor, had a very strong personality. *The Progressive* became sort of the weekly editorial section of the *Capital Times*. I've been told that sometimes if a long piece couldn't fit in the *Capital Times* it wound up in *The Progressive* or if there was no room one week in *The Progressive* for something, it would be published in the *Capital Times*. It was not a very good magazine during that period and then it got into a great amount of internal dissension about isolationism versus interventionism during World War II. It became sometimes a vicious vendetta within the pages of the magazine.[20]

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[18]*Ibid.* See also, Robert M. LaFollette, *Autobiography* (New York: Country Life Press, 1912). LaFollette often mentioned his wife's viewpoints in his autobiography, as well as his disagreements with her about these matters and her influence on him as a politician and as a human being.

[19]Patrick J. Maney, *"Young Bob" LaFollette, A Biography of Robert M. LaFollette Jr., 1895-1953* (Columbia & London: University of Missouri Press, 1978), 234.

[20]Erwin Knoll, interview with author, July 13, 1993, Madison, Wisc.

The magazine's name was changed from *LaFollette's Weekly* to *The Progressive* in October 1929, when the LaFollette family decided to rename the magazine after the political movement to which LaFollette Sr. devoted his life. The change reflected a broader editorial perspective but was not meant to obscure the achievements of its founder. From 1929 to 1944 the banner of the newspaper read, "THE PROGRESSIVE With Which is Combined LAFOLLETTE'S MAGAZINE - Founded In 1909 By Robert M. LaFollette Sr." From 1944 to 1948 the banner read, "THE PROGRESSIVE And LAFOLLETTE'S MAGAZINE."

Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Jr. was president of the publishing company that managed *The Progressive* from 1928 to 1940. Philip LaFollette acted as secretary and Evjue as editor. Evjue and the LaFollette brothers often clashed over the editorial content of the magazine in the late 1930s, but the crisis finally came, as Knoll said, in the early years of World War II. Although Evjue had supported the elder LaFollette's anti-war stance in 1917, he vehemently opposed the younger LaFollette's non-interventionist position as the world approached another war.[21]

A Difference of Opinion

The brothers' struggles with Evjue approached an impasse by early 1940, and

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[21]Maney, 234. See also Edward N. Doan, *The LaFollettes and the Wisconsin Idea* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1947), 248- 249. Although Doan's account is more superficial and laudatory, and based primarily on newspaper accounts and speeches, it does give a comprehensive account of the events that led to Evjue's departure from *The Progressive* in 1940.

threatened the magazine's survival, as well as their own standing in the progressive community.[22] During and after Hitler's spring offensive, Evjue, in *The Progressive*, openly endorsed Roosevelt's policy of aiding Britain. By this point it was apparent to the LaFollette's that something needed to change. A March 22, 1941, editorial said that the state of affairs reached a climax in June 1940, when Evjue took the initiative to resolve the situation. He allowed the LaFollettes to purchase his 50 percent share of *The Progressive*, thereby returning to them full control of the publication.

Evjue's initiative was applauded by the entire LaFollette family. Isabel (Isen) B. LaFollette, (Philip's wife) in her weekly column, "A Room Of Our Own," said of the Evjue situation,

> Differences of public policy culminating in Mr. Evjue's interventionist views as opposed to the LaFollette's fight against the involvement of America in Europe's war, caused Mr. Evjue to sever his connection with "The Progressive." Under the circumstances, it was the wisest course to take as it permitted The Progressive to resume its logical time-tested position.[23]

Further down in the column, Isabel LaFollette commented on the legacy left to *The Progressive* by *LaFollette's Weekly*. She said that it was interesting to recall that the old "LaFollette's" had the highest subscription rate in its history during the period of the last World War. In reference to the current war, she wrote: "With the press, radio and other

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[22]Maney, 234-235 and Doan, 248. Maney provides more detail than Doan about Sen. LaFollette's distaste for Evjue's tactics, but both mention the tension. Maney cites a letter from Young Bob to his wife Rachel, written in December 1939, found in The LaFollette Family Papers in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. LaFollette wrote: "Evjue would like to punish me for not supporting F.D.R. on the arms embargo and for unknown reasons which have made him so bitter against Phil and me in the past few years."

[23]*The Progressive*, March 22, 1941, 12.

avenues of propaganda almost unanimously whooping it up for total war, with England as our first line of defense, it is becoming clear that "The Progressive" is to continue in the tradition of "LaFollette's" in keeping a clear and steady view of what's best for America."[24]

A letter from a reader raised the issue of Evjue's departure and said that "The Progressive has been far livelier and more consistent since you fired the old editor and got down to cases."[25] This prompted a response from new editors Morris Rubin and Isen LaFollette to resolve misconceptions that had occurred before the change in the paper's management:

> The change in management, which became operative with the issue of June 29, 1940, involved the "firing" of no one by anybody . . . . For months prior to June 29 the dominant personalities of the Progressive entertained widely divergent views on some of the major issues of the day. As editor of the Progressive, for instance, Mr. Evjue reprinted editorials from his Capital Times supporting interventionist foreign policies. Some of the editorials, which appeared as the expression of the Progressive, appeared at the same time that both Bob and Phil LaFollette were fighting the very policies which the editorials endorsed. And yet their names appeared on the masthead as principal officers of the paper which was opposing their views![26]

If circulation figures are any indication of Evjue's effectiveness as an editor then the numbers fall short of a ringing endorsement. *The Progressive's* circulation during Evjue's tenure fell to 5,000, the lowest number in the magazine's history.[27] Another change that

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[24]*Ibid.*

[25]*Ibid.*

[26]*Ibid.*

[27]"Two-Thirds of a Century: The Story of The Progressive," supplemental issue, *The Progressive*, 1984, 6.

occurred during Evjue's tenure as editor of *The Progressive* was in the magazine's format. In 1928, Evjue dropped the magazine format in favor of a standard-sized, eight-column weekly newspaper. *The Progressive* continued to appear as a weekly newspaper until 1948 when Morris Rubin returned the magazine to its format as a monthly magazine.

The LaFollettes' restatement of the magazine's position on American involvement in the war in Europe appeared in the June 29, 1940, issue of *The Progressive*:

> The Progressive refuses to join those pessimists who see disaster lurking around every corner. Man created the paradox of privation and lack of opportunity in the midst of potential plenty and man can solve it. We have nothing to fear except blind and unreasoning fear. We must not fiddle away our chance. Time and events press.
>
> Any program of national defense that does not give each citizen a faith and conviction for which he will give his all will prove a sham and delusion.
>
> The Progressive will fight for a sound program of rearmament to defend this hemisphere from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn against all comers. It will fight for a tax program to prevent fat profits from being made from our new defense program.
>
> The Progressive will fight to the last ditch any effort to involve the United States in fighting an overseas, foreign war. . . . There is no time to waste in meeting the challenge of our day and our generation. To guard America effectively against the fifth columns of communism and fascism we must have a contented and united people. We must banish the discouragement and dissatisfaction that breed in the dead atmosphere of idleness and poverty on which ruthless dictators have risen to power.[28]

William T. Evjue's tenure as editor marked the only period in the history of *The Progressive* when it wavered from its consistent theme of denouncing U.S. involvement in foreign war. As Erwin Knoll said, Evjue had a strong personality. He was not persuaded by young Sen. LaFollette's arguments concerning non-intervention in World War II. In printing his own opinions supporting Roosevelt's policies, Evjue threatened the

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[28]*The Progressive*, June 29, 1940, 1.

long-standing tradition of *The Progressive*, begun by his friend Robert LaFollette Sr., of opposing war and militarism as acceptable means of resolving human conflict. The LaFollette family, although apparently grateful for Evjue's continued support and assistance in keeping the magazine afloat, was not willing to let that tradition lapse, even at the hands of one of their father's oldest friends. Therefore, the editor's slot on the masthead of the June 29, 1940, issue held a new name: Morris H. Rubin.

Rubin was a young man when he was installed as editor of *The Progressive* in 1940. At age 29 he was two years younger than the magazine itself. Erwin Knoll recalled the lore Rubin passed down about his induction as editor,

> They [the LaFollette brothers] told him, 'It will kill you like it did our father.' But he [kept] it going and incorporated it as a self-perpetuating, non-stop, non-profit corporation. And it still is today. He was editor for 33 years from 1940 to 1973 [which is] one of the reasons that the politics have been fairly consistent with the years, and stable.[29]

Rubin began his career in journalism at age 14 covering high school news for a paper in Portland, Maine, where he received ten cents an inch. In 1929, as *LaFollette's Weekly* changed its name to *The Progressive*, Rubin joined the *Portland Evening Express* and subsequently worked for the *Boston Globe*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald-Tribune* and *Time* magazine before moving to Wisconsin where Rubin served as writer and editor for the *Milwaukee Journal* and the *Wisconsin State Journal*.[30] Interestingly,

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[29]Erwin Knoll, interview, July 13, 1993, Madison, Wisc.

[30]Frances C. Locher, ed., *Contemporary Authors* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1989), vol. 101, 424.

according to Philip LaFollette, both of those papers were anti-progressive.[31] Perhaps this was the reason Rubin accepted the opportunity to become editor of *The Progressive* in 1940. Perhaps his views were being compromised working for newspapers that did not support his beliefs and he welcomed this opportunity to be "free to investigate and report and interpret events and issues in a diverse world too dangerous . . . for anything but the truth."[32] Rubin led the magazine through the end of the Second World War and throughout the cold war period. In an ironic turn of events, Young Bob LaFollette was defeated in the 1946 Senate elections by Joseph McCarthy. McCarthy would later become a target of *The Progressive's* outrage during the red-scare period of the 1950s.

The End of an Era

Three columns in *The Progressive's* August 26, 1946, issue were dedicated to the subject of Young Bob's defeat to McCarthy in 1946. Morris H. Rubin wrote a political post-mortem of Young Bob LaFollette. Rubin did so knowing that such events "are notoriously undependable." However, the editor said he was undertaking it in response to requests from many readers who expressed their grief over LaFollette's defeat after 21

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[31]Young, 180. Of the Wisconsin press Philip wrote: "Again may I remind you that the newspapers in Wisconsin were overwhelmingly hostile to Progressives and to the LaFollette's? It was not their opposition on the editorial page that mattered. It was their unabashed coloring of the news, or their refusal to reprint our side of the story, that made our task so hard for some fifty years." Further down, LaFollette noted that some of his readers may be dubious about his comments regarding the hostility of the press, possibly considering his perspective as a biased one. In contention to this he wrote: "Just read the files of the Milwaukee Journal– now (1957) generally rated as a first-class American newspaper–for any of those months of June through September during any campaign year from 1900 through 1938.

[32]*The Progressive*, June 1964, 2.

years in the Senate and asked *The Progressive* to explain why it happened. Rubin said an analysis of the vote pointed to organized labor as the reason for LaFollette's defeat. Rubin's opinion was later confirmed by several authors who studied the 1946 campaign.[33]

Associate editor, Isen LaFollette, wrote in her column that it was electoral apathy, an unfair smearing of Young Bob regarding his foreign policy stance, as well as the demands of Congress, which kept Bob from going home to wage an effective campaign, that led to his defeat. She recalled the night of the 1924 campaign when "Bob, Phil, and I were bitter with the spontaneity of youth. Sen. LaFollette, with the mellowness of experience, chided us. 'Never blame the people; they didn't understand.'" Isen concluded her column hopefully noting that beneath the so-called "apathy" the common person was waiting to be appealed to, and for this reason, she wrote, "I have real faith in the future."[34] Another response to LaFollette's defeat was written by Milton Mayer. His column focused not upon defeat, but rather that "If, in defeat, we remember that we once got a man on base, and that what we did once we can do again, our faith is safe."[35]

Although LaFollette's defeat to McCarthy was a blow to the magazine, this was overshadowed by the tragedy that occurred seven years later when Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Jr. committed suicide, eighteen days after his fifty-eighth birthday.[36]

[33]Maney, 288-304. See also, Roger T. Johnson, *Robert M. LaFollette, Jr. and the Decline of the Progressive Party in Wisconsin* (Madison, 1964) and David M. Oshinsky, *Senator Joseph McCarthy and the American Labor Movement* (Columbia, Mo., 1976).

[34]Isabel Bacon LaFollette, A Room of Our Own Column, *The Progressive*, August 26, 1946, 11.

[35]Ibid., "The People Lose," 10.

[36]Maney, 310-311.

LaFollette's death, moreso than his political defeat, truly marked the end of an era in Midwestern progressive politics.

Fifty Years of *The Progressive*

The "lineal descendant" of *LaFollette's Magazine* marked its Fiftieth Anniverary in January 1959. The publication returned to its original magazine format in 1948 when editor Morris H. Rubin decided to publish the magazine monthly, as it still is today.

Many individuals contributed articles to the magazine in its first fifty years of publication. The cover of the anniversary issue listed a number of these contributors, and might be a Who's Who of liberal authors, politicians, journalists, social activists, historians and inventors, including Lincoln Steffens, William Jennings Bryan, Jack London, George Orwell, Frederick C. Howe, Jane Addams, Louis D. Brandeis, Sidney Lens, John F. Kennedy, Russel B. Nye, Walter P. Reuther, Catherine Rodell, Eric Severeid, Upton Sinclair and many more. The opening editorial said of these contributors,

> The names that appear on the cover of this Fiftieth Anniversary Issue represent a cross-section of men and women who have contributed to the columns of this magazine during the past half century. They do not seem to make an especially homogenous group. . . . But all of them, and the countless others whose names could not be recorded on the cover, shared a profound dedication to the betterment of the human enterprise by democratic methods.[37]

The LaFollette family, as well as these supporters of the Progressive movement around the country, continued the tradition of altruism established by Robert M.

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[37]Morris Rubin, "The Challenge Ahead," *The Progressive*, January 1959, 3.

LaFollette in 1909. This collection of diverse voices was begun by LaFollette and his name, as well as the names of his two sons, Robert Jr. and Philip and Philip's wife, Isabel Bacon LaFollette, also appears on the cover. The LaFollette's contributions were made not only as columnists, but also as editors, publishers and financial supporters. Over the years, LaFollette's successors saw no need to tamper with an effective device--that of using contributions from around the country on a vast array of subjects--to represent the collective voice of the nation. Today, *The Progressive* still relies on freelance contributors for over 80 percent of its editorial content.

As the magazine approached its fifty-first year of publication, the editors recalled the legacy that had guided them for a half-century and concluded that though some of the issues had changed, but the fundamental philosophy instilled by LaFollette had remained unchanged. Rubin paraphrased LaFollette's words when he stated "That a free government must do for the people, in their quest for a better life, what they cannot do as well as individuals."[38] Some of the ideals addressed by the magazine in its first fifty years were considered radical at the time they appeared. Even so, as Rubin pointed out, *The Progressive* was "often derided for harboring a 'radicalism' that so many times became tomorrow's conservatism."[39] This assessment may not be supported by the magazine's introduction of such ideas as a progressive income tax system, the conservation of natural resources, a comprehensive system of social insurance, a broad system of public housing, the development of the river valleys along the planned lines of the Tennessee Valley

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[38] *Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid.*

Authority, federal aid for education, a federal program of public works, a minimum wage, an effective anti-trust program and a national health insurance program.

In 1959, the pages of *The Progressive* contained little material about the emerging conflict in Vietnam. It was an extremely busy time for America. A presidential election would take place in November 1960, in which *The Progressive* endorsed the nomination of Adlai Stevenson over John Kennedy. Once Kennedy was nominated, however, the magazine supported his candidacy over Republican opponent Richard Nixon. Battles over segregation were heating up in the South. Moreover, the nuclear build-up of both the United States and Russia, and the threat of nuclear annhiliation, concerned most Americans more than a possible full-fledged war in a small Southeast Asian country few had ever heard of. The editors of the magazine were familiar with their readers–mainly liberal, progressive, socially concious, middle and upper class individuals–and concerned themselves with the issues their subscribers wanted to read about during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The January 1959 issue was larger–ninety-six pages–than its usual size, which generally averaged forty pages. Owing to the anniverary theme, most of the articles, including the opening editorial, addressed issues from an historical perspective. Social analyst Stuart Chase wrote about the centuries-old obsession the United States possessed with militarism.[40] Chase's comparison of the issues of war and poverty (that a portion

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[40]Stuart Chase, "No War, No Poverty?" *The Progressive*, January 1959, 12. Chase traveled as far back as 1789, the time of the first census, to begin his article. Even as far back as the sixteenth century, he wrote, the federal government's "chief business was military preparedness." Chase leaped ahead to 1909, when the first issue of *The Progressive* was published, and found that

(continued...)

of the 80 percent of the U.S. budget dedicated to the military could be put to use to ease the burden of those still below the poverty line) was resonant with the editorial policy of the magazine. As Morris Rubin noted in the opening editorial in the January 1959 issue:

> We know of no better philosophy, for world affairs, than the progressive approach to American problems during the past half century–an approach that emphasizes the promotion of the general welfare and the extension of freedom. This means. . . far less emphasis on military might. . . . This means that we would recognize, and respond to, the universal hunger of the human heart not only for social security, and all that implies by way of equality of opportunity, decent employment, and minimum social and economic safeguards, but the universal hunger of the human heart for social significance. . . .[41]

Chase's article was one of the many that appeared in *The Progressive* that spelled out these general beliefs in specific terms.

Other articles in the fiftieth-anniversay issue not only addressed these beliefs but also give a comprehensive view of issues covered by *The Progressive*. UAW President Walter P. Reuther wrote about the industrial and economic growth of the nation over the past fifty years. Sidney Hyman, author of *The American President*, and a frequent contributor to *Time* and the *New York Times*, authored a piece called "Presidents, Then and Now." Hyman reviewed the role of the presidency from 1909 through 1959, pointing out

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[40](...continued)
although the population had jumped from four million to 90 million, the industrial revolution had overrun the land, the robber barons held firm control of the trusts and the frontier had closed, "the chief business of the federal government continued to be military, including pensions to the Grand Army of the Republic." Turning his attention to present day America, fifty years later, Chase came to the same conclusion. "The federal government, however, still devotes most of its energy to war–nearly 80 per cent of the current budget, according to an analysis by the New York Times in 1958."

[41]Morris Rubin, "The Challenge Ahead," *The Progressive*, January 1959, 5.

certain lessons learned (and not learned) by presidents from Theodore Roosevelt to Dwight D. Eisenhower.

No issue of *The Progressive* would be complete if it did not include some discussion of conservation, and the 1959 issue was no exception. Richard L. Neuberger, a U.S. Senator from Oregon and a member of two committees most concerned with conservation–Interior and Public Works–provided a fifty-year history of the conservation movement in the United States, begun when LaFollette was launching *The Progressive* and Theodore Roosevelt was in the White House. He wrote, "The career of *The Progressive* during the past half century has paralleled the great surge of concern among Americans for the future of their outdoor heritage."[42]

The future of race relations, a conflict which would be fought in the streets throughout the United States in the 1960s, was discussed in the article "Up From Segregation," a moving presentation one man's experience with, and view of, segregation. James McBride Dabbs, a South Carolina plantation owner and author, traced the history of segregation from the segregation and disenfranchisement acts enacted in the United States between 1890 and 1905. Writing in 1959, Dabbs recalled that he knew nothing, as he sipped his first cup of coffee on his sixth birthday in 1902,

> of the explosive forces held in leash around me. . . . These hidden forces were the repressed estate of the Negro–legally a citizen of the United States, actually a peon–and the economic and political forces of the modern world at work even in the South. The Negro had been repressed–the South said he had been put back in his place–both by the will of the white South and by the lack of will on the part of the nation as

[42]Richard L. Neuberger, "Gaurding Our Outdoor Heritage," *The Progressive*, January 1959, 36.

a whole.[43]

Dabbs followed with a convincing argument in support of his opening paragraph. Long-time *Progressive* readers would not have been shocked by Dabbs' directness, as it reflected the firmness of tone in most of the magazines articles. It was what they had come to expect in *The Progressive* and it was one reason why they kept reading the magazine. If they were shocked, Morris Rubin was not overly concerned, for in the coming decade he continued to publish others just as pointed. He believed he was was bound to do so by LaFollette's legacy, as well as by his own words: "In the long struggle to preserve and extend liberty in our land, *The Progressive* has fought without reservation to safeguard the freedom of the individual and to extend the freedom of minorities whose race, or color, or creed has reduced them to the status of second-class citizens."[44]

These historical overviews filled the bulk of the first forty-six pages in the ninety-six page January issue. The remaining articles examined militarism. It is unsurprising that almost one half of the magazine's editorial content was devoted to discussion of the Cold War because the nuclear threat engrossed the world's attention througout the 1950s and 1960s.

John M. Swomley Jr., executive secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, discussed the principle of the military as "simply one branch of the executive with no authority or duty other than that of defending the nation's interests against external

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[43]James McBride Dabbs, "Up From Segregation," *The Progressive*, January 1959, 52.

[44]Morris Rubin, "The Challenge Ahead," January 1959, 3.

enemies."[45] He argued that "This principle has been carefully observed by every American generation until our own."[46] The growth of the military during Swomley's lifetime signified to him a serious danger. The main reason for his fear, Swomley wrote,

> is that we permit military considerations to guide our relations with other nations. The tendency of generals and admirals to be tough, with a guided missile or an atom bomb as the big stick of the space age, needs to be curbed and eliminated or we shall again and again be led to the very threshold of war. . . . No people can turn the important decisions of life over to its army without eventually becoming controlled by that army.[47]

Although Swomley's article presented a different view from Chase's, it too, was consistent with the overall editorial legacy of *The Progressive* because it questioned the need for an overwhelming military force in a democratic society.

James P. Warburg, author and, according to *The Progressive's* editors, one of the foremost authors on foreign affairs, provided another broader perspective. "Our Obsolete Foreign Policy" was a history of U.S. Foreign policy since 1909. In addressing contemporary foreign policy, Warburg wrote: "In the as yet incomplete fifth phase of American foreign policy, the United States has definitely assumed leadership without, so far, understanding the changed and changing nature of the world which it is trying to lead."[48] According to Warburg, after an excellent postwar beginning with Truman's launching of the Marshall Plan, American postwar policy had "receded into growing

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[45]John M. Swomley Jr., "The Growing Power of the Military," *The Progressive*, January 1959, 24.

[46]*Ibid.*

[47]*Ibid.*

[48]James P. Warburg, "Our Obsolete Foreign Policy," *The Progressive*, January 1959, 48.

ineffectuality" by 1959.[49]

Warburg's premise was that the United States had reacted in a knee-jerk fashion to Stalin's early postwar policies in Europe. President Harry Truman had made the global containment of communism the sole aim of U.S. foreign policy in 1949, and this policy was still in place ten years later, at a time when the world was in a period of rapid change in the first atomic explosion at Almagordo. Warburg argued that

> the nuclear arms race is suicidal madness, no matter whether we are temporarily behind or ahead of the Russians; that the race for military ascendancy cannot be won; that it leads to war by accident if not by design; and that it cannot be halted so long as the great political and economic problems which create acute tensions remain unsolved.[50]

Warburg surmised that the United States was not being defeated by communists in the Cold War but by actions that suggested the United States had the right to decide for the human race at what point race suicide was preferable to further Communist advancement. His final assessment:

> We are losing the cold war because we are losing the respect of mankind. I do not despair simply because I believe in the decency, humanity, and common sense of the American people, and because Americans seem, at long last to be awakening to their responsibility. . . . I am encouraged by the outcome of the November elections to believe that citizen action will bring about the long overdue revision of all our bankrupt foreign policy.[51]

With the conflict in Vietnam lurking in the shadows, Warburg's sense to encourage a change in U.S. foreign policy may have been prescient.

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[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *Ibid.*, 50.

[51] *Ibid.*, 51.

Growing *The Progressive*

In addition to publishing in-depth features during the Vietnam era, editor Morris Rubin was also interested in gaining new subscribers. The circulation during this period hovered around 38,000.[52] In his May 1963 "Office Memo" column, which appeared on the inside front cover of *The Progressive* throughout Rubin's tenure, the editor told his readers that, "In one respect, any one of our subscribers has greater power than President Kennedy. Our subscribers are fully authorized to appoint *The Progressive*, as their ambassador to the peoples of foreign lands, without bringing the U.S. Senate into the act to "advise and consent."[53] Rubin acted as both editor and publisher during this period and in the spring issue of the magazine he appealed to his readers to take advantage of the "spring subscription offer." For three dollars, a subscriber could send the magazine to three friends and acquaintances for five months each. Rubin called it "a most inexpensive way to extend the influence and readership of *The Progressive*."[54] The regular subscription rate in 1965 was $5 for one year, $9 for two years and $12 for three years. An additional note was made to readers who had no one specifically in mind to send the magazine. Rubin let these readers know that *The Progressive* kept a list of individuals and institutions who expressed a desire to receive the publication but could not afford it. He mentioned that his staff was happy to select from it a student, library, school, university or other center of information and culture in foreign countries to send *The Progressive*. "This annual

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[52]Morris Rubin, "Office Memo," *The Progressive*, June 1964, 1. Also, Erwin Knoll, interview with the author, July 13, 1993, Madison, Wisc.

[53]Morris Rubin, "Office Memo," *The Progressive*, May 1963, 1.

[54]*Ibid.*

subscription offer. . . puts you in a position to help our foreign friend know America better, or to help an American open a window on the world of national and international events,"[55] Rubin concluded.

Continuing the Tradition

Under Rubin's leadership *The Progressive* continued to pursue different angles from which to elaborate on LaFollette's principle that war and militarism were unacceptable forms of resolving human conflict. "Peace on Earth," an entry in the May 1963, "Notes in the News" section, created by Rubin as a space for his associate editors to provide short editorial commentaries about world events, is a good example. One editorial addressed "Pacem in Terris," a recent encyclical issued by Pope John XXIII. *The Progressive's* editors wrote of the encyclical:

> There is tremendous inspiration, as well as urgent warning, in Pope John's appeal to men and their leaders everywhere to save humanity from nuclear annihilation, from any form of war and force, and to build an edifice of peace in which all faiths and none, all races and political systems can work together for the freedom and betterment of man.[56]

In July 1964, Rubin's "Office Memo" column recalled "a sweltering summer night twenty-five years ago, [when] the first issue of *The Progressive* under the current editorship went to press."[57] The editor then recounted:

In that dark October of inflation and mounting production costs, the

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[55]*Ibid.*

[56]Notes in the News, "Peace on Earth," *The Progressive*, May 1963, 5.

[57]Morris Rubin, "Office Memo," *The Progressive*, June 1964, 1.

> weekly suspended publication. Then: a memorable miracle. In a surge of support uniqued in the history of journalism, loyal subscribers contributed $40,000 toward resurrection of *The Progressive*.
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> In January, 1948, *The Progressive* resumed publication as an independent monthly made possible by the unforgettable faith and unprecedented support of its subscribers. . . . In large measure because of their spreading the word, the magazine's circulation has climbed from fewer than 5,000 in 1940 to about 40,000 today.[58]

This acknowledgement of support was another constant in *The Progressive's* history. LaFollette's first editorial thanked the people who helped it come into being, and he hoped, who would help it survive. Now, Rubin, the longest serving editor since LaFollette, was taking his turn in acknowledging his readers, possibly some of the same reader's LaFollette had addressed.

Passing the Torch

The byline of current *Progressive* editor Erwin Knoll first appeared in the July 1965 issue on an article entitled, "Progress On Poverty." It was the second article written by Knoll for *The Progressive*. Knoll first connected with *The Progressive* in the early 1960s when the *Reporter*, a political magazine of the 1950s and 60s that had published several of his freelance pieces, rejected an article he had written. Knoll had not heard of *The Progressive* but sent the piece to editor Morris Rubin anyway. It was 1961. Rubin published it and paid Knoll $25.[59] Thus began a long and fruitful relationship.

Several years after "Progress on Poverty" appeared, Knoll was traveling around the

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[58] *Ibid.*

[59] Erwin Knoll, interview with the author, July 13, 1993, Madison, Wisc.

country writing a series of articles for Newhouse Newspapers on the resurgence of politics on college campuses. In Madison, he stopped by *The Progressive's* office to finally meet Rubin. Knoll then said he enjoyed working with Rubin and told him that he might someday like living in Madison. In 1968 Rubin called Knoll, reminding him of that conversation.

> [Rubin] called me up and said, 'You once said you wouldn't mind living in Madison.' He then went on to tell me about his serious health problems, he'd had a heart condition for most of his life, and that it really bothered him that there wasn't anyone on the staff that could become editor. He asked if I would consider becoming Washington editor with the view that if he ever had to pick up in a hurry that there would be someone to take over.[60]

Knoll accepted the offer and became Washington editor of *The Progressive* in 1968. Five years later, in 1973, when Rubin retired from editing the magazine full-time, Knoll stepped in as editor. Rubin wrote of this transition:

> For the first time in thirty-three years, *The Progressive* has a new editor. . . . In Erwin Knoll we have an Editor whose dedication to progressive ideas and ideals makes him the perfect choice to succeed me. . . . With Knoll at the helm, I will be free to devote more time to special projects, contacts with writers and my own writing. While Knoll moves to attract new writers, develop fresh ideas, and chart our editorial course, I will be here to work with him in upholding the editorial standards we have demanded of staff and contributors alike over three explosive decades of keeping the magazine alive and pushing its growth and maintaining its independence.[61]

LaFollette's Current Legacy

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[60]*Ibid.*

[61]Morris Rubin, "Memo," *The Progressive*, October 1973, 2.

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A careful analysis of the editorial content of *The Progressive*, as well as interviews conducted with the magazine's editorial staff revealed that a commitment to LaFollette's founding principles continues. The bulk of the interviews conducted by the researcher are reflected in this chapter to illustrate how LaFollette's legacy influences the staff and the magazine, as well as what, if anything, has changed in the editorial direction of the magazine. This information, while only indirectly relevant to the theme of war coverage, is presented here to assist in comprehending the ideological commitment of the individuals that has been reflected in their, and their predecessors', war-time efforts.

Knoll's personal political views undoubtedly played a major part in *The Progressive's* decision to speak out early against the Persian Gulf War. The editor was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1931. His father, a socialist and pacifist, spent time in prison for anti-war activities during WW I. In November, 1938, seven months after Hitler invaded Austria, Knoll watched a local synagogue burn down as firefighters turned their hoses on adjacent buildings. His uncle died in political custody and his grandmother and other relatives died in Nazi concentration camps. In 1939 Knoll and his father fled to Switzerland. A year later the whole family was reunited in New York. The editor described the Holocaust as "the formative experience of my life, and the frame of reference from which I draw my politics. The fact that human beings are capable of committing such monstrous acts against each other is never terribly far from my consciousness." His rejection of violence as a means to any end holds true even for Hitler's Germany. "Ingenious nonviolent struggle" would have been more effective and less destructive, he said.[62]

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[62]Bill Leuders, "The Infiltrator," *Quill*, August 1993, 22.

Knoll acknowledged the tradition that has been passed down to him by LaFollette and said he was especially heartened by it during the Gulf Crisis. The editor recalled that it was the first time in his tenure as editor that threatening phone calls were made to *The Progressive's* office. During this period it helped, he said, to remember that the magazine's founder had been in a similar position seventy-three years prior to the Persian Gulf war:

> [I] remembered that, in 1903, Robert LaFollette, who was by far the most popular political figure in the history of the state, was burned in effigy on the campus of the University of Wisconsin for opposing WW I, and the faculty passed resolutions denouncing him for treasonous conduct against the United States. I felt very much that [LaFollette's] the tradition was present.[63]

That LaFollette's legacy was especially present during the Gulf War is not surprising given his vocal, and well documented, criticism of American involvement in the First World War. Matthew Rothschild, publisher of *The Progressive*, agrees that the historical connection to LaFollette and Progressivism is an important one for the magazine:

> We're connected historically with a movement that has its roots not in the philosophy of the German intellectuals or British egalitarianism but really

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[63]In an interview with the author July 13, 1994, Knoll provided an example that illustrates the loyalty of *The Progressive's* subscribers and that also reinforces his sense that LaFollette's ideals continue to influence magazine, as well as the political climate in Wisconsin.

> There is a presence. It's curious. It's interesting. . . . I met a women who told me 'you know, I've been reading your magazine since it was called *LaFollete's*.' I said that takes you back to at least 1929 because that's when the magazine changed its name and she said 'oh, I go back even longer than that.' And she proceeded to tell me that she and her long dead husband had gone to Washington D.C. on their honeymoon and she said they had sat in the Senate Gallery and heard LaFollette deliver his famous speech against intervention in WW I. And it must have been one great speech because she said, 'Mr. Knoll, that speech is the only thing I remember from my honeymoon!' So there is enough of that still here and enough in this state. And there is still a certain attitude about politics that I think harkens back to when LaFollette was here (in Madison) and a certain lingering commitment to squeaky clean government.

> in American radicalism. It's something that resonates in *The Progressive*. Robert LaFollette is connected somehow. Even though we're a bit of a distance from the magazine that started, we're close enough to be a couple generations removed and to sort of trace the genealogy. The words progressive and Progressivism resonate with Americans. It's a good term to have and it's good that we're here to connect that.[64]

Although the tradition of Robert LaFollette still lingers, Knoll is not its captive. He respects the tradition while understanding that his role as editor, as was LaFollette's, is to comment upon the issues of the current political climate. Knoll does this by calling upon his own beliefs and those of the political left. This has resulted in a deviation from some of LaFollette's ideals. Knoll said, "The one dramatic departure from the editorial commitment of LaFollette is that we simply don't have the kind of faith [that LaFollette did] in the capacity of government and its regulatory apparatus to set things right."[65] A sampling of the editorial content during Knoll's twenty-one-year tenure suggests this is an accurate statement. However, the variety of editorial content contained in *The Progressive* also corroborates what Knoll wrote in February 1989 regarding the consistency of the magazines editorial stance throughout its eighty-five year history:

> The fundamental principles that undergird this magazine's editorial stance have been remarkably consistent over the years: rejection of militarism and war as ways of resolving human conflict; exposure of corporate and governmental abuse; protection of the environment; defense of civil liberties. But within that broad context, *The Progressive* is always changing and, I hope, will always continue to change.[66]

As for his own principles, Knoll has said his politics get simpler and simpler

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[64]Matthew Rothschild, interview with the author, July 13, 1993, Madison, Wisc.

[65]Knoll, interview.

[66]Erwin Knoll, "Spry Octogenarian," Memo from the Editor, *The Progressive*, February 1989, 4.

because he holds firmly to two bedrock ideals. One is his commitment to non-violence and the other is a commitment to free speech. The rest, he said, is negotiable.

> But those two things get you in a lot of positions. When I talk to students I tell them, if you have a total commitment to non-violence and free speech you have to be a socialist because capitalism can't function without violence and repression, and you have to be an anarchist because the government can't function without violence and repression. So the only really serious political question is how you can be a socialist and an anarchist at the same time?[67]

Knoll manages well from his position as editor of *The Progressive*, a position he has held since 1973.

Knoll, who is now 63, began his career as a journalist in a fairly traditional manner. At age 16, he was hired as copy boy at *Editor & Publisher* and kept the job through college at New York University. In 1953 he was drafted into the army, where he spent his two-year term on U.S. soil writing press releases. He returned to *E&P* after his army tour, moved to a position at *Better Schools*, and then decided to apply to selected newspapers across the country. In 1957 Knoll was hired as a reporter by the *Washington Post*. Knoll covered the Washington beat first for the for the *Post*, and then for Newhouse Newspapers. In 1973 he secured the position he refers to as the best job in American journalism—editor of *The Progressive*. "Without question, it is the best. The only thing that constrains me is the magazines perpetual financial crisis. But except for that it is only job in American journalism today that provides the freedom that I have."[68]

As editor of *The Progressive*, Knoll has used that freedom to become the

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[67]Knoll, interview.

[68]Knoll, interview.


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best-known left-wing journalist in the land. He has a nationally syndicated radio show and, since the onset of the Gulf Crisis, makes frequent appearances on the MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour. Ralph Nader, a long-time friend, said Knoll communicates through other media more than any other progressive.[69] Publisher Rothschild has supported Knoll's efforts. "It is not only tremendous exposure for us but a tremendous vehicle for expressing our views." Rothschild said to be effective beyond the progressive community, members of that community must step outside the normal boundaries and generate discussion in the mainstream. "I think there are many of us in the progressive community, especially in the left-wing journals, who think that the sum substance of our work can be wrapped up in the magazine or journal," he explained. "Of course once that's done then fine, all we do is go out and put out the next one. But if we're not getting out to people beyond our own little ghetto then we're probably not doing the most effective work we can."[70]

Linda Rocawich, former managing editor of *The Texas Observer*, has served as *The Progressive's* managing editor for the last eight years. One of Rocawich's responsibilities as managing editor is to attract writers to the magazine and said this is a challenge at times, in part because of the financial limitations of *The Progressive*.

> We can't compete in terms of compensation, but the compensation, for young writer especially, comes in being published in *The Progressive*. Often a writer will develop a proposal for funding and find that a foundation like The Center for Investigative Journalism in San Francisco is interested in financing their article. Some of the best writing we get comes from these people so we do what we can to suggest alternative funding.[71]

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[69]Leuders, 21.

[70]Matthew Rothschild, interview.

[71]Linda Rocawich, interview with the author, July 13, 1994, Madison, Wisc.

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As for the more established columnists who contribute to *The Progressive*, Rocawich explained that she and Molly Ivins worked together at the *Texas Observer*. After an invitation from both Rocawich and Knoll, Ivins began writing her 'Small Favors' column, featured every month as the last column in the magazine. Nat Hentoff, who writes on First Amendment issues for *The Progressive*, was another friend of Rocawich's and, she said, after his music column was dropped by *The Village Voice*, he signed on to *The Progressive*. Essayist and poet June Jordan was invited to become a contributor to the magazine after Rothschild attended one of her poetry readings. In an editorial introducing Jordan's first column, Knoll noted that she was the first black woman writer to have a regularly featured column in an American opinion magazine.[72]

A Perpetual Financial Struggle

Left-wing political opinion magazines continually struggle with the absence of cash and must be creative in their efforts to keep their magazines afloat. It is characteristic of many opinion magazines to rely on subscriber donations to subsidize their annual income. Historically, it was not uncommon for an editor to postpone an issue of an opinion magazine while staff raised money to pay the printer. The editors of *Common Sense*, on the tenth anniversary of their publication in 1942, said that their deficit had averaged about $700 a month for a decade. William F. Buckley Jr., reported the losses of his *National*

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[72]*Ibid.*

Review at $136,000 in 1958, $132,000 in 1959, and about $100,00 in 1961.[73] *The Progressive* has not been immune to financial difficulties. Its "perpetual financial crisis," does weigh heavily at times. However, Knoll has spoken optimistically about the changes that have occurred in the past several years:

> Part of our ups and downs in terms of the finances have been influenced by who at a particular time was responsible for the business side of the magazine. The problem is that people who are very good at that sort of thing are in other jobs. If they didn't know it when they got here, they learned and were soon finding other jobs. We're lucky now because Matthew Rothschild has an editorial commitment to this magazine as well as a business commitment. To have people who are good at that kind of work makes a huge difference in the magazine.[74]

Knoll's commitment to the magazine despite its uncertain finance might also be attributed to *The Progressive's* legacy. There have been a number of close calls over the years when the magazine nearly folded, as it nearly did in 1948, but appeals to subscribers for contributions succeeded averting financial collapse.

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[73]Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 58.

[74]Knoll, interview.

The View from the Publisher's Chair

As publisher of *The Progressive*, Matthew Rothschild is intimately acquainted with the financial woes the magazine has experienced in the last eleven years. A graduate of Harvard, Rothschild worked for Ralph Nader for a year before joining *The Progressive* as an associate editor in 1983. Rothschild spoke to the researcher at length about the magazine, describing *The Progressive's* market, its competitors (*The Nation*, *Mother Jones*, *In These Times* and *Z Magazine*), its circulation, and the liberal climate.

According to Rothschild, the *Nation* has about 75,000 subscribers, *Mother Jones* has about 65,000, *The Progressive* has about 40,000, *In These Times* has about 20,000 and *Z Magazine* is down about 15,000. "In the scheme of things there are not too many outlets out there that give the perspective *The Progressive* gives. I wish there were more. While there is no national progressive movement in the country, per se, I think the left has the ability to persist, at least at local levels, and for people around the country to share a set of values. I think this is one valuable function we serve, to help people feel a part of the community," Rothschild added.[75]

As a product, Rothschild said he does not position *The Progressive* editorially.

> The editorial product is a given. I've always thought the function of the business side is not to tamper with the editorial process, which we wouldn't be able to do anyway since Erwin is so strong a leader of the editorial department who will brook no invasion from the business side. As it should be. The dog should wag the tail and not the other way around as it is in most other places. So, our mission from the business perspective is to take *The Progressive* as it is, as product A and sell it as best we can.

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[75]Rothschild, interview.

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[76] *Ibid.*

[77] *Ibid.*

So that's what we do.[76]

Rothschild said that, in the last four years he has focused on the ways in which *The Progressive* outshines other magazines, essentially doing product differentiation by comparing the products, not tampering with what *The Progressive* has, and then selling those advantages. Rothschild concurred with Knoll that the secret of the magazine's survival has been extremely loyal subscribers.

> Long before I got here, the way we kept surviving was to rely on donations from our subscribers from anywhere between 20 and 25% of the subsidies. And that's been crucial. We don't have an angel who writes us a huge check every week, so we rely on nickel and dime contributions of twenty, fifty and one hundred dollars from several thousand of our subscribers. That has kept us in business year in and year out and has bailed us out in times of particular crisis. So that's really the secret. Other than that, we've been a little more clever or shrewd and more careful in the last three or four years in doing what were supposed to be doing in acquiring new subscribers so that's why we're doing better than we were before. But generally it's that loyal, generous base of subscribers and then just hustling for new ones and hustling for advertising and trying to scrounge up a grant here and a grant there to get us from pillar to post. But by and large with a base of as low as 25,000 subscribers and as high as 42,000 we've always been able to keep going with whatever that percentage of the subscription base is.[77]

Rothschild, Knoll and Rocawich, along with about a dozen other staffers, do appear to know their product and their audience extremely well. They are the torch-bearers of the LaFollette legacy, and each of them has made a commitment to continue *The Progressive's* task of the last eighty-five years; maintaining a commitment to noninterventionist principles, questioning the perspectives offered by the national news

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[76] *Ibid.*

[77] *Ibid.*

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media, and offering a diverse group of voices to speak for the progressive community.

CHAPTER 4

World War I
(1914 - 1918)

If our democracy is to flourish it must have criticism, if our government is to function it must have dissent. Only totalitarian governments insist on conformity and they--as we know--do so at peril. Americans have a stake in nonconformity, for they know that the American genius is nonconformist.[1]

-Henry Steele Commager

Although it was not the bloodiest or the most protracted war in history, the First World War was the most intensely fought and the greatest in geographical scope to occur up to its time. World War I brought with it an end to a long period of peaceful coexistence among European states and was the first of two wars whose central focus was the control of German power.

The assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand in June 1914 by Serbian nationalists was the weight that tipped the European balance, which had kept the peace between nations for over forty years, toward war. The assassination was not, of course the sole reason for the First World War; It was merely its trigger. The international situation had grown dangerously unstable by 1900 and a variety of internal problems plagued the powers of Europe throughout the first decade of the twentieth century.[2] These internal

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[1]Henry Steele Commager, "Who's Loyal to America?" speech made in 1947, cited in *Passport to Liberty: The People and Ideas That Make America Great*, Jan Sammer, ed. (New York: Penguin, 1992), 77.

[2]J.M. Roberts, *History of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 706-709. Roberts points to the relative newness of Germany and Italy as states and (continued...)

divisions could, however, be mended by nationalist competition. In retaliation for the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, the Austrians declared war on Serbia July 28, 1914. Germany supported Serbia. One week later, all the great powers of Europe were at war. Across the ocean, the United States viewed the events in Europe with detachment.

Under the leadership of President Woodrow Wilson, America assumed an isolationist position at the outset of World War I. However, after only three months of fighting, Wilson integrated the economic interests of the United States with those of the Allies when he reversed an earlier ban on loans to the Allies, allowing them commercial credit to buy supplies in America. The Central powers, by virtue of Allied control of the seas, were cut off from American suppliers. At the same time, Wilson agreed to permit unrestricted trade in munitions, contrary to an earlier proposal for their embargo.[3] Sen.

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[2](...continued)
suggests that their rulers were especially prone to internal divisiveness. Italy's prolonged suspicion and unfriendliness toward Austria-Hungary (formerly Italy's ally) was also a source of stress. Roberts further suggests that Germany's industrialization spawned new economic and social forces that grew difficult to reconcile with the conservative character of her constitution which gave more weight to imperial government and semi-feudal, agrarian autocracy. Russia and Austria-Hungary also strained under the weight of great change. Austria-Hungary was trying to maintain the delicate balance of its new hyphenated form that grew out of a successful nationalism but, Roberts said, in the early years of the twentieth century there were signs that it was going to be increasingly difficult to keep the two halves of the monarchy together without provoking other nations inside it beyond endurance. Russia experienced a revolution in 1905 that had destroyed the liberal promise reforms of Alexander II but, Roberts said, did not prevent the start of industrial growth by the end of the century. The United Kingdom, for its part, was experiencing uncertainty about her relative strength and struggled with working-class agitation.

[3]Barbara Tuchman, *Practicing History*, Selected Essays, "How We Entered World War I" (New York: Ballantine Books, 1981), 160. Wilson's reversal of the ban on loans to belligerents and his decision to allow unrestricted trade in munitions were separate issues though they were made at roughly the same time.

Robert M. LaFollette was one of the most vocal opponents to these measures from both his seat in the Senate and his position as editor of *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine.*

LaFollette was not a pacifist in the traditional sense of the word. His criticism of Wilson's measures were largely based on economic, rather than humanitarian, principles. LaFollette opposed American involvement in the war based on his belief that sentiment for the war was manufactured for profit by bankers and businesspeople, who lent money and sold weapons and thereby increased their control of the government. According to LaFollette, the public interest was best served by maintaining an isolationist position. He considered war the least effective means of resolving human conflict. Many Progressives joined in LaFollette's opposition to the war.[4]

American Involvement in World War I

The May 1915 sinking of the Cunard Line's *Lusitania*, which carried, in addition to a full roster of non-combatant passengers, a part-cargo of small-arms ammunition, brought to a head the issue of submarine warfare. The ship was sunk without warning. Germany justified the attack by arguing that the Lusitania was a munitions carrier using its non-combatant status as protection. In 1915, the last thing Wilson or the majority of the American people wanted was war. Wilson chose to pursue negotiations with the Germans, demanding that they cease their attacks on non-combatants, even though of the

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[4]Tuchman, 166. See also, Russel B. Nye, *Midwestern Progressive Politics* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), 308 and 316 and Eugene M. Tobin, *Organize or Perish: America's Independent Progressives, 1913-1933* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 67-68.

1,195 persons lost with the *Lusitania*, only 124 were Americans.[5]

Historian Barbara Tuchman noted that Wilson's main concern during this period was to maintain the United States' appearance as a great power. If he forbade American citizens from exercising their rights to travel on belligerent ships, as Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan and the U.S. Senate suggested in the Gore Resolution after the *Lusitania* was sunk, Wilson feared the country would forfeit the respect of other nations, the confidence of American citizens and its prestige before the world. The president wrote to Senator Stone, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and a leading isolationist, that he could not take this measure without conceding American impotence as a nation.[6] Therefore, Wilson entered into tense negotiations and tried to force Germany to acknowledge the neutral rights of American citizens to travel the seaways free from attack. He enjoyed some success for the next two months until the *Arabic* was sunk in August 1915, with the loss of forty-four lives, including two Americans. After this attack Wilson secured a promise from Germany not to sink without warning. The promise did not hold, however. Germany viewed America as an obstacle to victory, as long as it continued to supply the allies. Submarines attacked without warning again, sinking of the *Ancona* in November and the *Sussex* in March 1916. Through its continued attacks, Germany hoped to provoke Wilson into a declaration of war. It was successful.[7]

Wilson's address to Congress in April 1916, part of which appeared in *LaFollette's*

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[5]Tuchman, 163. See also Roberts, 717.

[6]Tuchman, 163.

[7]*Ibid.*

Magazine, foreshadowed the United State's eventual involvement, one year later, in the First World War. On April 2, 1917, Wilson went to Congress to ask for its passage of a declaration of war on Germany after the German general staff chose to resume unrestricted submarine warfare. Congress did so.[8]

Sen. LaFollette's Opposition to World War I

Prior to 1914, LaFollette had paid little attention to foreign affairs, neither as a magazine editor nor as a U.S. Senator. His first important policy address that concerned international affairs came with the introduction of the LaFollette Peace Resolution in 1915. The resolution was a source of friction between LaFollette and Wilson, the first of many to come. The tensions between the two increased when LaFollette delivered a series of speeches in the Senate that attempted to undermine Wilson's foreign policy. LaFollette spoke against the president's request for a strengthened military (January 27, 1916), supported the Gore Resolution, which warned Americans not to travel on armed belligerent ships (March 10), and delivered a seven-hour speech that opposed a naval appropriations bill (July 19-20). Wilson prevailed in each case.[9]

Throughout 1916, an election year, LaFollette waged an intensive campaign in

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[8]Roberts, 717.

[9]Robert M. LaFollette, "On Right of Petition," Jan. 27, 1916, Cong. Rec., 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1619; Robert M. LaFollette, "Armed Merchent Vessels," March 10, 1916, Cong. Rec., 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 3886-91; Robert M. LaFollette, July 20, 1916, Cong. Rec., 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 11,330-47. See also Burgchardt, 85-90. In addition to the *Congressional Record*, the researcher relied on Burgchardt's interpretations of LaFollette's speeches during this period as well as his description of LaFollette's adversarial relationship with Woodrow Wilson.

which he continued to stress his approval of American neutrality and his opposition to military build-up. After a resounding victory in November 1916, LaFollette was at the height of his popularity. Only three months later, however, his continued opposition to Wilson's foreign policy led to the most trying period in his political career.

In February 1917, Wilson asked Congress for the authority to arm American merchant ships to defend themselves against German submarine attacks. LaFollette helped organize a filibuster against Wilson's request. On March 3, the Senate met for a twenty-six hour session. LaFollette was scheduled to be the final speaker but at the last moment the speaker's list was manipulated to omit LaFollette. When the chair refused to acknowledge LaFollette, he stood in the center aisle screaming that he would not be silenced. Eventually, LaFollette was persuaded to sit down. His tirade produced a minor victory after he and his allies managed to block the bill through parliamentary procedure and the Senate adjourned without approving Wilson's request.[10] This episode prompted an angry response from Wilson who said, "A little group of willful men, representing no opinion but their own, have rendered the great Government of the United States helpless and contemptible."[11] Dozens of the nations newspapers questioned LaFollette's loyalty and patriotism.[12]

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[10]Burgchardt, 86. See also Maney, 19-20 for Robert LaFollette Jr.'s reaction to this episode. LaFollette, Jr. was present during the debate in the Senate and watched his father's tirade. Maney includes letters written from Young Bob to his father during this episode in which LaFollette Jr., cautions his father about losing complete control.

[11]Wilson quoted in *New York Times*, March 5, 1917. See also Burgchardt, 86.

[12]Belle Case LaFollette and Fola LaFollette, *Robert M. LaFollette* (New York, 1953), 1:626-629.

After Wilson went to Congress April 2, requesting a declaration of war, LaFollette made a speech in which he argued that a declaration of war was unnecessary. LaFollette claimed that England was equally as lawless as Germany and that Woodrow Wilson was solely responsible for bringing America to war. Again he met harsh criticism but did not waver from his position. After war was declared, LaFollette opposed many of Wilson's initiatives but did not vote against necessary supplies to conduct the war. He did, however, vote against measures that restricted freedom of speech and diminished individual rights.[13] LaFollette continued to publish editorials in *LaFollette's Magazine* critical of Wilson's leadership and, although somewhat conciliatory in tone, obviously intended to hold the president's feet to the fire on his promise to bring an end to the war.

Magazine Content During World War I

Within the seven issues in the sample from the First World War (1913-1919), twenty articles addressed the war. During the opening stages of the First World War, the editors of *LaFollette's Magazine*, like the rest of the United States, focused their attention on domestic issues. LaFollette continued to use the magazine to lobby the public on issues he addressed in the Senate. In 1914, these included efforts to regulate railroad rates and to gain passage of his seaman's bill, which would ensure safety for passengers and seamen by standardizing the seaman's skills, limiting the number of hours of continuous service and improving on-board living conditions. The bill included numerous other regulations including the governing of the number and usage of lifeboats, following the

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[13]Burgchardt, 87-89.

sinking of the *R.M.S. Titanic* in 1912.

In a February 1914 interview, English poet Alfred Noyes told *LaFollette's Magazine* that the only way international peace was ever to be achieved was through "straight thinking." For this reason, the poet said, the world's hope lay in the United States. He maintained that the European powers, which included England, were so hooked on the war-habit that it was impossible to speak with them about peace. Their argument, he said, was that war was the only way to have peace. Noyes commented, "Laughable isn't it?"[14]

Noyes provided the following example of the bizarre thinking he saw taking hold of the world's conscience:

> What I can't understand is this: When a catastrophe like the *Titanic* occurs the whole world is disturbed, everyone talks mournfully of the horror, suffering. . . . But when a war goes on like the recent Balkan slaughter, in which not a few hundred, but 250,000 lives were lost, there is much talk about the necessity of war.[15]

The poet did not provide a reason for his belief that the United States could assist in adjusting the world's mind-set, he simply restated his belief that the world looked to the United States for the only solution--straight thinking. The following February, LaFollette introduced a resolution into the U.S. Senate which perhaps exemplified Noyes' sentiment.

The LaFollette Peace Resolution, which did not pass, authorized the president to convey to all neutral nations the desire for an international conference to promote cooperation among them to bring an early cessation to the hostilities and to establish peace among the warring nations of Europe. It also called for the establishment of rules

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[14]*LaFollette's Magazine*, February 1914, 11.

[15]*Ibid.*

limiting arms and regulating export of war supplies and of an international tribunal to settle disputes. The resolution was published in the March 1915 edition of *LaFollette's Magazine.* On the following page LaFollette reprinted the speech he made in the U.S. Senate Feb. 12, 1915, in support of his resolution. LaFollette's speech urged President Wilson to take a leadership role to "lead these warring brothers back to peace."[16] He argued that because the United States was bound by ties of blood and country to all of the warring nations, it was fitting that America take the initial step in convening a conference to seek a peaceful resolution. Part of LaFollette's argument for peace in Europe, in this speech, stemmed from an abiding view of war as barbaric and wasteful, both in economic and human terms. It was, therefore, the responsibility of leaders of those nations not yet involved, who could still exercise calm and dispassionate judgement, to bring about a cessation of hostilities through offers of mediation. The LaFollette Peace Resolution resembled a rudimentary League of Nations, which was ironic because Woodrow Wilson opposed LaFollette's ideas in 1915, and LaFollette helped block adoption of Wilson's League in 1919.[17] Obviously, the senator's unwavering opposition to American involvement in the war and his attempts to convince the President to act prior to Versailles had some effect on the final outcome of the First World War, though not in the manner LaFollette wanted.

Throughout the remainder of World War I, *LaFollette's Magazine* turned its

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[16]*LaFollette's Magazine*, "The Duty of Neutral Nations," March 1915, 7.

[17]Carl C. Burgchardt, *Robert M. LaFollette, Sr.: The Voice of Conscience* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 85.

attention to foreign policy issues. LaFollette continued to publish articles and editorials in the pages of his magazine that directly and indirectly supported his opposition to war and militarism. An April 1916 editorial reported on the testimony of Gen. Nelson A. Miles before the Senate and House Committees on military affairs. Miles, former Chief of Staff of the United States Army, reportedly sharply disagreed with advocates of universal conscription and compulsory service and a continental army. The general was also commended for performing a great service in referring to the danger in foisting upon this country a military bureaucracy. This danger was one that Sen. LaFollette often spoke of in speeches before the Senate during this period.[18] The editorial also quoted the general's statements about American involvement in the war in Europe, which coincided with LaFollette's position. "Over-seas expeditions have always been very expensive and, as a rule, very disastrous."[19] Miles referred to British invasion attempts during the Revolutionary War and to French expeditions in Mexico.

The "News Worth Remembering" column, a page of short editorials, included a portion of President Wilson's April 19 address to Congress that informed the country that negotiations with Germany had reached a point at which neither U.S. demands concerning submarine warfare would be honored by Germany immediately, or the president would be forced to break off diplomatic relations between the two countries. *LaFollette's Magazine*

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[18]Robert M. LaFollette, "On Right of Petition," Jan. 27 1916, Cong. Rec., 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1619; Robert M. LaFollette, "Armed Merchent Vessels," March 10 1916, Cong. Rec., 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 3886-91; Robert M. LaFollette, July 20 1916, Cong. Rec., 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 11,330-47. See also Burgchardt, 87-90.

[19]*LaFollette's Magazine*, April 1916, 4.

made no editorial comment on the president's speech. The editors merely reprinted a portion of it for their readers and let them decide what it meant. After war was declared, however, LaFollette questioned every move the president made.

The May 1917 edition led with a front-page editorial in which LaFollette questioned the wisdom of leaving the mobilization of all the activities and output of a hundred million people, distributed to a territory equal to all of Europe, to "the great financiers and captains of industry who, by instinct and training, have the imperialistic idea of the right way to manage trade and production."[20] In LaFollette's opinion the best way to divert a negative reaction from the American public concerning this mobilization was to assure them that "we have consciously used our influence and power to bring about a just and durable peace to the world."[21] LaFollette included a portion of a speech, made by Wilson to the Senate January 22, in which the president said, "It must be a peace without victory." Editor LaFollette offered this as a reminder to his readers, as well as to the president and Congress. He argued that because America was now involved in the war, Wilson's statement should make everyone more strongly resolved to "hold to the noble ideals promulgated by President Wilson as the basis of an international agreement."[22]

In the same edition LaFollette reproduced a copy of a speech he made April 27 against conscription. Here he was not so conciliatory. The four-page speech argued that

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[20]*LaFollette's Magazine*, "A Just and Durable Peace," May 1917, 1.

[21]*Ibid.*

[22]*Ibid.*

the conscription bill was unfair and irrational. He railed against the draft as a means to "violently lay hold of one million of America's finest and healthiest and strongest boys" and against their will require them to "wound and kill other young boys just like themselves. . ."[23] At every opportunity LaFollette spoke out against the war and continued to oppose the majority of Wilson's measures long past the end of the fighting. In doing so the Senator came close to losing his seat in the Senate.

LaFollette's August 1917 opposition to the president's war revenue bill and his own proposal of a War Aims Resolution, which argued for the right of Congress, not the president, to control national wartime goals triggered more criticism from the press. However, the most serious political crisis of LaFollette's career came after a September 1917 speech to the Non-Partisan League in St. Paul, Minnesota. In the course of his remarks, LaFollette said that although the United States had "serious grievances against Germany," those grievances did not warrant a declaration of war. In its report of the speech the next day, the Associated Press misquoted the senator as having said that the United States had "no grievances against Germany." The following day, newspapers throughout the country ran the report under banner headlines. One newspaper labeled LaFollette "the most sinister, forbidding figure in latter day American history," adding that "his very name has come to spell sedition and speak treason." Former President Theodore Roosevelt called him one of the "Huns within our gates."[24] Although LaFollette's speech

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[23]*Ibid.*, 2.

[24]*Seattle Post Intelligencer*, Sept. 26, 1917, Roosevelt quoted in *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 27 1917, both cited by Belle and Fola LaFollette, *LaFollette*, 2:770-72. See also, Burgchardt, 91 for a detailed account of LaFollette's speech.

would have met with criticism whether or not he was misquoted, the Associated Press report provided seemingly concrete evidence to those who already questioned his patriotism and prompted petitions to Congress calling for LaFollette's expulsion from the Senate. In Wisconsin, LaFollette's former friends joined his enemies on the campus of the University of Wisconsin in December 1917, and hung LaFollette in effigy.[25] LaFollette defended his position throughout and publicly denied the correctness of the report. A retraction by the Associated Press was not forthcoming until eight months later. The Senate took fourteen months to clear LaFollette of any wrongdoing.

LaFollette's lawyer, Gilbert Roe, went before the Senate subcommittee in December 1917 to request the dismissal of proceedings to banish LaFollette from the Senate. The request was not granted until November 1918. In the meantime, the Associated Press, in May 1918, printed a one sentence retraction which said "The error was regrettable and the Associated Press seizes the first opportunity to do justice to Senator LaFollette."[26] The concluding comment of *LaFollette's Magazine*'s June 1918, editorial, in which this subject was addressed, said the injustice done to the public was far more serious than that done to LaFollette because,

> If public men fighting in the interest of the public may be ruined and discredited while the fight is on, the public may lose its fight, and its servants may become intimidated and afraid to make any real fight on its behalf. The fight Senator LaFollette was making was for a fairer system of taxation to support the war. He sought to arouse public interest for this purpose. It is fortunate that President Wilson has renewed that fight which

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[25]Burgchardt, 87. See also Maney, 24. Also mentioned by Erwin Knoll in an interview with the author July 13, 1993, in Madison, Wisc.

[26]*LaFollette's Magazine*, June 1918, 3.

had become largely submerged through the efforts of wealth to escape just taxation.[27]

The editorial provided some measure of retribution for LaFollette. By placing the mistake, without malice, in the broader context of the public interest--an issue addressed by LaFollette throughout his tenure as editor of *LaFollette's Magazine* and as a U.S. Senator--the editors made a start at restoring LaFollette's reputation.

The rest of the June issue was dedicated to war issues and opened with three LaFollette editorials addressing Wilson's request for war taxes. In addition, Albert J. Beveridge, former Senator from Indiana, argued against Wilson's League of Nations and Congressman John M. Baer wrote about post-war benefits for the American farmer. Also included were an unattributed article on the effect of war on the birth rate across the world and another that discussed the discrimination in food distribution occurring in Germany. So, despite the turmoil created by these events, or perhaps in spite of it, LaFollette continued arguing against the policies he deemed were corrupting America's war effort and supported those he considered constructive.[28]

In July 1919, one month after the Treaty of Versailles was signed, LaFollette continued to criticize President Wilson, specifically, his efforts to establish a League of

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[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *LaFollette's Magazine*, June 1918, 3. In "Standing Back of The President," LaFollette goaded the profiteering "patriots" to support Wilson's recommendation for additional war taxes using a highly sarcastic tone. "That he recommends it is enough for you. Yours is not to question why, yours not to bat an eye, yours but to walk up to the Captain's office and pay heavily on your big incomes, cough up your war profits and meet a tax on luxuries, which will make you remember as long as you live that war means sacrifice for you, as well as for the poor, who in giving their boys give all."

Nations. The opening editorial of *LaFollette's Magazine* denounced the secrecy the Senator believed surrounded the drafting of the League of Nations Covenant. He wrote:

> Together with four other men, speaking for the Allied powers, he has framed in secret, and has signed and sealed the League Compact and Treaty.
> This he did in defiance of both the letter and spirit of the Constitution. It was a most wilful violation of that provision of our fundamental law which specifically declares that the Senate shall participate as an advisor, in the making of a treaty,–not merely "concur" in a treaty after it has been made.[29]

LaFollette began the editorial with the words he had written ten years prior, in the first edition of *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, in which he pledged to speak the truth. He reminded his readers of his pledge that "no eminence of position in party or government shall protect a servant of the people from deserved criticism; and it is gladly given to all who commend themselves to it by brave and right action, in any party or place."[30] In denouncing Wilson's actions, LaFollette came full circle when he explained how he had honored this pledge over the last seven years. He said he supported the president whenever he believed his administration merited approval and admitted that he criticized Wilson whenever he believed the president's course of action was wrong.

The constancy of LaFollette's position throughout the First World War suggests that the ideals he espoused in the first issue of *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine* were more than words; they were principles that served as the basis for every argument he made against the war in both the Senate and in the magazine. LaFollette did not waver from these

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[29]*LaFollette's Magazine*, "Wilson's Broken Pledges," July 1919, 1.

[30]*LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*, January 9, 1909, 2.

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tenets, even at the risk of political disgrace. He was, it seems, a man dedicated to specific principles, and these provided the foundation on which his successors would erect *The Progressive* magazine.

CHAPTER 5

World War II
(1939-1945)

"Mark my words: I may not live to see it but you will. This war will be followed by one of the worst economic collapses in history. The cost in lives and money will have been stupendous, but instead of the world 'being made safe for democracy' the whole ghastly business will sow the seeds for another and perhaps worse world war to follow."[1]

- Senator Robert M. LaFollette Sr. to his son Philip, 1917

In many respects, the Second World War was, as LaFollette prophesied, a continuation of disputes left unsettled by World War I.[2] German bitterness over defeat in the First World War, severe terms of the Versailles treaty, social unrest and political instability within the Wiemar Republic were the wellspring of Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933. Hitler's rearmament of Germany, begun in 1935, and his alliance with Mussolini signaled the beginning of the division of Europe that culminated in World War II.

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[1]Donald Young, ed., *Adventure In Politics: The Memoirs of Philip LaFollette* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 42.

[2]J.M. Roberts, *History of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 756-766. Roberts clearly explains the impact of key individuals and the major influences on the development of the Second World War, suggesting that the political and economic assumptions of the nineteenth century had gone, along with many others, and left in their wake an uncertainty about international relations in the 1930s. The heart of this uncertainty lay in Europe and in the fact that Japan was quickly challenging Europe's status as the main focus of the international power system. The German problem was, however, more pressing in the 1930s, Roberts said, because the country had not been destroyed in 1918. A logical consequence therefore, was that Germany would once again "exercise her due weight." The question was whether this weight could be exercised without war. The answer, with the economic depression besetting the Wiemar Republic–the post World War I attempt to reconstruct German society and civilization–turned out to be no.

Outspoken opponent of World War I, Sen. LaFollette did not live to see its successor. LaFollette died in June 1925, leaving his legacy as one of the leading proponents of Midwestern progressive ideals. His magazine, *LaFollette's Weekly*, did not die with him, however. It was kept alive as a testament to LaFollette's vision of truth, about which he had spoken so often in his long political career.

World War II Begins

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Two days later England and France declared war on Germany. Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Jr. heard the news of France and England's declaration while in Wisconsin and promptly declared that from that point forward, he would "test every international issue upon the question of whether or not it tends to keep the United States from becoming involved in another foreign war."[3]

In the spring of 1940, Hitler launched a major offensive. Between April and June, Germany overran Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and finally France. By summer only England and Russia stood between Hitler and the conquest of Europe. These events prompted Roosevelt to aid Britain in its defense.[4] Young Bob was still not

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[3]*The Progressive*, September 9, 1939, 8.

[4]Roberts, 768-770. Roosevelt had believed since 1940 that supporting Great Britain was within the interests of the United States. The support was, however, limited by the law of neutrality and what was to be permitted by the public. Roosevelt went beyond these limits and his disregard of these limits were what so frustrated Sen. LaFollette. The American Lend-Lease program, which provided production and services to the Allies without payment was Roosevelt's first step. His second was to extend naval patrols and the protection of shipping further eastward into the Atlantic. Then followed a meeting with Churchill which resulted in a declaration of shared principles--the Atlantic Charter--in

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persuaded that Hitler's advancement was cause for alarm on the part of the United States and actually increased his argument to keep the United States out of war. "If we allow ourselves to be drawn into the European slaughter," he told a gathering of Wisconsin Progressives in May 1940, "it will bleed us white and leave us helpless as the rest." He also declared that "we must and shall provide adequate military defenses for this hemisphere . . . but in the name of democracy I pledge to you that I shall never give my vote to send American boys to fight overseas in a foreign war."[5]

Successor to the progressive voice in the U.S. Senate, Young Bob protested against American involvement in World War II as his father had done, thirty years prior, during the First World War. LaFollette Jr.'s biographer, Patrick J. Maney, suggested that the most important attitude underlying Young Bob's views on foreign policy was a nearly total aversion to war. Maney said this attitude stemmed directly from Young Bob's and Old Bob's experiences during World War I.

Young Bob was 22 years old at the onset of World War I in 1917. The eldest son of Robert Sr. and Belle Case LaFollette, Young Bob was not called into service because of a medical deferment. However, "he witnessed the ugly domestic consequences of war,"[6] and was his father's staunchest defender during those nightmarish years when

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[4](...continued)
which the United States, a nation formally at peace, and Great Britain, a nation at war, talked of the needs of a post-war world 'after final destruction of Nazi tyranny.' Roberts said this was the background to Hitler's foolish decision of Dec. 11, 1941, to declare war on the United States, four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines.

[5]Maney, 235.

[6]Maney, 229.

people called Old Bob a traitor, hung him in effigy, and when the Senate considered a motion to expel him for disloyalty. Both Young Bob and his brother Philip, two years his junior, succeeded their father as steadfastly progressive politicians.

Young Bob ran for and won his father's Senate seat in September 1925, three months after Old Bob's death. His brother Philip, two years his junior, was elected governor of Wisconsin in 1930. Philip served one term, but was defeated in a reelection bid in 1932. Reelected in 1934, Philip served as governor until 1938.[7] The LaFollette brothers were the proprietors of the progressive movement in Wisconsin, and like their father, they subsidized *The Progressive.*

Magazine Content During World War II

After Evjue's departure as editor, *The Progressive* realigned its editorial content to reflect LaFollette's non-interventionist policies. Within the nine issues in the WWII sample, thirty-five articles addressed the war. During the summer and fall of 1940, and before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Young Bob continued to battle the Roosevelt administration on practically every international issue. The Senator's vocal criticism

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[7]Donald Young, ed., *Adventure In Politics: The Memoirs of Philip LaFollette* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 148, 178, 220. Philip LaFollette was a striking contrast to his older brother and his father. Although Philip took more after his father than did Bob, and was more adept as a communicator, he did not share in his father and bother's complete opposition to war. In fact, Philip served in both World War I and World War II. When, at
age 44, Philip reenlisted in the army and served overseas as a public relations officer on MacArthur's staff, Bob complained to Philip's wife Isen, that Phil had gone off and left him 'holding the bag' politically.

prompted numerous comparisons to his father's strident anti-war stance in 1917.[8] Throughout the war, Morris Rubin kept *The Progressive's* readers abreast of Young Bob's maneuvers in the Senate and gave the Senator ample editorial space to expound upon his views, which included his ardent disapproval of corporate business, in addition to his anti-intervention stance.

For example, a front page article written by Young Bob tackled the issue of patent rights and remarked that Nazi Germany was waging "economic war" on the United States through "our own patent laws."[9] The article described Standard Oil's attempt to monopolize synthetic rubber production in the United States. A few years before the war, Standard Oil and I.G. Farben Industries agreed to exchange all technical information and research in the field of synthetic rubber. Although Standard Oil kept its part of the agreement, allowing the German company to develop a synthetic rubber industry, the

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[8]Maney, 247; Belle Case LaFollette and Fola LaFollette, *Robert M. LaFollette* (New York: 1953), 1:626; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Four Freedoms" speech, in B.D. Zevin, ed., *Nothing to Fear, The Selected Addresses of Franklin Delano Roosevelt 1932-1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1946), 261. During the Senate debate over Roosevelt's lend-lease plan the discussion sometimes degenerated into a verbal brawl, with reckless and unsubstantiated charges being hurled from both sides. Roosevelt, Maney said, set the tone. He used phrases like "American appeasers" to describe noninterventionist critics like LaFollette and charged that some Americans in high places were unwittingly aiding the enemy. Some of these statements evoked memories of Woodrow Wilson on the eve of World War I. In March 1917, following the filibuster on the armed-ship bill in the Senate, Wilson had characterized Sen. LaFollette Sr. and other anti-war Senators as "a little group of willful men, representing no opinion but their own" who had "rendered the great Government of the United States helpless and contemptible." Roosevelt, in a message to Congress on 6 January 1941, employed language that echoed Wilson's attack on Young Bob's father when he said: "We must be especially aware of that small group of selfish men who would clip the wings of the American Eagle in order to feather their own nests."

[9]*The Progressive*, "The New Economic Warfare," April 25, 1942, 1.

United States was suffering a rubber shortage in 1942 because I.G. Farben did not hold up its end of the agreement. The Nazi government would not allow it to, and yet, Standard Oil continued to send the German company full reports and samples of its research in synthetic rubber. The reason for this, LaFollette contended, was because Standard Oil planned a monopoly of synthetic rubber production in the United States.

> Only by maintaining I.G. Farben's agreement not to interfere selling rubber or its process for rubber to other American companies, could Standard Oil achieve its desired future monopoly of synthetic rubber. Other firms have tried to develop synthetic rubber. Standard has blocked them. The result? Add it up for yourselves. Germany has enough rubber for her war; we are dangerously short.[10]

In this article, Senator LaFollette co-mingled two principle issues first addressed by his father during World War I--the abuse of power by industry and the need for preservation of democracy in the United States. In this way he used the magazine, as his father did before him, to garner support for his policies.

Long before December 1941, Young Bob seemed to sense that full involvement in the war was a foregone issue, and he understood that continued opposition to the war would be political suicide. LaFollette had repeatedly maintained that if any foreign power ever attacked the United States or its possessions, Congress would have no alternative but to declare war. And yet, the Pearl Harbor attack came as a shock because Young Bob was more concerned with Europe than the Pacific. He kept his word, however. When LaFollette entered his Senate office December 8, he told an aide, "We have no choice."

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[10]*Ibid.*

Later that day he voted for war against Japan and on December 11, for war against Germany.[11]

LaFollette never retracted any of his prewar statements. Nor did he make a point of insisting that he had been right and the administration wrong. Instead, LaFollette used the U.S. war effort as a platform from which to aim his invective at U.S. trusts, another of his and his father's favorite targets. His article condemned both Standard Oil and other "industrial empires" for creating shortages in "the tools of war necessary to victory" and urged Congress to pass a bill he and two other senators introduced to free essential patents for war production because "it is the duty of Congress to strip legal protection from fascist economic control and to free our people for the job of winning the war and preserving democracy at home."[12]

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, *The Progressive* began running a new column, "The War in Review." Fashioned after a similar column started by Morris Rubin in 1940, called "The Week in Review," this one provided a weekly update on World War II as it was fought in both the Pacific and Europe. "The War in Review" column dated April 25, 1942, gave accounts of U.S. bombs dropping on Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe and Nogoya; Gen. Douglas MacArthur's appointment as Commander in Chief of General Headquarters of the Southwest Pacific Area; the threat of a Japanese attack on India; the movements of the German army in Russia; and attempts by the new chief of the French Government, Pierre Laval, to negotiate a reconciliation with Germany. This column

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[11]Maney, 250.

[12]*The Progressive*, "The New Economic Warfare," April 25, 1942, 1.

focused on reporting the news while other columns in the twelve-page weekly were dedicated to interpreting the news.

Economist Stuart Chase, who interpreted the news for *The Progressive* for over twenty years, contributed a front-page article to the May 3, 1943, edition. In it, Chase recounted some headlines that appeared one day in one of the nation's leading newspapers and said, from the way the national news media was talking, the Allies should win the war hands down by 1944. The view from his "strategic armchair" however, was not so rosy. "[But] the trouble is that wars are not won with five-inch headlines. They are won with five-inch guns. I have pasted on the arm of my strategical armchair certain facts and questions which do not often appear in the headlines. I call this list: "Events we don't like to think much about." Chase went on to ask some of these questions. For example, "What is the arrangement between Russia and Japan?" and "How are we going to get at Japan without a springboard base in either Siberia or China?" The point that Chase made, using a heavy dose of skepticism, was that the national news media, unquestioningly filling its headlines and copy with only the positive news, was "taking the country for a ride—one of the most tragic rides in history."[13]

The front page prominence of Chase's article illustrated one of LaFollette Sr.'s fundamental directives for the magazine; to constantly question the news offered as truth by the national news media. The owners and editors of *The Progressive* understood this directive and asked questions like Chase's because they believed, as LaFollette Sr. had,

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[13]Stuart Chase, "This is Not Your Daily Headline (At Least, Not Often), *The Progressive*, May 3, 1943, 1.

that these questions seldom appeared as front-page articles--or articles of any kind--anywhere else. Other questions appeared in the April issue along with Chase's. Thad Snow asked "Why Are We Fighting?" and Frank C. Hanighen asked "Was It All A Dream?" Robert M. LaFollette Jr., raised questions about the United Nations food conference, wondering what all the secrecy was about, and Milton Mayer, another longtime contributor to *The Progressive*, asked "Who was responsible for the brutal assassination of American flyers captured by the Japanese government?" This question was also discussed on *The Progressive's* editorial page underneath Robert LaFollette Sr.'s banner, "Ye Shall Know The Truth And The Truth Shall Make You Free."

This method of presenting the news was not embraced by everyone, however. *The Progressive* received, and printed, its fair share of criticism during this period. Morris Rubin encouraged readers to write with their opinions. He even sponsored an "If I Were Editor" contest in April, 1943, and printed critical opinions received from contestants:

> One contestant thought we were "suckers not to be getting money from Hitler for trying to split the United Nations." Another recommended that we apply for Soviet decoration on the grounds that "you are more loyal to Stalin than to Roosevelt" while a chap in Boston felt that "the red-baiting in The Progressive smacks of medieval bigotry." A contender from Pittsburgh informed us that "if I were editor of The Progressive, I would throw in the towel, admit I didn't know anything about editing a magazine, and go to work scaling fish."[14]

Rubin said these types of letters were exceptions to a generally positive response from contestants (27 out of 612). However, there were other general criticisms from readers. One suggested that the magazine was too destructive and urged the editors to "keep on

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[14]Morris Rubin, The Editor Receives The Last Word Column, *The Progressive*, May 3, 1943, 12.

exposing evil but give us constructive alternates." Another reader said *The Progressive* lacked a sense of humor and asked that the editors not be so grim about everything. More variety was also requested. "The Progressive is too heavy on personal opinion," a reader complained, "too light on facts."

In response to constructive critical suggestions requesting a better quality of paper and more illustrations Rubin addressed the issue of financing. The editor said those suggestions "will have to be tucked away in our future book for the day The Progressive has a little more folding money."[15] Given that the LaFollette family, with some assistance from a few loyal subscribers, was still financing the magazine, the "future book" was to stay closed until 1948 when Rubin returned *The Progressive* to its original magazine format.

By June 12, 1944, the nation contemplated a presidential election in November. *The Progressive*, on this date, led with an article entitled "Tom Dewey: Politician In Grease Paint." Fred Rodell, a professor of law at Yale University, painted an unlikable portrait of the man seeking to oust Roosevelt. The professor began with this characterization:

> It is an American adage that any little boy may grow up to be president. If, as now seems not too unlikely, Thomas F. Dewey should become the 33rd President, the old adage would be imbued with new and still greater hope. It might read: Any little boy, even though he never really grows up, even though he carries into chronological maturity a second-rate mind and a complete absence of intellectual courage or conviction may become President – if only sufficiently smooth, sufficiently shrewd, and sufficiently ambitious.[16]

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[15]*Ibid.*

[16]Fred Rodell, "Tom Dewey: Politician in Grease Paint," *The Progressive*, June 12, 1944, 1.

Despite Young Bob's continued battles with the Roosevelt Administration regarding the President's policies at home and abroad, *The Progressive*, by publishing Rodell's article on Page 1, supported Roosevelt's bid for reelection in 1944, albeit in a backhanded manner.

The question of what challenges a post-war world was to face and of who would take over as Commander in Chief of the United States were frequently discussed in the pages of the weekly newspaper. Articles entitled "The Coming Showdown Against Fascism" and "Hitler Hopes for a Stalemate," outlined future challenges and those entitled "F.D.R.'s 'Great Design'" and "Dialogue on a Dilemma" spoke to the impending presidential election.

"The War In Review" column recounted the success of Dwight D. Eisenhower's D-Day invasion of Normandy and reported that the Allied forces were achieving initial success at all points of landing. Also included in the column was Pope Pious XII's address to a large crowd in Rome, one day after the city fell to the Allies. The Pope pleaded for peace, *The Progressive* reported, and expressed his thanks that Rome had been spared from destruction.[17]

"The Week In Review" column turned its attention to the debate over the shaping of American foreign policy. The editors reported that Secretary of State Cordell Hull invited the representatives of Britain, Russia and China to participate in conversations on a proposed postwar security organization, later to become the United Nations. Hull would

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[17] *Ibid.*

win the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in the creation of the UN.[18] Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Jr. said of the proposed organization, "I have made clear to all concerned that the future consideration of any plan worked out as a result of these conversations, the establishment of an organization, and the participation of the United States in it must depend upon the negotiation of just terms of peace."[19] With encouraging news predicting an imminent Allied victory in both Europe and Asia being reported, the tone of *The Progressive* took on a decidedly optimistic view.

The war in Europe was effectively ended when Adolph Hitler killed himself in a bunker in the ruins of Berlin on April 30, 1945. Berlin surrendered to the Russians May 2, and Germany capitulated May 7. The end of war in the Pacific came after President Harry S. Truman, who assumed the presidency immediately on Roosevelt's death April 12, 1945, opened the atomic age by ordering the use of two nuclear weapons against Hiroshima (Aug. 6) and Nagasaki (Aug. 9). A formal instrument of surrender was signed by the Japanese on Sept. 2, 1945.[20] By July 1945, the editorial content of *The Progressive* was dedicated largely to reporting on the progress of the peace conference in Potsdam attended by Harry Truman, Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin.

Progressive writer Kenneth Crawford contrasted the peace negotiations to what was occurring in Washington, where the Senate debated whether to ratify the United Nations

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[18]Bernard Grun, *The Timetables of History, A Horizontal Linkage of People and Events* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 1945, History and Politics. There are no page numbers in Grun's book, therefore the year and subject heading are cited.

[19]*The Progressive*, June 12, 1944, 3.

[20]Roberts, 772. Grun, 1945, History and Politics.

charter drawn up at San Francisco. The charter needed to be approved by two-thirds of the Senate before its ratification. Crawford said he was puzzled as to why serious publications were transposing the importance of these two events when, to him it seemed that "Unless the leaders of the 3 nations that own the big guns can settle some of the world's most pressing problems at Potsdam, unless they can get along as peaceful bargainers, the San Francisco charter isn't worth the paper it is written on. . ."[21] Crawford discussed his opinions about the major players' strategies toward peace and concluded by telling readers "Anyone who wants to know what is going on in the world these next few weeks, and what will go on in the years to come, will do well to watch Potsdam instead of Washington."[22] The remaining pages of this issue of *The Progressive*, with the exception of "The War In Review" column, explored the changing nature of the post-war world from a domestic perspective.

"The Week In Review" column included a more factually based account of the proceedings in the Senate on the UN charter than was provided in Crawford's front page opinion piece. It noted that Senate ratification of the charter by an overwhelming majority was expected after the Foreign Relations Committee voted to pass it 21 to 1. Also included in this column was a review of a "significant report" by a subcommittee on Education and Labor that urged the War Labor Board to meet the substandard wage problem and that Congress act on the LaFollette-Pepper proposal to make 65 cents an

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[21]Kenneth Crawford, "The Peacemakers At Potsdam," *The Progressive*, July 23, 1945, 1.

[22]*Ibid.*

hour the minimum wage.[23] This was one of the last proposals Sen. LaFollette Jr. introduced in the Senate. In 1946, Young Bob lost his Senate seat to Joseph McCarthy, effectively ending the LaFollette family's political dynasty.

The Progressive, with its roots firmly imbedded in the principles and personalities of the movement, survived the death of another of its most devoted patrons. Young Bob committed suicide in 1953. The magazine forged ahead, however, holding firm its non-interventionist commitment throughout the 1950s and into the turbulent decade of the 1960s.

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[23]*The Progressive*, July 23, 1945, 3.

CHAPTER 6

Vietnam
(1955-1975)

Risen from newcomer to one of the world's two dominant powers in fifty years, we are once again at war, no longer fresh and untrained, but an old hand, skilled, practiced, massively equipped, sophisticated in method, yet infirm of purpose, and without a goal that anyone can define. Is this the destiny to which that first experience has led us?

-Barbara Tuchman, *New York Times Magazine*, 1967

The standard, if cursory, view of the war in Vietnam holds that it lasted from 1955 to 1975. This twenty-year period reflects the United States' most significant involvement in the conflict between North and South Vietnam. Nine years earlier the United States was involved in a different conflict involving the French and the Vietminh. The French were attempting to reassert control over Indochina and the conflict engulfed the region in a colonial war. The United States supported France by providing an arsenal of weapons, but not troops. Fighting broke out between the French and the Vietminh in 1946 and continued until 1954, when the French were badly defeated in the battle of Dien Bien Phu. An international conference was convened in Geneva in 1954 to negotiate a cease fire. The result of the conference was an end to French rule in IndoChina and the establishment of the independent states of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.[1]

[1]J.M. Roberts, *History of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 823-847. See also, O. Edmond Clubb, "Lesson of Laos," *The Progressive*, May 1961, 8-12.

The proposed settlement was intended to unite all citizens of the three independent states, including the Communist-influenced military force, Pathet Lao, as one nation. Laos was to represent a neutral buffer state between Thailand on the west and North Vietnam on the east. The signatories of the Geneva accords (including the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China) agreed to "refrain from any interference" in the internal affairs of the new states. The United States did not sign the final accords, claiming it did not believe that the Vietminh had achieved "victory" or that the Pathet Lao should have been allowed to exert its influence any further.[2]

Vietnam was America's most socially divisive war largely for the reason Barbara Tuchman addressed in the quote prefacing this chapter, written at the midpoint of the war, May 5, 1967. Few Americans, at this time, understood why U.S. troops intervened in Vietnam but many supported U.S. governmental policies. As early as May 1961, *The Progressive* took a firm stand against the war in Vietnam and did not waver in its position for the next fourteen years. The sample issues from the Vietnam period begin in 1959, because the researcher concluded that American involvement was pursued more vigorously by President Kennedy's Administration than by President Eisenhower's. Although Eisenhower was responsible for engaging America in the conflict in 1955, it was not until 1962 that Kennedy, continuing with Eisenhower's policy, sent not only financial and material support, but also four thousand American "advisers" to help South Vietnam.[3]

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[2]*Ibid.*, Clubb, 8.

[3]Roberts, 485.

Magazine Content During the Vietnam War

By February 1960, the United States had been pursuing its agenda in Vietnam for six years, but the February 1960 issue of *The Progressive* made no mention of the political maneuverings taking place in IndoChina. However, by February 1961, the size of the U.S. military contingent in South Vietnam had grown to four thousand, and this increased involvement on the part of the United States did not go unnoticed by the national news media, which included *The Progressive.* In the seventeen issues analyzed between 1959 and 1976, thirty-six articles, editorials and columns were written in opposition to the war in Vietnam.

The most comprehensive of the articles were written by O. Edmund Club, who served in the foreign service in Asia for two decades and was a former director of the Office of Chinese Affairs in the U.S. State Department. In "The Lesson of Laos," Clubb charted the history of U.S. involvement in IndoChina dating back to its disapproval of the 1954 Geneva proceedings and warned, prophetically, that continued "blundering diplomacy" on the part of the United States was weakening its position throughout all Southeast Asia. He wrote:

> The Geneva settlement provided that Laos, in particular, might maintain strictly limited military relations with France, but stipulated that it was not to enter into any other military alliance and that, prior to the settlement of its political problems, it might not accept foreign military assistance, whether in the form of arms, personnel, or military instructors. There was no exception made for the benefit of the United States, although we were soon to play the game–and a dangerous one it was–of pretending we had a special permit to destroy Laos' neutrality.[4]

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[4]O. Edmond Clubb, "The Lesson of Laos," *The Progressive*, May 1961, 8.

Clubb's foretelling continued: "The developments that loom in the offing threaten to have far-reaching and deleterious consequences for the United States position in Southeast Asia."[5]

If Vietnam in 1961 was a 'conflict,' by April 1962 it was beginning to look and sound like a war. In "Trap in Vietnam" (April 1962), Clubb quoted several correspondents on assignment in Saigon who confirmed that the United States was solidly committed "to defeat the North Vietnamese Communists' guerilla attack on South Vietnam at all costs."[6] The opening editorial of *The Progressive* also addressed the situation in Vietnam. The editorial excerpted a passage from an article by Chester Bowles, Special Representative Adviser to the President on African, Asian and Latin American Affairs, in which the author explained the purpose of Kennedy's reshaped foreign aid program:

> The purpose of the new program is to give special inducements to those governments which are determined to develop their own resources, to institute internal reforms, and to allow greater individual opportunity and justice with maximum freedom of choice. . . . Its primary purpose is on economic aid instead of military aid. . .[7]

Bowles' words, the editors said, did not describe the administration's deeds in South Vietnam:

> Here, clearly, are the basic ingredients of a meaningful foreign aid program. But the very opposite of every one of them is being employed today in the area of our deepest involvement--South Vietnam. We are pouring billions of dollars and sending thousands of American boys to prop up a government which is determined not to institute internal reforms, not to

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[5]*Ibid.*, 11.

[6]Edmond O. Clubb, "Trap in Vietnam," *The Progressive*, April 1962, 17.

[7]"Words and Deeds," *The Progressive*, April 1962, 3.

> allow greater individual opportunity and justice with maximum freedom of choice. And our primary emphasis is military aid, not economic aid.[8]

The editorial makes a parenthetical reference to Clubb's article at the end of this paragraph, suggesting to the reader that Clubb's review of the situation supported this point.

Clubb brought *The Progressive's* readers up to date on "The increasing involvement of the United States in the little Asian country of South Vietnam. . ."[9] and again suggested caution because the state of affairs was "a haunting echo of similar episodes in our recent history."[10] He referred to the escalating number of military personnel and the United States' contribution of "substantial quantities of military equipment–particularly military planes."[11] Clubb reported that in May 1961, one month after the U.S. invasion of Cuba–remembered as the Bay of Pigs attack–on April 17, Vice President Lyndon Johnson made a Far Eastern tour. At the end of Johnson's visit to Saigon, he and Premier Ngo Dinh Diem, president of South Vietnam, issued a joint communique in the names of their respective governments. Clubb quoted the communique in which the two governments agreed "to extend and build upon existing programs of military and economic aid. . ."[12] The agreement did not go through conventional channels, however. It was not submitted to the U.S. Senate for ratification because it was not a treaty but an executive

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[8]*Ibid.*

[9]Clubb, "Trap in Vietnam," 16.

[10]*Ibid.*

[11]*Ibid.*

[12]*Ibid.*, 17.

agreement. The decision had been made to engage in a military conflict in South Vietnam without consulting Congress or the American people. Two questions now faced the American people: "With all the military, economic, and financial aid we are to provide, and tactical and strategic advice from General Harkins' (head of the new U.S. military command in Saigon) command, can Ngo Dinh Diem's government win the war against the Viet Cong rebels? If Diem cannot win, can we?"[13] Clubb reminded his readers that the French lost a similar battle in Vietnam and suggested that the Kennedy Administration learn from that defeat. Clubb concluded:

> It is hoped that when the time comes we shall not choose to persist in our present unilateral course, but will consent to negotiate with others interested in the fate of Southeast Asia. International action leading to a peaceful political solution would provide a firm foundation for implementation of a program of genuine economic and social reforms–to the benefit of all concerned. History would seem to teach, on the other hand, that even the mighty United States cannot arbitraruily impose its own solution in Vietnam.[14]

Two editorial cartoons appeared within Clubb's article that helped illustrate the author's discussion of escalating U.S. involvement and the nature of agreements being pursued in Vietnam. The first cartoon, reprinted from *The Greensboro Daily News*, was an illustration of President Kennedy, Uncle Sam and the symbol of the democrats, a donkey, up to their necks in water in a rice paddy. The caption read, "How much are we really involved here?"[15] The second, reprinted from *The Nashville Banner*, pictured an army helmet being blown off the ground by an explosion. Atop of the helmet, trying to hold

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[13]*Ibid.*, 18.

[14]*Ibid.*, 20.

[15]*Ibid.*, 17.

it in place, was Lyndon Johnson. A sign, affixed to the helmet, read "censorship." Another sign, in the foreground of the explosion, read "Viet Nam." The caption on the cartoon read "Secret War?"[16]

The June 1964 *Progressive* marked a cooling period on the discussion of the Vietnam war. The opening editorial made a passing comment about the war, in the larger discussion of Lyndon Johnson's bid for reelection in a year in which "Republican candidates and strategists had proclaimed their determination to make foreign policy the dominant issue in this year's campaign."[17] The remaining pages of the magazine contain articles written about a wide variety of subjects including Henry Cabot Lodge, Lyndon Johnson and his negotiations with the FCC to gain control of a radio station in Texas, Malcolm X, the Cold War and Medicare.

By July 1965, ten years after the United States became involved in Vietnam, *The Progressive's* editors noted in a two-page editorial that the situation in Vietnam was racing out of control. The editors called for public hearings, followed by Congressional debate, to provide "creative insights and new directions to replace threadbare policies that have manifestly failed."[18]

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[16]*Ibid.*, 19. The reprinting of editorial cartoons was a practice begun by founder Robert M. LaFollette. It was a cheap method of including art in the publication that was perpetually strapped for money. Besides, art was never much of a concern to *The Progressive's* editors, it was words that held weight with both them and their readers. Erwin Knoll, who took over as editor from Morris Rubin in 1973, said the layout of the magazine was changed in August 1981 to engage the interest of younger readers.

[17]"At Water's Edge," *The Progressive*, Number 6, June 1964, 3.

[18]"The Moment of Truth," *The Progressive*, July 1965, 3.

In the remaining years of Rubin's tenure, from 1966 to 1973, the United States deepened its involvement in the war in Vietnam, and *The Progressive* continued to strongly profess its dissatisfaction with the Johnson and Nixon administration's pursuit of victory. "The question facing the country [is simply this:] Do we ride our present escalation policy to its logical conclusion--full scale land war in Asia--or do we pause at this fateful moment to make a supreme effort to achieve a cease-fire as a preliminary to negiotiated settlement?"[19] There was no pause, and in fact, the war in Vietnam endured beyond Morris Rubin's tenure as editor of *The Progressive*.

Erwin Knoll thus became editor in September 1973. Two years would pass before the evacuation of U.S. troops and civilians from the roof of the U.S. embassy in Saigon in 1975, which marked the end of the war in Vietnam. In those two years, Knoll continued to espouse LaFollette's firmly held belief that war and militarism were unacceptable means of resolving human conflict.

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[19]"The Moment of Truth," *The Progressive*, July 1965, 3.

CHAPTER 7

Persian Gulf War
(January - April 1991)

"Like a juggernaut rumbling mindlessly toward its target, the buildup of U.S. armed forces in the Middle East continues, accompanied by bellicose chanting of the war drums at home and abroad. Clearly the Bush Administration is spoiling for a military showdown. Among those who have access to the Administration's war plans, the only real disagreement seems to be over when the bloodshed will begin."

-*The Progressive*, November 1990

Fifteen years and five presidents after the close of the Vietnam war, the United States again ventured into an international conflict. On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded its neighbor, the oil-rich nation of Kuwait, seizing control of Kuwait City. The White House, along with the Soviet Union, Britain and Lebanon, strongly condemned the invasion and called for immediate Iraqi withdrawal. The United Nations Security Council convened an emergency session at the request of Kuwait and the United States. American public opinion compared the politics surrounding American involvement in the Persian Gulf to Vietnam, and the arguments for and against engaging in war began to divide the nation once again. By September, President George Bush decided to send U.S. troops to defend neighboring Saudi Arabia. The Pentagon called the defense plan Operation Desert Shield. On January 5, 1991, Bush told Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops at once or face terrible consequences. Saddam responded that U.S. troops would "swim in their own blood" if they attacked Iraq. A United Nations deadline for Iraqi withdrawal was set for January 15. If withdrawal did not occur, then an invasion was assured. Iraq ignored

the deadline. On January 16, 1991, President Bush announced his decision to initiate combat in the Persian Gulf. Operation Desert Storm, the name given to the United States' attack, ensued the following day. Five weeks later, with Kuwaiti oil fields ablaze, the United States launched a ground offensive, which led to the declaration of a cease-fire in the Persian Gulf War March 3, 1991.[1]

Prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, *The Progressive* had continued to address current affairs from its left-wing perch. A review of the twenty-four issues published between January 1990 and December 1991 revealed that Editor Erwin Knoll directed the magazine along a path that consistently wound its way through political, activist, agricultural, environmental, social, economic, educational, cultural, legal, international and civil and human rights issues (includes minority issues), in addition to topics involving the media and corporate business and industry. By September 1990 though, events in the Persian Gulf were given an increasing amount of editorial attention.

Magazine Content During the Persian Gulf War

From September 1990 to April 1991, *The Progressive*, true to its heritage, published forty-six editorials, articles and columns firmly denouncing the Bush Administrations actions in the Persian Gulf, an average of seven articles a month. No articles, editorials or columns appeared in support of the administration's policies in the Gulf.

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[1]BBC World Service, *Gulf Crisis Chronology* (London: Longman Group, 1991), 3, 18, 145, 285.

Shortly after U.S. troops were deployed to Saudi Arabia *The Progressive* firmly declared its continued commitment to nonintervention.

> At *The Progressive*, we proudly uphold the tradition of nonintervention. We believe the United States has no divine right, no high moral claim, to act as world policeman.[2]

These words opened the debate over American involvement in the Persian Gulf in the pages of the magazine. *The Progressive's* editors then invoked the history of American involvement in the Vietnam war recalling

> when Lyndon Johnson took to Congress a fabricated confrontation in the Gulf of Tonkin and received instant approval of a blank check to wage war in Indochina, a couple of Senators–only a couple–had the decency and good sense to say No.[3]

This time around, the editorial pointed out, George Bush did not consult Congress before committing U.S. troops "to an overseas adventure that could prove to be as pernicious, painful, and costly as the Vietnam war. And Congress cheered."[4]

The role Congress and the mass media played in gathering support for Bush's decision, especially Congressional Democrats, was viewed with contempt by *The Progressive's* editors.

> Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, the Minority Whip, proclaimed, 'There is a sense of awe at how brilliantly Bush has handled this.'
> Forgive us, please; we are not awed.
> We are appalled–appalled that once again the U.S. Government has resorted to military force to impose Washington's notions of how the world

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[2]"On the Wrong Side," *The Progressive*, September 1990, 6.

[3]"Bring the Troops Home," *The Progressive*, October 1990, 6-8. This editorial appeared in the Comment section of *The Progressive*, which is where most of its editorials are run. The Comment section generally runs about 3 to 4 pages.

[4]*Ibid.*

> ought to be run; appalled at the monumental hypocrisy of the rhetoric emanating from the Bush Administration and dutifully relayed, with little question or analysis, by its faithful mouthpieces in the mass media; appalled by the eagerness of members of Congress--and especially liberal Democrats--to abdicate their constitutional responsibilities; appalled at our Government's willingness to shed blood--the blood of our own soldiers and of Arab soldiers and civilians--in the quest for economic and political advantage.[5]

Political columnist Molly Ivins, a regular contributor to *The Progressive*, had some of her own questions about the Gulf crisis. Specifically, "Who are those idiots advocating an attack on Iraq? In the name of God, Why? We've stopped Saddam Hussein, we've got him surrounded and cut off, so now we let him negotiate the best deal he can: He's not holding any cards, what have we got to lose?"[6] Ivins questioned the logic of the Bush Administration's policy in the Gulf because, "Everyone who has ever lost someone he or she loved in a war has an obligation to talk back to these chest-thumping jackasses who are so anxious to get other people's sons killed."[7] Ivin's contributed another piece in March 1991. With hindsight, Ivin's commented upon how strange it all was.

> Then it became surreal. One began to get the first understanding of what it will be like to get all our information from the military. Pin-point, precision, surgical bombing. Thousands of sorties. We have established air superiority. Oh, good, the war's gonna be a walk. Go, guys, go. Then Scuds start landing on Tel Aviv and Riyadh. But, amazing to report, no one gets hurt. Magic missiles, they land in crowded cities and no one gets hurt. And our missiles kill their missiles, let's hear it for the military-industrial complex. Oops, more incoming, and now they kill, and we wish we could go back to pretending they didn't.[8]

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[5]*Ibid.*

[6]Molly Ivins, "The Golf...er, Gulf...Crisis," *The Progressive*, October 1990, 46.

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]Molly Ivins, "Super Bowl in the Sand," *The Progressive*, March 1991, 46.

Editorials and articles published during the war discussed the "Gulf Crisis" from a number of different perspectives. *Progressive* Managing Editor Linda Rocawich profiled General Norman Schwarzkopf, U.S. commander of operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.[9] Jennie Anderson, an editorial intern, reported on some men and women who refused to serve in the Persian Gulf War. "While their situations vary," Anderson wrote, "their message is clear–they will not risk their lives for cheap oil."[10] A January editorial debunked the Bush Administrations' "propoganda offensive designed to revive faltering enthusiasm and win support for the unsupportable," by arguing that the threat of nuclear attack by Iraq was a myth.

> First, most experts on nuclear proliferation believe Iraq isn't even close to becoming a nuclear power. . . Second, Saddam Hussein couldn't use a nuclear weapon without annhilating himself and his own country. . . . Third, even an Iraq armed with a few primitive nuclear weapons poses no threat to the United States. . . . Fourth, Why should Saddam Hussein's nuclear threat be perceived as singularly dangerous? Are the five original nuclear powers–the United States, Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union–to be trusted with nuclear weapons?. . . Finally, those who perpetrate the nuclear hoax display an astonishingly callous disregard for human life. They urge that we go to war right now, perhaps sacrificing hundreds of thousands of lives. They prefer the certainty of mass death today to the possibility–and a remote possibility at that–of mass death many years from now. That's an immoral and illogical choice.[11]

Congress drew more criticism from the magazine's editors in February 1991. *The Progressive's* editors had grown tired of watching Congress ignore the war issue and in "Vestigial Congress," the editor's called Congress's behavior shameful. From the outset of

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[9]Linda Rocawich, "The General In Charge," *The Progressive*, January 1991, 18-21.

[10]Jennie Anderson, "Some Troops Who Won't Go," *The Progressive*, January 1991, 22-24.

[11]"The Propoganda War," *The Progressive*, January 1991, 8-10.

the Gulf Crisis, the editors wrote, Congressional leaders had been in headlong flight from their responsibilities. The editorial concluded with this reminder "if, as seems ever more likely, the criminally stupid rush toward war proves irreversible, the Congress will richly deserve much of the blame."[12]

The February issue went to press only days before the January 15 deadline for Iraqi withdrawal. The editors noted that, in the United States, support for war had swiftly faded over the preceeding five months and that a peace movement of considerable proportions had begun to form. The article following this editorial, "Missoula to U.S.: 'No Blood for Oil'," highlighted the actions of one such movement in Missoula, Montana. From another perspective, that of media coverage, Debbie Nathan wrote about the Pentagon's manipulation of the press corps, which tried to cover the movements of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. Nathan noted that it was not the first time the Pentagon had made press coverage difficult.

> The policy seemed to be an improvement over the one followed in Grenada in 1983, when reporters were barred from the island during the invasion, and in Panama in 1989, when the Southern Command at first isolated the press pool from combat areas. Now though, a growing number of reporters complain that the military is censoring sources, discouraging national press access to the field, and squelching critical coverage in favor of 'Hi Mom' reporting aimed at boosting pro-war sentiment at home.[13]

The fourth article in the February issue related to the Gulf War, "Blame the Arabs," discussed the growing bigotry toward Arab families in the United States caused by rising tensions in the Gulf. Editorial intern, Jennie Anderson profiled a Palestinian

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[12]"Vestigial Congress," *The Progressive*, February 1991, 7.

[13]Debbie Nathan, "Just the Good News, Please," *The Progressive*, February 1991, 25.

family, the Husseins, who had been the targets of constant harassment since Sept. 1990. "The Hussiens had never before encountered any hostility from their neighbors. But things have changed. Recently one neighbor told Hussein, 'If my oldest son sees your children, he is going to run them over.'"[14]

In March *The Progressive* launched an assault of its own. Employing a tactic often used by founder Robert M. LaFollette, an editorial appeared on the front cover of the magazine under the headline, "The War Some Wanted." On the inside of the magazine the editors published a collection entitled "Voices of Reason." Nine authors, including Phillip Berrigan, Noam Chomsky, Daniel Ellsberg, Saul Landau, and Jim Wallis contributed articles, each of which discussed the need for peace in the Persian Gulf. In total, the magazine devoted twenty-nine pages of the forty-six page March issue to articles and editorials calling for an end to the Persian Gulf War. On March 3, about two weeks after the March issue hit the newsstands, the war came to a close. *The Progressive* was not done with its commentary, however.

"America Triumphant," the first editorial to appear in *The Progressive* after the cease-fire was declared, mocked America's celebration of victory in the Gulf War.

> Oh what a lovely war! Short and sweet and ever so victorious. . . . We don't know and we'll never know how many dead and wounded. . . . But no matter; what's 100,000 or 200,000 or whatever when a New World Order is aborning? What difference does it make that a nation has been destroyed? It's celebration time!"[15]

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[14]Jennie Anderson, "Blame the Arabs: Tensions in the Gulf bring bigotry at home," *The Progressive*, February 1990, 28.

[15]"America Triumphant," *The Progressive*, April 1991, 8.

In hindsight, and sparing no bitterness, the editors revisited the justification given by the Bush Administration for waging war in the Gulf and asked "What happened to the formidable Iraqi threat? *The Progressive's* answer: There never was a threat. In addition, they said, the Iraqi impotence came as no surprise to many Western experts who "say they knew all along that Iraq could deliver nothing more than conventional ordnance–and couldn't do that very well."[16] This notion led to another question by the editors which was, "Why didn't those experts speak up sooner–at least to spare Israelis the fright of shoving their children into gas masks and locking them into sealed rooms?"[17]

In addition to this editorial, three columns, "On the Line," "Pundit Watch," and Reflections," addressed different aspects of the war. "On the Line" reported about the Gulf Crisis TV Project, a series produced by peace activists around the nation, which began airing in November 1990. In "Pundit Watch," Peter Dykstra, national media director for Greenpeace, commented upon "War Reporting Trends and Fads." Dykstra marveled at how the strengths and weaknesses of U.S. media coverage during the Gulf War seemed more visible at times than the war itself. Gar Alperovitz, president of the National Center for Economic Alternatives, was the featured writer in "Reflections," a semi-regular feature in *The Progressive*. Alperovitz explored "What the War Says About Us," and concluded that the United States was only beginning to confront the deeper issues illuminated by the Gulf crisis, which, he said, are,

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[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

> the feeble nature of America's structure of constitutional accountability, the power of our national-security institutions and the military-industrial complex, the dangerous influence of corporate interest groups, the expansionist commercial dynamic of our capitalist system, our society's extraordinary commitment to materialism, and the profound violence at the very core of our culture.[18]

Michael Klare's feature-length analysis of the Gulf War, "One, Two, Many Iraqs," found that the United States not only sought to destroy Iraq's military capabilities, but waged a war of annihilation. Klare, associate professor of peace and world-security studies at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, and a frequent contributor to *The Progressive*, wrote that it was not the present Iraqi threat that the Bush Administration wanted to destroy, but rather, any future threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Klare said the fact that Iraq was a third-world country not under U.S. control, and therefore a potential enemy of American interests, was another source of concern to U.S. policymakers. In intervening in the Persian Gulf, the Bush Administration hoped to send a message to other third-world countries that there was a "New World Order" and that the United States was leading it. These, then, were the real reasons for waging war in the Persian Gulf. However, although the resounding victory in the Persian Gulf may have vindicated the Bush Administration's intervention policy, Klare warned that it would be "a terrible mistake to assume that challenges to U.S. domination will disappear. In fact, the opposite is likely to be the case, though the form such challenges will take is not yet clear."[19]

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[18]Gar Alperovitz, "What the War Says About Us," *The Progressive*, April 1991, 18-19.

[19]Michael Klare, "One, Two, Many Iraqs," *The Progressive*, April 1991, 20-23.

The Progressive also included a piece that reviewed the war from a financial standpoint. Bernard D. Nossiter, an economist and author, said the timing of the Gulf war was exquisite from an economic standpoint. Just when it looked as if the United States would slide into its eighth postwar recession, the situation in the Gulf heated up. While acknowledging that there is no evidence that President Bush launched the war to stimulate a flagging economy and to keep oil prices from escalating, Nossiter implied that this theory was not without merit with Bush facing election in less than two years.[20]

The Progressive ended its analysis of the Persian Gulf War with another regular feature. "The Progressive Interview" featured Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General turned anti-war activist. Claudia Dreifus, a freelance writer who often contributes to "The Progressive Interview" section, spoke with Clark about his impressions of the Persian Gulf War. Dreifus asked Clark why he went to Iraq before the shooting started:

> I went because, as an American, I've been concerned about our proclivity to war. In this case, because we had established from the beginning a principle of no dialogue, no communication, I accepted an invitation from the Iraqi government to go over and see if there was anything an individual could do to open up communication. . . . I did not go seeking a dozen hostages to bring back, but to make the argument, 'If you want peace, you shouldn't hold foreigners hostage.'[21]

The Progressive, guided by Knoll, consistently opposed intervention in Kuwait from the moment U.S. troops were deployed to Saudi Arabia to the end of Operation Desert Storm. Prior to the Gulf War *The Progressive's* circulation had dropped to 26,000. Since

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[20]Bernard Nossiter, "Sand Dollars, Who nets what from the war?," *The Progressive*, April 1991.

[21]Claudia Dreifus, "The *Progressive* Interview: Ramsey Clark" *The Progressive*, April 1991, 32-35.

then, it has risen steadily. Currently, the magazine's circulation numbers around 36,000. Knoll acknowledged that the Gulf War had a positive effect on the magazine's circulation.

> We were early and firmly outspoken against the Gulf War. There weren't that many people out there doing that and so for those people who felt the way we did, that was a draw for readers and our circulation picked up.[22]

The magazine's constant pacifist position yielded positive results.

Since the end of the Persian Gulf War, the staff of *The Progressive* have maintained LaFollette's legacy by continuing to approach societal issues from a progressive perspective.

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[22]Knoll, interview with the author, July 13, 1993, Madison, Wisc.

CHAPTER 8

Summary, Further Research and Conclusions

Disgusted by political corruption in the national Republican Party, Robert LaFollette left Washington and returned to his home state of Wisconsin. In six years as governor, LaFollette championed a reform program based upon Progressivism, a movement gaining prominence in the early twentieth century. The progressive movement in the United States was led by men and women, provoked by Victorian greed, who sought to apply Protestant morality to the social, industrial, political and aesthetic problems of society.

After his election to the U.S. Senate in 1906, LaFollette engendered a variety of platforms, mainly political, from which he addressed his vision of progressive reform. In the course of this development, LaFollette discovered a need for a publication that would give both his ideas, and those of other prominent progressives, wider exposure. Much research has been published concerning LaFollette, his family and political movement. This thesis, however, is the
first study to analyze exclusively the magazine LaFollette founded to publicize his reform efforts.

LaFollette's Weekly Magazine emerged in 1909 as the pulpit from which LaFollette railed against corruption in government, public utilities, railroads, corporate business and against American involvement in World War I. As public servant and magazine editor,

LaFollette believed his mission was to expose "the truth." It was in the truth that his constituents would find the means to take back the power of democratic government that had been lost to them. This was one defining aspect of *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine's* editorial agenda. The second, which provided the framework for this study, was LaFollette's pacifism. From his seat in the U.S. Senate, LaFollette seized every opportunity to oppose President Woodrow Wilson's policies concerning the United States' role in the First World War. He gave many speeches on the subject and published a number of them in *LaFollette's Weekly* from 1915 to 1919. LaFollette's opposition to World War I nearly cost him his Senate seat, but even such a reprisal did not cause him to waver in his principles. He remained certain the war did not serve the public interest. And it was the public's interest, not the president's, to which LaFollette remained faithful to his death in 1925.

The objective of this study was to test the validity of Erwin Knoll's statement, made in 1989, that the "fundamental principles that undergird this magazine's editorial stance have remained remarkably consistent" throughout the years following LaFollette's death. In analyzing one of those fundamental principles–the rejection of militarism and war as ways of resolving human conflict–over a period of eighty years and four wars, the researcher found that Knoll's statement was valid and that this consistency contributed greatly to the survival *The Progressive.*

Suggestions for Further Research

Throughout the course of research on this topic, the author discovered some additional areas for further study related to this subject. The first concerns LaFollette's influence on Woodrow Wilson's plan for a League of Nations. LaFollette's Peace Resolution shared some common goals with Wilson's League and yet Wilson opposed LaFollette's Resolution in 1915. And, when Wilson's League was proposed in 1919, LaFollette helped to block its adoption by the Senate. What caused this ironic turn of events? Although they often opposed one another on the issue opf American involvement in the war, Wilson and LaFollette shared a common progressive ideology regarding the need for peace and political and economic reform. Was it simply political rivalry which prevented them from supporting each others ideas? Was it timing? These questions and others involving Wilson and LaFollette's relationship would be interesting in pursue in a research paper.

Another subject, linked more directly to *The Progressive* magazine, is William T. Evjue's ideological switch from supporting American non-intervention in the First World War to supporting American involvement in World War II. What prompted this change? Was there a personal reason for his opposition to the LaFollette brother's stance on the war? Evjue served as editor of *The Progressive* for twelve years while simultaneously running the *Capital Times*. What effect did this editorial time-sharing have on both publications?

Belle Case LaFollette's contribution to *LaFollette's Weekly* also deserving of research. Case LaFollette may have been more responsible for the magazine's survival than was her husband. This is the impression given by Bernard A. Weisberger in his book

The LaFollette's of Wisconsin: Love and Politics in Progressive America, published in 1994. Case LaFollette often chided her husband for not fulfilling his responsibilities to the magazine. It would be interesting to learn what more she did to keep the magazine in publication.

Conclusions

The researcher arrived at the following conclusions through a qualitative analysis of selected content and not through any scientific means. However, a careful record of issues and opinions was kept throughout of the shifts in both perspective and in the issues addressed in the magazine. This record was interpreted by the researcher and presented in an historical narrative format because this is the style preferred by the researcher.

The Progressive's editorial compass has remained fixed, in part, because there have been few hands at the helm. Only four people have been responsible for the magazine's editorial leadership in its eighty-five year history. Each of them shared similar political ideologies, which included a commitment to LaFollette's fundamental principles regarding the magazine's editorial content. After LaFollette's death, the Senator's sons, Robert Jr. and Philip, kept the magazine true to its founding course of non-interventionism (with the exception of a short period during World War II when William T. Evjue served as editor), and maintained its consistency by installing Morris Rubin as editor in 1940. Rubin, in turn, hand-picked his successor, Erwin Knoll. LaFollette served as editor from 1909 to his death in 1925. Evjue was editor from 1928 to 1940. Knoll and Rubin's combined tenure equals fifty-four years. This consistency in editorial leadership undoubtedly

contributed to the consistency of the magazine's opinions, which, in turn, attracted readers.

The decision was made to use selected war coverage of *The Progressive* as the content examined in this thesis to illustrate how editorial agenda are formulated. LaFollette defined his magazine's editorial agenda regarding militarism and war when he took a firm stand against American involvement in World War I. It is often the case that the owner of a given media outlet sets the agenda for their publication. It is more often the case with smaller publications like *The Progressive* that these agendas are maintained throughout the history of the publication.

Over time, *The Progressive* has evolved into a more balanced publication. As was stated in the body of the thesis, LaFollette used his magazine as a platform with which to publicize his reform efforts. After LaFollette's death, his sons also used the publication as a political tool, however, Editor Morris Rubin provided a balance during this period that was not present when LaFollette Sr. served as editor. During the 1960s and 1970s *The Progressive* continued to present issues from a decidedly left of center perspective, however, the editors were more likely to address the whole issue and not just the pieces that fit their argument, as was the tendency in previous years. Under Editor Erwin Knoll, *The Progressive* has not wavered from its commitment to progressive ideals, but has adapted those ideals to address contemporary issues such as protection of the environment, governmental abuse, the business practices of multi-national corporations and civil rights. Thus, the arguments and opinions presented in the magazine today, while still based upon progressive principles, reflect a broader perspective which readers can use

to explore their own opinions.

The Progressive has maintained a loyal subscription base but also has continually sought new subscribers. Although the subscription base has grown little since LaFollette's tenure, in the last fifty-four years Rubin and Knoll have attracted engaging commentaries from around the world and thereby widened the scope of the magazine's influence further than LaFollette may have ever imagined. Today, *The Progressive* reaches subscribers in every U.S. state and in 54 foreign countries. This diversity and scope has also been an essential factor in *The Progressive's* longevity.

The Progressive appears to have survived, in large part, because its consistent opinions on war and peace have been embraced by subscribers who valued the ideological nature of these opinions (and others) and who loyally supported the magazine with contributions through some of its leanest times. This conclusion was drawn without the assistance of readership surveys; however, given the information found in editorials and provided by *The Progressive's* editorial staff, the researcher believed this to be a logical and sound conclusion. This causation was incompletely examined. A study employing a more quantitative perspective might more completely assess this.

Even so, this study not only provides some understanding of how and why *The Progressive* survives, but also provides some insight about some of the personalities who contributed to its survival in the last eighty-five years. Clearly, more than four people contributed to the success of *The Progressive*; however, for this brief study it was necessary to focus on the editorial leadership to understand the content analyzed.

Initially, the greatest problem experienced by the researcher was in narrowing the

study to a managable size for a Masters thesis. The prospect of writing a complete history of *The Progressive* was a tantalizing one, however, it was also unrealistic. After several conversations with both *Progressive* staff members and MSU faculty members the researcher decided that the question of how the magazine had survived for eighty-five years could be answered, in part, by looking at one subject over several periods. LaFollette's ideology concerning war led the researcher to choose the topic of war coverage in the magazine as a theme. Unfortunately this decision was made after conducting interviews with *Progressive* staff members. However, the topic was raised by Editor Erwin Knoll during and after the researchers visit to Madison and thus, did not present any obstacles to pursuing the topic. Given an opportunity to do the study again, the researcher would have conducted the interviews after a final decision was made about what content was to be analyzed.

Another difficulty the researcher experienced was in maintaining an objective perspective throughout the one-year period of study. As a subscriber to *The Progressive* for three years prior to undertaking this project, the researcher had already formed some opinions about the magazine. Those opinions had to be set aside. This is, of course, an issue that all professional journalists must face at one time or another and it proved to be a valuable learning experience for the researcher.

This thesis provides a basis for further research. It is by no means comprehensive, yet it reveals a great deal about the history of the magazine through its analysis of Progressivism, the origin of *The Progressive*, LaFollette's principles and his successors devotion to LaFollette's firm belief that war and militarism were unacceptable means of

resolving human conflict.

Although *The Progressive* is just one piece of LaFollette's legacy, it remains an important piece because it has survived the test of time in a field where periodicals regularly close their doors after just two or three years of publication. The progressive movement did not survive as a significant political force, but *The Progressive* did, and still does. Although it is a significantly different magazine than it was when LaFollette served as editor, *The Progressive* remains a testament to progressive values and to the need for a publication to speak for, and to, individuals who share those values.

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