

# POSTSCRIPTS

THE WINTER, 1988, issue of this journal carried an article by William E. Matsen that dealt with the case of William A. Schaper, a University of Minnesota professor of political science, who was dismissed from his post "in the frenzied days of war hysteria in the autumn of 1917." According to Matsen, the dismissal "had a lasting impact on the question of academic freedom and resulted in debate in places as widely separated as Minneapolis-St. Paul, Washington, D.C., and Norman, Oklahoma." Twenty-one years later, at the instigation of university president Guy Stanton Ford, the board of regents rescinded its earlier action, affirming that the university "should not impose any limitation upon the teacher's freedom in the exposition of his own subject in the classroom or in addresses and publications." The article came to the attention of Thomas K. Ford, a former St. Paul newspaperman, a longtime official of the Williamsburg (Va.) Foundation, and a son of Guy Stanton Ford. The following paragraphs are excerpted from his letter written in February to Ford's boyhood friend, University of Minnesota professor emeritus, William Gerald G. Shepherd:

"THE MATSEN ARTICLE . . . is interesting in several ways. First off, when the [Guy Stanton] Ford family arrived in Minneapolis from Champaign-Urbana in the fall of 1913, we lived in the Schaper house for some months, perhaps as much as a year. The house was a big one (or so it seemed to me at the age of three) facing the river at the corner of Walnut and Huron(?) streets—the 'farthest' corner of Pioneer Hall now. I have no memory of Schaper himself, but his name certainly has been a familiar one through the years. I am indeed proud of my father's part in getting his name cleared. I feel sure, in fact, that he opposed the firing in the first place. Fred Snyder's position is hard to reconcile with his rock-firm support of the University in other ways.

"Matsen's mention of the World War I 'Creel Committee' as a vehicle for spreading German atrocity stories and consequent war hysteria—and Schaper's undoing—is more ironic than he probably knew. On this point Matsen cites only Philip Knightly's *The First Casualty* . . . which strikes a glancing blow to the Committee on Public Information for sins which he (Knightly) attributes to it. Matsen would have done

better to consult the *Minnesota History Bulletin* [now *Minnesota History*] of February, 1919, for the text of a speech, 'America's Fight for Public Opinion,' by none other than Guy Stanton Ford.\* It happens that GSF was among [George] Creel's earliest recruits and that from May, 1917, to December, 1918, he directed the Division of Civic and Educational Publications which developed and issued many pamphlets, booklets, etc., (in millions of copies) analyzing war aims, policies, official statements, etc. To the end of his life my father remained proud of the high standards of scholarship despite wartime pressures that these publications observed at his insistence."

THE WINTER, 1988, issue also elicited a response to Carl Ross's report on the 20th-century radicalism in Minnesota project. Alden Jameson of Bellingham, Washington, who writes that he regards *Minnesota History* "as a letter from home," adds:

"THE MENTION of a possible program to complete a history of the Duluth working people and labor movement is very exciting to me, having worked at the Duluth steel plant from 1945 to 1971. When I started work at the plant in November, 1945, the union was just nine years or so old. There were quite a number of men working at that time who had worked under the turmoil of union organizing, and many who had worked for the company when there was no union. Morgan Park was a company town, with a company store. Employees were at the mercy of the company, and were employed pretty much at the whim or pleasure of their supervisors."

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\* Stanton described the work of the Committee on Public Information as a "mobilization and inspiration of public opinion," a "fight to create and sustain morale and to arouse a patriotism that could be translated into action." Calling the Creel Committee "a much misunderstood organization," Ford maintained that "No other war agency . . . ever labored under such initial disadvantages and such persistent misunderstanding," due in large part to a firmly established idea that it was "a censorship." Ford asserted that Creel's mission was "wholly constructive: to find and to give the truth . . . to furnish . . . all the information that could possibly be given out, consistent with safety." See *Minnesota History Bulletin* 3(Feb., 1919): 4, 8, 9.



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