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Article Summary: Norris originally opposed the repeal of the arms embargo. When he later favored it, isolationists asserted that he was just repaying Franklin Roosevelt for the TVA. Norris responded that Axis aggression was a greater threat than the increased presidential power inherent in a program of aid to Britain.

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Photographs / Images: Senator George W Norris; Norris and Governor Robert L Cochran campaigning for President Franklin D Roosevelt, 1936; historical marker erected in memory of Norris in McCook in 1964

THE GEORGE W. NORRIS "CONVERSION" TO INTERNATIONALISM, 1939-1941

By THOMAS N. GUINSBURG

Congressional debates over foreign policy from 1939 to 1941 produced an alignment that, with one important exception, contained no great surprises. Although long-standing isolationists predictably attacked the President's internationalist designs, the majority in Congress with varying degrees of alacrity came to support the administration's program. But one outstanding congressional leader took an unexpected stance. Nebraska's George W. Norris, last survivor of the band of senators who had opposed American entry into World War I, announced in 1939 that he favored repealing the arms embargo, which forbade the sale and shipment of munitions and supplies of war. Thereafter he proved a staunch champion of the program of aid to Britain that would lead the nation to the brink of intervention.

Norris's defection from the so-called "peace bloc" in Congress did not pass unnoticed. If other senators had, like Norris, developed a national following, none save William E. Borah had gained a comparable reputation for independence, and even the "Lion of Idaho" could not match Norris as a symbol of integrity and faithfulness to progressive political ideals.¹ When Norris began to show publicly a growing animus towards the Axis powers, the German charge d'affaires reported back to his government that the senator's stand was producing a "tremendous sensation" and that it was likely to exert a considerable influence.² Devoted admirers of Norris might condemn the Nebraskan's position on the embargo, but they could not ignore it. Newspaperman Richard Neuberger, a Norris biographer and

later a U.S. Senator from Oregon (1955-1960), wrote Norris's secretary: "My stand for the embargo is made difficult by a lot of people who say to me, 'Senator Norris, whom you admire more than any man in public life, is for lifting the embargo. What have you got to say about *that*?' "³

Intractable opponents of the administration's foreign policy grieved over Norris's desertion. Unquestionably it would hurt their cause. They could no longer effectively damn their opponents as war mongers; with Norris in the other camp, one editorial writer observed, the isolationists would have "to stop claiming for themselves a corner on the will-to-peace."⁴ The wounds were deepened, moreover, by the isolationists' assessment of the reasons for Norris's apostasy. Having stood fast by their own earlier positions, anti-repeal leaders doubted the sincerity of Norris's reversal. Privately, they attributed his shift to gratitude to Franklin D. Roosevelt for the President's efforts on behalf of the Tennessee Valley Authority.⁵

Yet Norris defected from isolationist ranks for more complicated reasons. His undeviating colleagues erred in assuming that, prior to the campaign over the arms embargo, Norris's foreign policy position had been identical to theirs. Consequently, they wrongly concluded that Norris was betraying conviction — to say nothing of long-time senatorial allies — out of loyalty to Roosevelt. They failed to see that throughout his career Norris had not fully lived up to the "irreconcilable" label. Nor had he mustered the intense faith shown by many legislators in the neutrality laws of the mid-thirties.

Opponent of intervention in 1917, implacable critic of the Versailles Treaty after the armistice, George Norris never regretted either of these early milestones in his senatorial career.⁶ Nonetheless, he must have lamented the degree to which observers then and later stereotyped his foreign policy views. Although one of the "irreconcilables" in 1919-1920, Norris, unlike many in that group, fought primarily against the inequities of the Versailles Treaty rather than against the notion of a league of nations. Indeed, both before and after the peace-making, Norris had brought forth ideas of his own on the need for international cooperation to preserve peace.⁷ Still, he had battled hard against the mechanism proposed in the Versailles pact. "We cannot," he said, "build a temple of justice on a foundation of sand."⁸

Ensuing senatorial contests over international collaboration further illuminated differences between Norris and bitter-enders like Borah, Hiram Johnson, and James A. Reed. He refused, in 1922, to join in the attack by these men on the Four-Power Treaty. Norris, Johnson acknowledged sorrowfully, was a "natural pacifist" and supported the work of the Washington Conference as a step towards peace and disarmament.⁹ When later in the decade the concept of the World Court came before the Senate, Norris, though unenthusiastic, shunned a full-fledged attack. Like most Americans in the 1920's, Norris doubted that the United States could do a great deal to regenerate a European continent that gave every sign of reverting to conflict and turmoil. The powers of the World Court, he contended, were "wonderfully overestimated" by those who favored American entry. Yet he also suggested that the Court's potency was similarly exaggerated by those in the opposition.¹⁰ Consequently, satisfied that American sovereignty and autonomy had been duly safeguarded by reservations, Norris voted for adherence. He explained that though he continued to oppose American participation in the League of Nations, he had "always conceded that the Court had some good points and might be able to do some good."¹¹

Although throughout the 1920's and 1930's Norris devoted most of his energies to domestic affairs, he remained concerned about the problems confronting the United States on the world scene. He noted with alarm the mounting international tension of the depression years, and in 1934 expressed pronounced pessimism. "Much as I dislike to say it," he wrote privately, "it looks to me as though we are doomed to another world war, in spite of the lessons taught by the last."¹² Norris, like the majority of his countrymen, concluded that the "lessons" of the American intervention in World War I underscored the need to avoid entanglement in a future world conflict. Consequently, he took a harder stand on the subject of the World Court in the 1930's than he had taken in the contest of 1925-1926. He refused to support a resolution of adherence without an amending reservation that no dispute between the United States and a foreign country could go before the Court unless approved by both the President and the Senate.¹³ The years since 1926 had convinced Norris that Japan and debt-defaulting European powers were untrustworthy and that the ideals of foreign



*Senator George W. Norris,
1864-1944.*

governments differed markedly from American ideals. Other countries, he asserted during the 1935 debate on the World Court, “are entitled to have their government, ideals, and civilization but we don’t need to go into a court of that kind of men, without protecting ourselves.”¹⁴ When his reservation failed to win the Senate’s approval, Norris saw no choice but to vote against the resolution itself.¹⁵

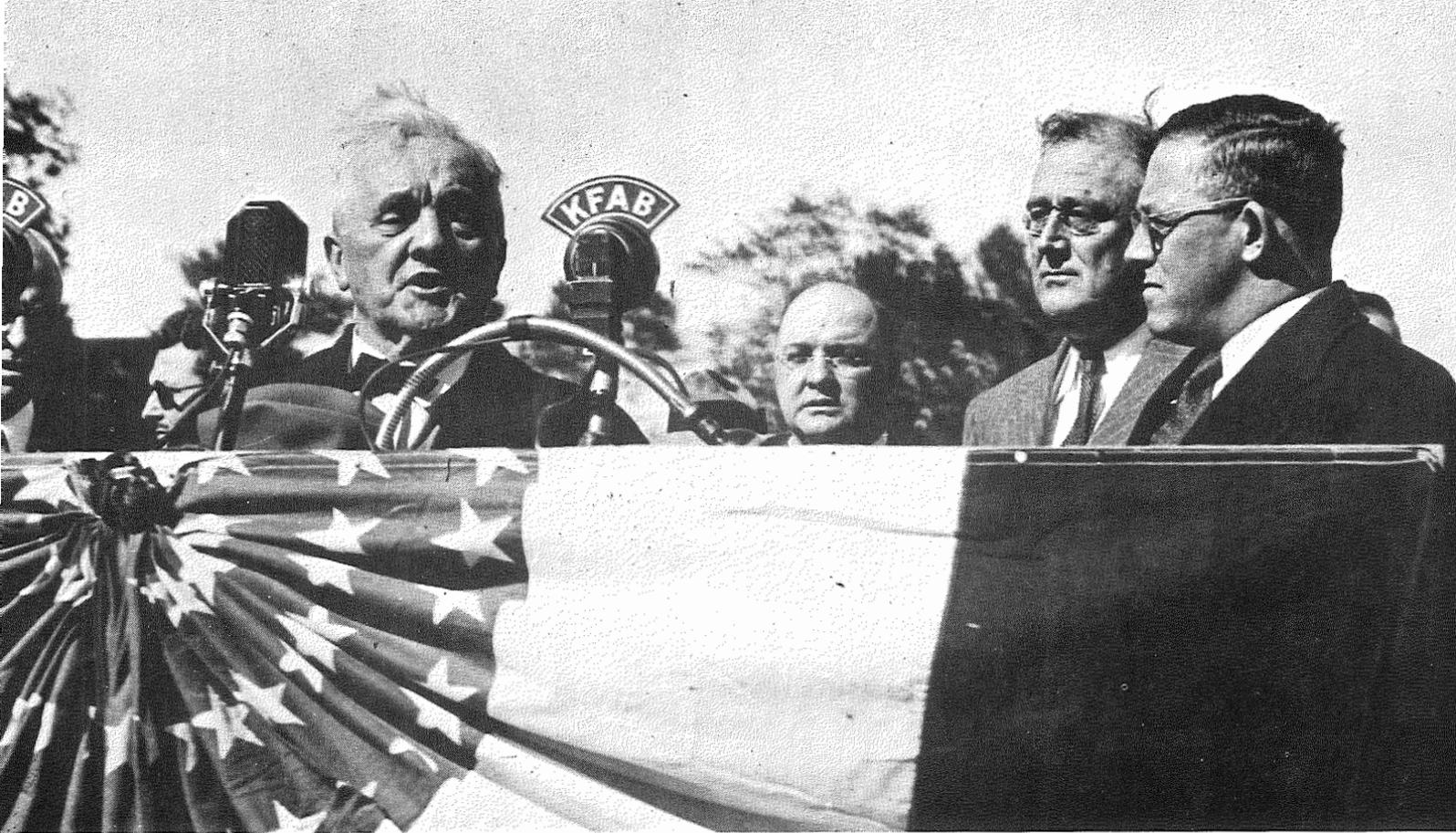
Having long supported the economic interpretation of American entry into World War I, Norris in the middle 1930’s endorsed the congressional efforts to legislate neutrality.¹⁶ But although he voted for the various neutrality laws, he did not play a significant role in their formulation or passage. Nor was he nearly as enthusiastic as others in the “peace bloc” about the adequacy of the neutrality legislation. Early in 1938 he wrote to the editor of *Nation* that his attitude toward the neutrality law would depend upon “conditions which may arise in the future.”¹⁷ Meanwhile, even as he continued to advocate a policy of official neutrality, Norris became openly critical of the actions of Japan, Italy, and Germany. “No good citizen,” he contended, “should stand idly by, without at least expressing the conviction that the murderer should be prevented from

bringing further havoc and death upon innocent people.”¹⁸ By the end of the year, Norris’s antipathy to fascism had clearly begun to erode his faith in the wisdom of neutrality legislation.¹⁹

Early in 1939 Norris had not yet broken with the many senators who maintained that substantial change of the 1937 neutrality law, especially a repeal of the arms embargo, would signify to the world a lessening national desire to remain neutral. “The only alternative to neutrality,” reasoned William E. Borah, “is belligerence. If we refuse arms and ammunitions as neutral, then when we furnish them we become belligerents.”²⁰ Norris, too, was troubled on the question of a “middle ground.” In April he wrote that if the United States sold war materials to one side in a conflict, “are we not in effect putting ourselves in the position of taking sides in the controversy? . . . Would this not get us into war?”²¹

Norris did, however, firmly disagree with the leaders of the neutrality bloc on the question of Franklin Roosevelt’s intentions. By the spring of 1939, Hiram Johnson was writing privately, “I am entirely satisfied that the President desires to take us into war.”²² Though few senators were as candid, a number shared that belief. Not only did Norris reject this analysis, he also scorned the notion that increasing the President’s latitude in foreign affairs meant fulfilling Roosevelt’s aspirations for dictatorial power. The independent Nebraskan felt obliged to criticize long-standing friends for their mistrust of Roosevelt, and in response he found these colleagues becoming “angry, excited, and illogical.” “I cannot make a move,” Norris complained, “without incurring their animosity and hatred.”²³

As war engulfed Europe in September of 1939, Norris made the move sure to elicit the isolationists’ enduring contempt: he came out for repeal of the arms embargo. The decision was not easy. Responding to a powerful plea on behalf of the embargo from the international law scholar, Edwin Borchard, Norris noted that he had misgivings about deviating from the precepts of an authority he respected greatly, but that his own reasoning and his own conscience led him to different conclusions. Contending that no American policy could have equal impact on the belligerents — that the arms embargo worked in Germany’s favor, that its repeal would aid Britain and France —



Senator Norris campaigned for President Franklin D. Roosevelt (second from right) in 1936. At left, partially obscured by KFAB-Lincoln-Omaha radio station microphone, is Nebraska Governor Robert L. Cochran.

Norris wrote: "When we must help one side or the other by our action or non-action, we would be less than human if we did not cast our influence in favor of the right against the admitted wrong."²⁴ Unlike many advocates of repeal, Norris in both his private and public statements did not shrink from acknowledging that the step would aid Britain and France. In a long and impassioned letter to William Allen White, editor of the *Emporia* (Kansas) *Gazette*, he contended:

The question then comes down, it seems to me, to whether we want England and France to win, or whether we want Hitler to win. We may not like England; we may not like France; we can point to many instances in their history where they have been guilty of serious offences against the rights and liberties of other peoples, but . . . when we consider Hitler, we must reach the conclusion that his doctrine, his aim, is repulsive to every sense of justice and humanity. Even though we may not like England, when we come to consider Hitler, he is so much worse, he represents . . . an international policy that is so far beneath that for which England and France stand, that we can reach only one conclusion, and that is, whatever we have a right to do . . . should be done in favor of England and France, and not in favor of Hitler.²⁵

Norris did not, however, see his stand as involving the United States in the war. While the isolationist leaders took the view that "we are either all the way in or all the way out,"²⁶ Norris conceived of his position as permitting the United States to do what it could in a just cause while still staying out of the holocaust. "It is fortunate," he noted, ". . . that in following our legal rights as universally recognized we are able to enact a law which will more likely keep us out of war and at the same time puts us on the side of humanity and civilization."²⁷ The revised neutrality law coupled repeal of the arms embargo with a renewal of cash-and-carry on the sale of all goods, as well as with other safeguards of neutrality. Norris believed that it would preclude the situations by which the United States had prior to 1917 become entangled in World War I.²⁸

Repeal of the arms embargo embittered the isolationist leaders and widened the rift between Norris and themselves. By now they considered the Nebraskan practically a rubber stamp for the administration policy.²⁹ Yet Norris continued to be his own man, refusing to subscribe blindly either to the views of his doctrinaire colleagues or to those of the administration. He demonstrated his independence of the latter in 1940 on the issue of conscription. Believing conscription unnecessary to the goal of aid short of war, Norris temporarily rejoined the ranks of the "peace bloc."³⁰ But events shortly proved that the prodigal son had not come home to stay.

The Lend-Lease Bill, which would authorize the President to furnish governments of nations opposing the Axis powers with supplies and money, put Norris' convictions to a decisive test in 1941. Opponents insisted that it was a "war" measure. Lend-Lease, they argued, placed in presidential hands power that would be used to ensnare the United States in the military conflict.³¹ If none of them went as far as Burton K. Wheeler's notorious statement that the measure was the New Deal's "triple-A foreign policy" for plowing under every fourth American boy, most agreed with Gerald P. Nye that the legislative contest would be the "last-ditch fight" to avert war.³² To support Lend-Lease, Norris, who still cringed at the thought of intervention, would have to convince himself that this reading of the proposal was wrong.

Such was Norris's reputation as an opponent of war that those who had failed to note carefully his recent position on foreign policy assumed that he would oppose Lend-Lease. He received considerable mail congratulating him for his stand against the bill — a stand that he never took.³³ Even the senatorial opponents of Lend-Lease, who had learned not to count on Norris, hoped he might support their side. Aware that Norris's position would likely influence others, they delegated Robert La Follette, Jr., whose father had joined Norris in opposing intervention in 1917, to try to persuade the Nebraskan to join them.³⁴ Instead he moved the other way.

Norris acknowledged that in first considering the measure, he had been inclined to vote against taking sides in the European conflict. "I started out to reach a conclusion that I ought to oppose it," he admitted, "but what I believe to be the absolute facts, piled one upon another, convinced me that I could not take such a course." England, he had concluded, was fighting against the philosophy that "might makes right" and deserved all the help short of armed intervention that the United States could give her.³⁵

Norris endorsed Lend-Lease despite a deluge of pleas and denunciations from constituents, whose attacks doubtless made him wince.³⁶ The man who had "shown so much courage in the last war" had disappeared, one writer noted, and then observed, "Your great glory of that shining star is rapidly failing."³⁷ A clergyman implored Norris "not to surrender those profound

convictions that have given you such an outstanding place in American leadership . . . Let your life record be one to the end of Principle before politics."³⁸

His critics failed to see that for Norris there was no political advantage in defying the apparent sentiments of the majority of Nebraskans he represented. He had, in fact, put "principle before politics," shunning his constituents' isolationist leanings and tarnishing his glittering image as a dissenter from warlike ventures. Feeling as he now did that "civilization" was at stake in the war, he could not withhold his support of a measure designed to aid the defenders of civilization without using American fighting men.³⁹

Perhaps Norris was guilty of wishful thinking or self-delusion in believing that material aid alone would do the job and that the United States would be spared direct military involvement. Yet he did not shrink from the commitment made by Lend-Lease. He defended the establishment of bases in Greenland and the subsequent administration strategems designed to help keep Britain in the war. If the Axis defeated Britain, Norris insisted, the time would surely come, sooner or later, when the remaining free nations in the world would have to defend themselves. "Under these circumstances," he asked, "ought we not to do everything we can to see to it that England wins?"⁴⁰ Everything? No, not quite, for Norris still refrained from endorsing an American expeditionary force. But he did contend that the United States would have to "take some risks . . . rather than to be compelled to take upon our shoulders in later years the entire struggle."⁴¹

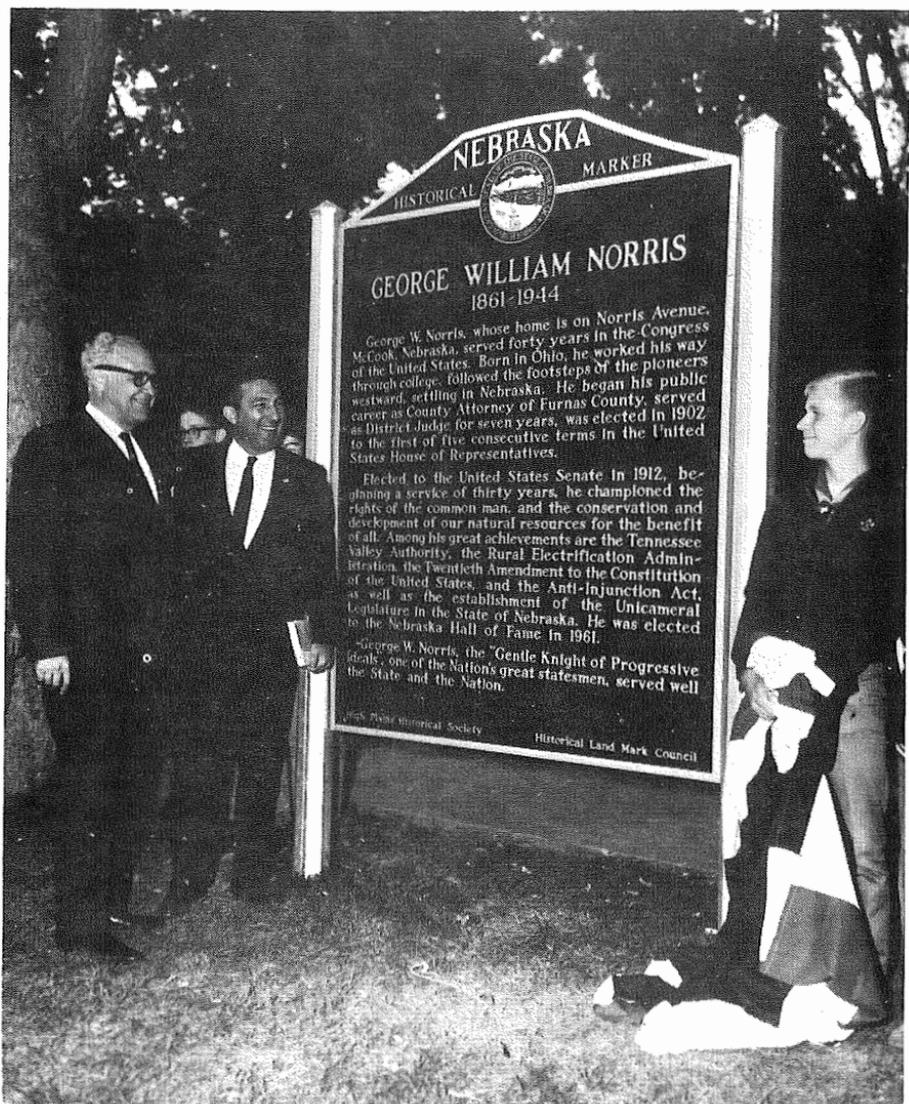
Thus, the sole survivor of the senatorial anti-war brigade of 1917 had espoused collective security if not interventionism. A difficult question remains: why did he alone among the senatorial isolationists do a complete about-face? In part, as noted earlier, the answer lies with long-standing divergencies between Norris's international views and those of his erstwhile allies. He had never been quite the isolationist that others were. But the same can be said for a number of senators who continued to do battle with the administration from 1939 to 1941. Burton K. Wheeler, Arthur Capper, Arthur Vandenberg, and others had previously shown greater flexibility on international matters than, say, Hiram Johnson or Gerald P. Nye.⁴²

None of the isolationist leaders, however, shared Norris's willingness, on the eve of war or thereafter, to judge the international issue afresh. Part of the explanation may stem from Norris's flexibility; in the course of his career he had shown himself able to move from conservatism through rural progressivism to advocacy of national stewardship in an industrial society.⁴³ A related—and more important—reason for Norris's break with his colleagues was his enduring confidence in the ideals and integrity of President Roosevelt.

The apostles of strict neutrality attacked the administration's foreign policy less out of preference for Germany and Italy abroad than out of fear of concern over the situation at home. If many displayed streaks of Anglophobia, none were truly sympathetic to the Nazis and most expressed their hope for British victory.⁴⁴ All, on the other hand, sensed that a vote for the administration's proposals meant further power in the hands of President Roosevelt. Although the isolationist coalition was by no means monolithic on domestic issues, its members shared a perspective which was alien to Norris.⁴⁵ Some of the isolationist stalwarts — among them Vandenberg, Robert Taft, Bennett Clark, and Rufus Holman — were spokesman for conservatism. Others — like Nye, Wheeler, Robert La Follette, Jr., Hiram Johnson, and Arthur Capper — had garnered reputations as progressives. But the latter group's progressivism, save in the case of La Follette, had distinct limitations. Its members feared centralization of power, political as well as economic, and they viewed the Lend-Lease Act as an even more dangerous delegation of power than Roosevelt's court-packing scheme had been.⁴⁶

Norris, however, displayed very little of this distrust—either toward federal power or toward that of F.D.R. Both, he believed, had done much to meet the catastrophe of the Great Depression. Nor did he conclude that a president who had used his power for the national well-being in peacetime would fail to do so after the outbreak of war. Even when he broke sharply with the administration on the issue of conscription, Norris, unlike most opponents of the measure, still maintained that Roosevelt sincerely desired to keep the nation out of war.⁴⁷

Although the senatorial champions of isolationism were not altogether wrong in insisting that Norris shifted his position



Senator Norris, recognized universally as one of the nation's great statesmen, lived in McCook, where the High Plains Historical Society and the Nebraska State Historical Society erected a marker in his memory in 1964. From left are Nebraska Governor Frank B. Morrison, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, and Boy Scout Jay Johnson.

because of Roosevelt, the transformation was a more complex process than they implied.⁴⁸ Norris was not simply repaying Roosevelt for TVA. He had not abandoned his repugnance toward war, but he believed that Axis aggression placed freedom in greater jeopardy than did increased presidential power. Unafraid of that power and trustful of the President, George Norris could support the administration without feeling he was betraying his convictions. Consequently, he could "convert," while his old friends remained intractable.

NOTES

1. Until the completion of Richard Lowitt's full-scale scholarly biography, the best works on Norris are Norman L. Zucker, *George W. Norris: Gentle Knight of American Democracy* (Urbana, Illinois, 1966); Alfred Lief, *Democracy's Norris* (New York, 1939); and Richard L. Neuberger and Stephen B. Kahn, *Integrity: The Life of George W. Norris* (New York, 1937). All three clearly reveal the Senator's distinctive position in American political life.

2. U.S. Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, I, 727.

3. Neuberger to John P. Robertson, October 21, 1939, George W. Norris MSS, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

4. Editorial *Portland Oregonian*, October 7, 1939, copy in Norris MSS.

5. According to Senators Gerald P. Nye and Burton K. Wheeler, most of the pro-embargo group believed that Norris's stand stemmed from, in Nye's words, "a personal relationship with F.D.R. that weakened his independence." Wheeler recalls: "Norris was grateful to F.D.R.; he had never had a President who treated him well." Author's interviews with Gerald P. Nye, August 19, 1965, and Burton K. Wheeler, December 28, 1965.

6. At least once in every five years on the anniversary of American intervention Norris in correspondence and public statements reaffirmed his attitude towards World War I. See Norris MSS, *passim*.

7. *Congressional Record*, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., 10932-10933; 65 Cong., 3 Sess., 77; 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 2593. Norris's sympathy for the idea of an association of nations and his slowness in attacking the League of Nations made some irreconcilables fear that he would not stand with them. See Albert J. Beveridge to Ernest Bross, March 3, 1919, Albert J. Beveridge MSS, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. On the diversity within "irreconcilable" ranks see the recent penetrating study by Ralph A. Stone, *The Irreconcilables* (Lexington, Ky., 1970), and Stone, "The Irreconcilables' Alternatives to the League of Nations," *Mid-America*, XLIX (1967), 163-173.

8. *Congressional Record*, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 2595.

9. Johnson to C. K. McClatchy, January 15, 1922, Hiram Johnson MSS, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

10. Norris to "Dear Boys," March 20, 1926, Norris MSS. See also *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, December 29, 1925, clipping in 1926 Scrapbook, *ibid*.
11. *Ibid*.
12. Norris to the Rev. William A. Tyler, March 30, 1934, *ibid*.
13. As early as 1930 Norris indicated that he would support adherence only with such a reservation. Norris to the Rev. Frank G. Smith, November 11, 1930, *ibid*.
14. Clipping, *Washington Times*, January 25, 1935, 1935 Scrapbook, *ibid*.; Norris to J. E. Taylor, December 30, 1933, and Norris to the Rev. William A. Tyler, March 30, 1934, *ibid*.
15. His reservation to the resolution failed by 37 to 47. *Congressional Record*, 74 Cong., 1 Sess., 977. Norris maintained that he would not otherwise have opposed the resolution and that he did not believe his reservation nullified adherence. Norris to Elaine Fontain, January 31, 1935, and Norris to F. E. Weyer, February 7, 1935, Norris MSS.
16. *Congressional Record*, 74 Cong., 1 Sess., 14434, 75 Cong., 1 Sess., 3962.
17. Norris to Freda Kirchway, March 19, 1938, Norris MSS.
18. Norris to John T. Flynn, January 4, 1938, *ibid*. See also Norris to Edwin Borchard, January 4, 1938, *ibid*.
19. *Ibid*.
20. Undated memorandum [1939], Borah MSS, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box 544.
21. Norris to Mrs. Grace D. Orr, April 3, 1939, Norris MSS.
22. Johnson to John Bassett Moore, May 12, 1939, Johnson MSS. See also Johnson to Edwin Borchard, April 9, 1939, *ibid*.
23. Lief, *Democracy's Norris*, 526-527.
24. Norris to Borchard, October 12, 1939, Norris MSS.
25. Norris to White, October 30, 1939, *ibid*. See also "Interview Dictated by Senator Norris for Blair Moody," *ibid*.
26. The phrase is Arthur Vandenberg's in "The Battle over the Arms Embargo," typewritten entry, September 15, 1939, Scrapbook 12, Vandenberg MSS, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.
27. "American Neutrality," radio speech, October 3, 1939, copy in Norris MSS.
28. Norris to Louise Newhall, January 14, 1939, *ibid*.
29. Author's interviews with Gerald P. Nye, August 19, 1965, and Burton K. Wheeler, December 28, 1965.
30. *Congressional Record*, 76 Cong., 3 Sess., 10113, 11142, 12161. He also saw peacetime conscription as antithetical to democratic government. See Norris to Ellsworth Steele, July 5, 1940, Norris MSS, and clipping, *New York Sun*, Norris Scrapbooks, *ibid*.
31. For an example of arguments that the bill constituted Congressional abdication of the war-making power and increased the prospects of intervention, see *ibid*, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1100 (Bennett Clark), 1299 (D. Worth Clark), 1300 (La Follette); Arthur Capper, radio address, January 12 and 26, 1941. Capper MSS, Kansas State Historical Society; as well as the statements by Burton K. Wheeler and Gerald P. Nye cited in note 32.
32. *New York Times*, January 12 and 13, 1941.
33. See, for example, Madeleine H. Baker to Norris, January 21, 1941, and Arthur T. Granfield to Norris, March 3, 1941, Norris MSS.
34. *Newsweek*, XVII (February 3, 1941), 14.

35. Norris to the Rev. A. Cortney, March 15, 1941, Norris MSS.
36. Norris's correspondence from constituents who were overwhelmingly critical can be found in tray 25, *ibid.*
37. Warren Adee to Norris, February 24, 1941, *ibid.*
38. The Rev. O. D. Baltzly to Norris, February 25, 1941, *ibid.*
39. Norris expressed this conception of the war most eloquently prior to the Lend-Lease contest in a letter to Grace Shallenberger, June 26, 1940, *ibid.* His convictions about defying constituent sentiment, if necessary, are made explicit in Norris to J. H. Cramer, June 8, 1940, *ibid.*
40. Norris to E. W. Rossiter, April 17, 1941, *ibid.*
41. Norris to Harry Chrisman, May 31, 1941, *ibid.* See also Norris to the Rev. A. P. Almen, March 11, 1941, *ibid.*
42. Wheeler, Capper, and Vandenberg had, for example, endorsed adherence to the World Court in 1926. The senatorial isolationists are discussed in detail in the author's "Senatorial Isolationism in America, 1919-1941," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1969.
43. This metamorphosis is underscored in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "George Norris and the Liberal Tradition," which appears as the introduction to the paperback edition of *Fighting Liberal: The Autobiography of George W. Norris* (New York, 1961)
44. See Guinsburg, "Senatorial Isolationism," 248-250, 263-264, and Manfred Jonas, "Pro-Axis Sentiment and American Isolationism," *Historian*, XXIX (1967), 221-237, *passim*. Warren Kimball, in his recent study of the passage of Lend-Lease, *The Most Unsordid Act* (Baltimore, 1969), 185-186, suggests that the opponents' professions of desire to aid Britain—and support of an amendment toward that end—were merely tactical ploys. Certainly this is true for some of the isolationists who made about faces, but Capper, Vandenberg, Taft, and McNary had already staked out a pro-British position before the legislative contest. Others, too, wanted a British victory but did not believe that it warranted American unneutrality leading to belligerency.
45. My appraisal of the overall political views of the Senators has been greatly helped by James T. Patterson's *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal, 1933-1939* (Lexington, Ky., 1967).
46. See Taft speech of January 25, 1941, Robert A. Taft MSS, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Capper, radio address, January 12, 1941, Capper MSS; Johnson statement in *New York Times*, January 11, 1941; Nye speech of February 20, 1941, America First MSS, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.
47. Norris to Grace Shallenberger, June 26, 1940, Norris MSS; John P. Robertson (Norris's secretary) to Mrs. Gladys M. Nelson, September 14, 1940, *ibid.*; 1940 campaign speeches and letters on Lend-Lease, January, 1941. *ibid.*
48. See footnote 5, above.