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### A. C. Townley (1880–1959)

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When his nomination came to the vote, the committee rejected Tower along strictly partisan lines. The Senators who voted against Tower stated that the evidence of Tower's drinking persuaded them that he was not fit to hold as critical a position as Secretary of Defense. The Republican Senators, dismissing the allegations as innuendo, focused on Tower's expertise and his years of excellent service.

Despite the vote of the committee, Tower could have been confirmed by the Senate as a whole. To succeed, the administration needed yeas from at least five Democrats, not to mention a number of skeptical Republicans. Although the Bush administration fought hard for the President's choice, Tower's nomination was defeated in the full Senate by a 53-to-47 margin. Three Democrats, Christopher Dodd, Lloyd Bentsen, and Howell Heflin, voted for Tower, while Nancy Kassebaum was the sole Republican to vote against him.

*See also:* Lloyd Bentsen, George H. W. Bush, Lyndon B. Johnson

*Jeffra Becknell*

### A. C. Townley (1880–1959)

Archetypal political entrepreneur. Arthur Charles Townley, a successful farmer ruined by the business cycle in agriculture, saw a "market" for a certain type of politics among the cash crop farmers of the Northwest and Southwest. He established two great protest organizations—the North Dakota Nonpartisan League and the National Nonpartisan League—to tap this market.

The business cycle played a key role in shattering Townley's second career. The 1921–1923 recession killed off Townley's organizational creations. In 1922 Townley began a third career, founding a marketing cooperative, the National Producers Alliance, but abandoned it to become a wildcat oil driller.

In 1929 Townley founded the American Temperance League, advocating federal control of liquor sales. In 1930 he unsuccessfully tried for Congress in western North Dakota against an old Nonpartisan Leaguer, running on a platform of Prohibition's repeal. In 1933, in the depth of the Great Depression, Townley regained some influence in what was left of the old Nonpartisan League. North Dakota governor William Langer sent him to Washington to push, without success, a plan of massive federal loans for cooperative factories and industries in rural regions. In the late 1940s and early 1950s

Townley became virulently anti-Communist. In 1956, after television came to North Dakota, he tried a red-baiting campaign for the U.S. Senate against Quentin N. Burdick (D) but got fewer than 1,000 votes. Before he could embark on yet another career, Townley died.

*See also:* William Langer, National Nonpartisan League, North Dakota Nonpartisan League

*Richard M. Valelly*

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### Francis E. Townsend (1867–1960)

Political reformer of the Great Depression. Born in Livingston County, Illinois, Francis Everett Townsend graduated from Omaha Medical College in 1903 and moved to Belle Fourche, South Dakota, to practice medicine. Because of poor health, he moved to Long Beach, California, in 1920. In 1933 he lost his job as an assistant county health officer because of a change in county administrations. Unemployed and 66 years old, Townsend became alarmed at the flight of the poverty-stricken elderly during the Great Depression.

In September 1933 Townsend announced his proposal that the federal government provide each American over the age of 60 with a pension of \$150 a month. This figure was soon increased to \$200 a month. Each recipient of this pension would be required to spend all of this amount by the end of each month. Townsend assumed that his policy would not only support the elderly but would also create jobs for younger Americans as consumption and, thus, business activity sharply increased. This pension program would be funded by a national sales tax.

In January 1934 Townsend and his real estate associate, Robert E. Clements, established an organization to publicize the plan, calling it Old-Age Revolving Pensions (OARP). Throughout 1934 and 1935, Clements quickly and skillfully publicized and organized the Townsend movement throughout the United States. By 1935 nearly 500,000 paid memberships in the Townsend clubs made the organization a political enterprise to be dealt with.

In January 1935 Townsend persuaded California Congressman John S. McGroarty to submit a pension bill based on his plan to the