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RIVERSIDE

Anxious Electorate:  
City Politics in Mid-1920s America

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Russell MacKenzie Fehr

June 2016

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The Dissertation of Russell MacKenzie Fehr is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

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## Acknowledgements

As is always the case when engaged in a massive project that has spanned an entire continent, there are more people to thank than I possibly could, including many whose names I will never know. The following, therefore, is just a partial consideration of those who deserve credit for this dissertation.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of

Thomas James Fehr Sr. (1923-2015)

Who was most eagerly awaiting this work of anyone I knew

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Anxious Electorate:  
City Politics in Mid-1920s America

by

Russell MacKenzie Fehr

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in History  
University of California, Riverside, June 2016  
Dr. Catherine Gudis, Chairperson

The 1920s has had a reputation as being a fallow period in the history of American urban politics, having the image of being a decade when business elites and urban political organizations held undisputed hegemony over urban politics. This vision, however, is one that falls apart under close examination: neither of these groups held power to the degree that this image implies, and it was based on a belief that the decade generally was a conservative interlude between interesting times. Rather, the 1920s was a period of serious contestation politically, with issues of class, religion, and ethnicity serving as fault lines dividing the population and giving a rancorous tone to local political practices.

Three case studies serve to demonstrate the contested nature of urban politics during the period. In 1923 Chicago, a combination of political scandal, hard times, and ethnic tensions led to a reform wave in Chicago, with three candidates offering different reform visions for Chicago, demonstrating the ways in which various ethnic and religious communities interpreted the concept of reform. In 1924 and 1925 Detroit, the Ku Klux

Klan rose and fell as a political force, taking advantage of a combination of recent trends in Detroit politics towards an ideology of political Protestantism and the presence of large numbers of non-elite Protestants who felt neglected by the leading factions in Detroit politics. 1925 Boston witnessed the breakdown of ethno-religious solidarity, as the Boston Irish, heavily divided by matters of class and spatial location, splintered their vote between several major candidates, enabling the election of a Yankee Republican as mayor. Combined, these three case studies demonstrate the contested nature of city politics during the period, showing how ethnic and religious matters served to create a heated political environment. These events had lasting impact: machine dominance in Chicago, political ill-will in Detroit, and ethnic political realignment in Boston all held roots in these elections. They also offer a way to understand national politics, as the roots of the New Deal urban coalition, the limitations of class politics, and changing ethnic politics all have roots in these events.

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## **Introduction: Three Incidents, or, The Relevance of Urban Politics**

April 3, 1923 was election day in Chicago. On that day, an African-American precinct captain for William E. Dever, Democratic candidate for Mayor, was attacked by several white sluggers in the 14<sup>th</sup> Ward, resulting in a fight between dozens of blacks and whites that resulted in shots being fired and nearly became a race riot.<sup>1</sup> Republican precinct captains in the 27<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Wards were kidnapped, apparently in connection with their political work, while an assistant to States Attorney Robert Crowe had been mysteriously murdered the day before.<sup>2</sup> In the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ward, people attempting to cast multiple ballots were arrested; in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Wards, charges were made that ballot boxes were stuffed prior to the polls opening. These events had an impact on some of the results: the runoff for Alderman in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward had its results changed when it became apparent that severe fraud had taken place in two precincts, with election officials in these precincts going into hiding after the election.<sup>3</sup> All in all, however, the general agreement was that this was a peaceful election by Chicago standards, and newly elected County Judge Edmund Jarecki was praised for a job well done.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For some accounts of these events on election day, see *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, 4/4/1923, 4; *Chicago Post*, 4/3/1923, 1; *Chicago American*, 4/3/1923, Second Edition, 1, 2; *Chicago Daily News*, 4/3/1923, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Chicago Daily Drovers Journal*, 4/2/1923, 3; *Chicago American*, 4/3/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 4/8/1923, 3; *Chicago American*, 4/7/1923, Second Edition, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 4/4/1923, 6.

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1924 a rally against the Ku Klux Klan was scheduled for the Arena Gardens in Detroit with Aldrich Blake as chief speaker.<sup>5</sup> The Ku Klux Klan had been a growing force in American politics in the years leading to 1924: Blake had been an associate of John C. Walton, who was removed as Governor of Oklahoma when he had tried to declare martial law against the Klan in 1923. Moreover, this increased political impact of the Klan was visible in Detroit, as obscure attorney Charles Bowles was running a strong write-in campaign due almost solely to Klan backing.<sup>6</sup> Before the rally started, 6,000 Klan supporters, many of them women, gathered outside the Arena Gardens, blocking the entrances and pasting stickers for Bowles on every car passing down Woodward Avenue. In order for the rally to be held, the Detroit police had to send out their riot squads and use tear gas and red pepper in order to clear the streets near the Arena Gardens and allow for the rally to take place. Even then, the Klan backers were not finished: one group entered the Arena Gardens and engaged in a mass walk-out when Joseph C. Martin, candidate of the Detroit Citizens League, began to speak, while other groups gathered in the side streets of the area and held impromptu Bowles rallies.

Daniel H. Coakley had a distinctly checkered career in Boston politics in the thirty-five years leading up to 1925. He had briefly held elective office in Cambridge and minor appointive positions in Boston, but had been chiefly active as a legal fixer who used his connections with politicians and prosecutors to aid his clients and enrich

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<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise cited, these accounts are taken from *Detroit News*, 10/22/1924, 1, 2; *Michigan Catholic*, 10/23/1924, 1, 6; and *Detroit Free Press*, 10/22/1924, 1, 3.

<sup>6</sup> For Bowles as a write-in candidate, see *Detroit Free Press*, 9/24/1924, 1, 16.

himself.<sup>7</sup> In the early 1920s, these connections had backfired: he had been disbarred, along with Suffolk County District Attorney Joseph Pelletier, after being exposed as using sexual entrapment to engage in extortion. After beating criminal prosecution, Coakley ran for Mayor of Boston in 1925 on a platform focused solely on the political redemption of Pelletier, who had died the year before, and who as a prominent Catholic layman retained support even after his disbarment among the working-class Irish in Boston.<sup>8</sup> The strength of this message of redemption was demonstrated on October 30<sup>th</sup> in a rally in Allston. Francis Quigley, one of those in attendance, heckled Coakley, first asking what he had done for Pelletier, and then charging him with being responsible for Pelletier's downfall.<sup>9</sup> This was not approved of by many in the crowd: Quigley was rushed and assaulted, and only the swift action of the Boston police prevented him from being killed by the crowd.

At first glance, these stories of politically-connected chaos may seem to be minor incidents that in the broad scheme of things have little meaning beyond that of the interesting anecdote. However, these incidents have greater significance when considering their broad aggregated meaning. These incidents collectively indicate the great importance that many regarded municipal politics as holding during the 1920s. The turmoil that occurred on Election Day in Chicago was ultimately based in trying to influence the vote: the incidents of election fraud clearly demonstrate this, but so does the

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<sup>7</sup> For the political background of Coakley, see "Daniel Henry Coakley, Sr.", biography written by unknown author (1941?), Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library.

<sup>8</sup> *Boston Telegram*, 10/2/1925.

<sup>9</sup> *Boston Post*, 10/31/1925, 1, 8; *Boston Herald*, 10/31/1925, 1.



violence against precinct captains, motivated by an effort to control voter turnout. Similarly, the riot at the Arena Gardens was more than simply a skirmish between friends and opponents of the Ku Klux Klan, but had a direct connection to Detroit local politics. The pro-Klan demonstrators ultimately demonstrated before, during, and after the riot for Bowles, rather than the Klan, indicating that the candidate was of greater importance than the organization. Aldrich Blake, meanwhile, spent over a week after the riot campaigning for Joseph Martin as a mayoral candidate, demonstrating that his work against the Klan also had specific importance on behalf of a candidate rather than against the movement generally.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the assault at the Coakley rally demonstrates two parallel elements concerning Coakley's political campaigning. Coakley had been able to craft a message strong enough to bring out thousands in support of his campaign, an impressive number given his unsavory reputation and his limited career in front-line politics before 1925. It also demonstrates that his message was one whose believers would do anything to hold onto, as demonstrated by the violence against Francis Quigley when he dared challenge it. In the aggregate, these three incidents gain meaning in demonstrating the ways in which urban politics mattered to voters during the 1920s.

The tumult that these incidents demonstrate concerning urban politics was not over minutia, but connected to major concerns involving race, class, and ethnicity in the city. The near-race riot in Chicago is one case in point: William Dever had sought African-American support more strongly than any previous Democratic candidate for mayor, symbolized by the presence of the African-American precinct captain. The 14<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For Aldrich Blake's campaign activities, see *Detroit News*, 10/27/1924, 19; *Detroit News*, 10/30/1924, 27.

Ward, meanwhile, was located across Wentworth Avenue from the Black Belt of the South Side, and was an area where political gangs surrounding notable politicians produced many participants in the 1919 race riots.<sup>11</sup> The incident at the polling place was a response to the symbolic challenge to the normal order that the precinct captain represented, as this was a challenge both to the ethnic political order and to the spatial boundaries of race in Chicago. Similarly, the Detroit Ku Klux Klan had an origin in a form of political Protestantism that had been of significance in Detroit politics since the rise of the Detroit Citizens League in the 1910s. Faced with two Catholic candidates running for Mayor, non-elite Protestants went for Bowles in large numbers, producing the sorts of crowds that led to incidents at the Arena Gardens.<sup>12</sup> Finally, Coakley's appeals on behalf of Pelletier were not simply personal appeals, but were pitched directly at the working-class Irish of Boston, portraying Pelletier as a martyr for his faith and acting in opposition to both the Protestant elite of the city and the better-off Irish who had been of growing importance in the previous decades and who were starting to develop their own approach to politics.<sup>13</sup> This appeal to class, ethnic, and religious issues resulted in crowds for Coakley, and the violence against Quigley came about directly because his challenges to Coakley's credibility came across as a challenge to their efforts to make a claim politically. Overall, these incidents were not quaint by any means, but were directly

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<sup>11</sup> For information concerning this, see Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), particularly Chs. 1 and 11; William M. Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 102-103, 161-163, 199-200, and *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> For Bowles' status as the only Protestant candidate, see *Detroit News*, 10/12/1924, 6.

<sup>13</sup> For the anti-middle class elements of this rhetoric, see *Boston Telegram*, 10/21/1925; for Pelletier as martyr, see ad in *Boston Telegram*, 10/9/1925.

connected to concerns in Chicago, Detroit, and Boston relating to the racial, ethnic, religious, and class order.

Finally, all three of these incidents are linked together in demonstrating the presence during the 1920s of anxious electorates in the city, as these voters in their actions were united by acting in response to concerns that they felt had been neglected. The violence on election day in Chicago, as engaged in by participants in both major parties, was an effort by various folk involved in organizational politics to claim a continued significance, as the reform wave that had risen in both parties in 1923 was threatening to remove them from political significance. The Klan in Detroit was a movement of non-elite Protestants, who felt that their institutions (most notably public education) were being threatened by new ethnic groups in the city, but who at the same time felt that the business elite of the city had taken their votes for granted and were ignoring their political interests. Finally, the working-class Irish backing Coakley were similarly dually alienated, regarding the rising Irish middle-class as being indifferent to their interests at best and selling out to the Yankee elite at worst, while also regarding James Michael Curley as having betrayed their interests once in office. This anxiety was not one that was limited to these groups specifically, as various other voters in all of the cities were similarly motivated by anxieties concerning conditions within the cities. This anxious electorate is of great importance in another sense: it is clear through their existence that interpretations of urban politics that regard the elite as consistently dominant cannot hold, as they clearly demonstrate a lack of this control through their

actions, which served to produce substantial future changes for political practices in these cities.

This study shall consider urban politics in Chicago, Detroit, and Boston, using the mayoral elections of 1923 in Chicago, 1924 and 1925 in Detroit, and 1925 in Boston as key points of investigation. These elections are not being considered in isolation, but are of relevance for what they suggest about the evolution of politics in these cities in the decades before and after these elections. These cities were not hermetically sealed from other influences, as the links between events in these cities to each other and to the national landscape is essential in order to understand political matters in each of these cities. This is also not a study intended to be narrowly political in nature: on the local level, the political was often the social, making such matters as ethnic settlement, spatial patterns, urban development, and labor practices deeply important to understand in order to explain political affairs. In addition, these elections were not merely of significance on a narrow level, but are of deep significance, in terms of understanding both the evolution of urban politics in Chicago, Detroit, and Boston, and in shedding light on political and social trends on the national level. Through these approaches, I intend to demonstrate two important points about urban politics during the 1920s. Contrary to previous writing on the subject, urban politics was not a subject of apathy in which elites dominated and major issues were not discussed, but highly contentious, fraught with issues concerning ethnicity, religion, and class, and with no one force managing to control them. Additionally, these elections were of great significance for the future, as national patterns

in political practice and the political futures of each of these cities directly developed from the situations in each of these cities.

### **Cities Under Review**

In order to demonstrate these points, a brief review of political affairs in each of the three cities under consideration is merited.<sup>14</sup> In the thirty years leading up to 1923, Chicago developed a complicated factional system of politics in which various groups within both major parties fought each other for the spoils of office. This system, never particularly stable, underwent a series of challenges in the half-decade before 1923. Race riots, labor unrest, and poor economic conditions after the First World War demonstrated the ideological limitation to Chicago politics, resulting in the rise of the Chicago Labor Party with the backing of the Chicago Federation of Labor. Meanwhile, a series of political scandals in the mayoral administration of William Hale Thompson, cumulating with exposures of fraud in the Board of Education that resulting in dozens of indictments, undermined the pursuit of patronage that had motivated much factional fighting over the preceding decades. Finally, the factions in both major parties was undergoing realignment: among the Democrats, forces led by George Brennan had managed to wipe all other factions from relevance, while various factions among Chicago's Republicans opposed to William Hale Thompson began working together towards the cause of ending Thompson's political career. These combination of factors led to both major parties running reform candidates for mayor, resulting in an election where different visions as to the remaking of Chicago politics became the chief issue. As a result, distinctive patterns

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<sup>14</sup> In all three of these cases, citations for the materials being considered in these introductory paragraphs will be provided during the case study, which will also consider these points in greater detail.

emerged involving the ethnic and religious response to reform, with middle-class Protestants tending to support business administration of government and Catholics, eastern European Jews, and African-Americans supporting municipal ownership and similar social reforms.<sup>15</sup>

Detroit in the quarter of a century prior to 1924 underwent massive social transformation, as the rise of the automotive industry resulted in massive growth for Detroit in terms of population and spatial mass. This growth led to a reshaping of the Detroit political system in the 1910s: uncomfortable with a political system in which local officials traded favors with each other and the liquor industry, a mixture of Protestant laymen and Detroit's business elite passed charter reform that significantly altered local political practices, using the Detroit Citizens League as a means to select most of the officials running the city. By the mid-1920s, this led to a challenge, as working-class Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans, particularly on the East Side of the city, began to coalesce as a force challenging elite dominance. 1924 disrupted this trend, as the Ku Klux Klan came seemingly out of nowhere to become a major force in local politics, possibly only losing the 1924 mayoral election due to chicanery in vote counting. The Klan did not last long as a political force in Detroit, collapsing rapidly after failing again to elect a Mayor in a 1925 rematch. However, the brief rise of the Klan is significant, as it made Detroit by far the largest city in which the Klan was able to become a major political force, serving as a case study for understanding the Klan as an

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<sup>15</sup> Reform has long been a tricky subject in understanding urban politics, as it tends to be a concept that either is mentioned in very vague was, or which has been defined in regards that are excessively reductive. In the case of this study, I have chosen to look at reform less in any sense of it being a specific ideological program, and more as an approach to urban politics which could incorporate a variety of ideas, unified by a sense of it responding to problems with the existing status quo.

urban mass movement by demonstrating how the presence of politicized Protestantism in Detroit starting in the 1910s was extended into support for the Klan a decade later.

Boston, like Detroit, experienced charter reform in the early twentieth century which served to significantly alter local political practices. Unlike Detroit, the changes in Boston politics had ended up being ethnic in nature: with political parties losing their place in urban politics, the politics of ethno-religious solidarity grew to be pivotal in mobilizing the voters of Boston. This led to a peculiar paradox developing in Boston during the 1910s. On the one hand, ethno-religious politics increasingly dominated Boston political life, with James Michael Curley in particular having considerable success in portraying himself as the defender of the Irish of Boston against the ravages of the Brahmin elite. However, the basis for this political approach was undermined in social terms: the Boston Irish were becoming more and more divided in terms of spatial location, class, and religiosity, making their mobilization as a unitary whole increasingly questionable. This came to the fore in 1925, when Curley for the first time since 1910 was unable to run as a candidate. In this election, ethno-religious solidarity broke down: many within the Boston Irish community considered running as candidates for Mayor, and seven of these candidates made it to election day. On the one hand, this multiplicity of Irish candidates and the lack of a runoff managed to elect Malcolm Nichols, a Republican running with the support of Yankees, Jews, and African-Americans, in spite of his having only 35% of the total vote. However, the divides present in this election were of great importance, as they indicated a growing distinction between working-class

and middle-class Irish in their political outlooks that would result in a realignment of ethnic politics in the future.

### **Looking into A Lost Decade**

This consideration of urban politics in three major cities breaks new ground in several regards. The most important of these aspects is the very consideration of the 1920s as a pivotal time in the structuring of urban politics. In all three of these case studies, the events of that decade were key in transforming Chicago politics from duels between factions and parties to a dominant machine, Detroit politics from religious-based to class-based, and Boston politics from based on Irish unity to fights between Irish factions. This is an important intervention due to a major gap in the literature on urban politics and urban government in terms of chronology. There has been a tendency in writing the literature on urban politics to focus on the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, with many studies of urban political affairs treating the late 1910s as an end point. Many other scholars have focused on the Depression era, with the stock market crash of 1929 serving as a starting point for their studies. This combination of approaches has tended to negate the 1920s by suggesting that this is a decade out of time, either regarding it solely as when the Progressive Era ended or suggesting that the political transformations of the 1930s sprang out of nowhere. This approach has ultimately had two problems: it tends to be insufficient in explaining how things changed after the Progressive Era by failing to offer the detail necessary to demonstrate what changed, and has neglected continuities between 1930s urban politics and those of earlier decades, making it necessary to demonstrate how the 1920s was the decade in which the transformations between



Progressive Era and New Deal urban politics took place, as the ethnic, religious, and class issues of that decade made the older politics less relevant and pushed towards the formation of new alignments.

Similarly of importance as an issue has been the consideration that the 1920s has received from scholars of urban politics. There is a tendency to use one of two approaches to consider this time period, both of which are rooted in a sense of a general electorate that had lost its reform impulses and was generally apathetic to urban affairs.<sup>16</sup> The first of these focuses on the various political figures and organizations that long have dominated studies of urban politics. Whether using the language of the “boss” and the “machine” or engaging in a different linguistic approach, there is a general assumption present that the 1920s was a time during which various organizations were able to consolidate their political support and generally were able to run civic affairs without strong political opposition.<sup>17</sup> The other approach looks instead at local elites, particularly those in the business sphere. In this form of analysis, tendencies towards urban reform of a structural nature in previous decades are shown as peaking in the 1920s, as the city manager system rose to become an important way of administering local government.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For a work that considers both of these approaches, see Jon C. Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City: Problem, Promise, and Reality* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

<sup>17</sup> For this implication specifically with Chicago, but also applicable nationally, see Steven J. Diner, *A City and its Universities: Public Policy in Chicago, 1892-1919* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 174.

<sup>18</sup> For an interpretation of the city manager system in this matter, see Melvin G. Holli, *Reform in Detroit: Hazen S. Pingree and Urban Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 178-179, and Ch. 8 for this view on structural reform generally. The one general study on the city-manager system of government generally is Richard Joseph Stillman, *The Rise of the City Manager: A Public Professional in Local Government* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), while Bradley Robert Rice, *Progressive Cities: The Commission Government Movement in America, 1901-1920* (Austin: University of

Both of these groups are suggested as having unclear connections with the public at large: the elites behind the city manager system are portrayed as horrified by non-elite rule and as using this system to guarantee their control over local politics, while political organizations, while debated about concerning their motives, have largely been regarded as acting in the interests of their membership rather than that of the electorate as a whole.<sup>19</sup> Overall, however, these interpretations of urban politics have combined to suggest a negation of the urban voter, who in this era is passive and willing to cede control of civic affairs to others.

These approaches to understanding urban politics in the 1920s on the surface have some things working for them. In some cities, such as New York City and Philadelphia, political organizations indeed were dominant during the decade, with Tammany Hall and the Vare brothers having political power beyond what they had in prior decades.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, the 1920s was a boom time for the city manager system, as such major cities as Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Cleveland adopted that system of government.<sup>21</sup> However,

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Texas Press, 1977) considers its rise in connection with the decline of the commission system in previous decades, and Martin J. Schiesl, *The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America, 1800-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) considered this efficiency ideology more generally. This interpretation, meanwhile, has lasted beyond the 1960s and 1970s: James Duane Bolin, *Reform in a Southern City: Lexington, Kentucky, 1880-1940* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000) restates this, and this is an interpretation that is frequently used in textbooks.

<sup>19</sup> The Holli work cited above serves to demonstrate this, while the points on urban machines generally will be discussed later in this work.

<sup>20</sup> For just the most recent work concerning Tammany, see Terry Golway, *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014). For Philadelphia, see Peter McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia: The Emergence of the Republican Machine, 1867-1933* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993).

<sup>21</sup> For a contemporary consideration of the rise of the city manager system, see Leonard D. White, *The City Manager* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927).

in both cases, this surface plausibility falls apart when engaging in close analysis. In terms of the political organization approach, there is generally an implicit assumption that all political leaders and organizations could be claimed as having citywide hegemony. In recent decades, this interpretation of urban political organizations has been demonstrated as tending to assume leaders and organizations had greater degrees of political power than they actually had. While political organizations thrived in places where they had already been powerful, they did not gain power in places where they did not have it already. Similarly, while the city manager system boomed during the 1920s, it largely was adopted in mid-sized and smaller cities and tended to be much more important in the South and West than in other parts of the country. Larger cities often did not take up the city manager plan, and even where they did this did not result in elite dominance: the Pendergast organization had no change in terms of their power with Kansas City under the city manager plan, and the city manager system was abolished in Cleveland in large part because of the continued influence of party organizations in that city's government.<sup>22</sup> As a result, it is very clear that neither of these approaches to understanding urban politics in the 1920s is fully workable, as it becomes clear that many cities, including most of the largest cities in the United States, cannot be understood through these approaches to urban governance. By examining political practices as they actually were in several major cities, a new understanding is present, in which an involved electorate

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<sup>22</sup> For a work discussing the Pendergast machine being able to function with city managers, see Lawrence H. Larsen and Nancy J. Hulston, *Pendergast!* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 67-70. For Cleveland under the city-manager plan, see Kenneth Finegold, *Experts and Politicians: Reform Challenges to Machine Politics in New York, Cleveland, and Chicago* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 115-116.

was present that was just as willing to fight political organizations and business elites as they were to back them.

In order to understand why these models for understanding 1920s urban politics have held such strength over the years, it is necessary to examine the history of scholarship on both the period and the field. In the 1950s and 1960s, the 1920s had a very poor image in scholarly circles, being regarded as generally a time of complacent conformity. Popular and scholarly accounts of the period regarded it as being a conservative interlude between times of great change, and in general phrased their considerations of the period as if it were a time that was apart from the general sweep of history.<sup>23</sup> Since the 1970s, there has been much research in various fields to demonstrate the limitations of this understanding of the period.<sup>24</sup> This interpretation has been demonstrated as being a rather homogenous approach, neglecting such divisions as the radicalism of the prairies of the Upper Midwest and the presence of general tensions

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<sup>23</sup> Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1931), while not completely fitting this mode, seems to have established the idea of the 1920s as a clear break from previous decades. John D. Hicks, *Republican Ascendancy: 1921-1933* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), is probably the classical statement of the era as a conservative one apart from the times both before and after it. Francis Russell, *The Great Interlude: Neglected Events and Persons from the First World War to the Depression* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964) and Elizabeth Stevenson, *Babbitts and Bohemians: From the Great War to the Great Depression* (New York: Macmillan, 1967) serve as just two examples of how entrenched this mode of analysis was by the 1960s, the period when many of the currents in the literature of urban politics were developed. Michael L. Kurtz, *The Challenging of America: 1920-1945* (Arlington Heights, IL: The Forum Press, 1986) indicates the lingering of this view into the 1980s, even after the start of revision in other directions.

<sup>24</sup> For just a few examples of the research in this direction, see Stanley Coben, *Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Lynn Dumenil, *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); David J. Goldberg, *Discontented America: The United States in the 1920s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Niall Palmer, *The Twenties in America: Politics and History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); Charles J. Shindo, *1927 and the Rise of Modern America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010). For a collection of primary sources demonstrating that the 1920s was seen as contentious during its own time, see Daniel H. Borus, editor, *These United States: Portraits of America from the 1920s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

between urban and rural America. Just as important was the demonstration of the fact that the 1920s, in many regards, was a transformative time. Rather than a break between the Progressive Era and New Deal, the 1920s contained both the rising mass culture and managerialism that distinguished the latter period from the former. This understanding has taken place in specific fields as well: the image of women as having a declining role in political life after suffrage has similarly been deflated, as much research has demonstrated continuity into the 1920s.<sup>25</sup> However, these scholarly findings have not been fully applied into the study of urban politics for several different reasons. Part of this was a matter of chronology: many of those writing on urban politics were either writing in the 1950s and 1960s or received their training during that time period, resulting in these scholars either working before this new research had taken place or having not had the time to integrate these findings into their work.<sup>26</sup> As a result, the interpretation of the 1920s as a time out of step, rather than a time of social and cultural transformation, remained in the urban political literature long after it vanished from other scholarship.

Just as important for the failure of the scholarship on the 1920s to influence the study of urban politics was the ways in which scholarship on urban politics had been shaped during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>27</sup> The scholarship on the subject in the 1920s and the

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<sup>25</sup> Joanne L. Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers' Pensions in Chicago, 1911-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Kristi Anderson, *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics Before the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> This point is clearly demonstrated in looking at many of the works to be cited in the following pages, which date from this rough period.

<sup>27</sup> At this point, a note for conceptual clarity is of importance. Urban politics, as a broad subject, is sweeping in nature, and can incorporate large amounts of work from a great variety of fields, for which a

1930s by both historians and political scientists tended to be rooted in conceptions from the popular press of the 1900s, most notably the writings of Lincoln Steffens, which tended to consider urban politics as a tale of citizens against the machine.<sup>28</sup> This approach was heavily influential, resulting in early scholarship having something of a moralistic anti-boss approach in its content and interpretations. In the late 1940s, this methodology was challenged by the prominent sociologist Robert Merton, who argued (with virtually no hard evidence) that political organizations had latent functions that made them a positive good through providing services.<sup>29</sup> In the decades that followed, much of the literature on urban politics followed Merton's lead, in trying to reinterpret both political organizations and reformers, suggesting greater complexities to these groups and breaking from the moralistic traditions of the past.<sup>30</sup> However, the Mertonian approach still conceived of urban politics as fighting between reformers and the machine:

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study of this nature cannot adequately incorporate. In the discussion of the historiography that follows, I have chosen to focus my study on urban electoral politics and on the structure of these politics, and, when I use the term "urban politics" in this study, I am considering these practices unless otherwise noted. This in no way is meant to be deprecatory on other varieties and approaches to the subject, but a necessary intervention to try to control a work that even focused narrowly runs the risk of growing unwieldy. It also should be noted that this consideration only makes sense in a broad context- only through understanding the social and cultural do urban electoral politics make any sense.

<sup>28</sup> Lincoln Steffens, *The Shame of the Cities* (New York: McClure, Phillips, & Co., 1904), is a classic statement of this theme. For other examples, see Harold Zink, *City Bosses in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1930); Robert Sharon Allen, editor, *Our Fair City* (New York: Vanguard, 1947); J.T. Salter, *Boss Rule: Portraits in City Politics* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1935).

<sup>29</sup> Robert King Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, revised edition (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957), 71-82.

<sup>30</sup> For some examples of this literature, see Lyle W. Dorsett, *The Pendergast Machine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Melvin G. Holli, *Reform in Detroit: Hazen S. Pingree and Urban Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Bruce M. Stave, *The New Deal and the Last Hurrah: Pittsburgh Machine Politics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970); Bruce M. Stave, editor, *Urban Bosses, Machines, and Progressive Reformers* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1971); as well as Schiesl.

while the machine was not always the bad guy and the reformers not always the good guys, there was still an assumption that these relationships explained urban politics. Only in recent decades has scholarship emerged to challenge the underlying assumption of urban politics being solely reformers versus machines, demonstrating that political affairs were complex in ways that these approaches negated and that in many places viewing urban politics as being simply bosses versus reformers ignored what was actually going on.<sup>31</sup> This focus on reformers and bosses affected scholarship on urban politics in several regards. Because there had been until the 1970s a parallel assumption that the New Deal killed urban political organizations by taking social welfare functions, it encouraged a narrow focus in the Progressive Era.<sup>32</sup> Later revisionism has been unable to break from this approach, and has tended to maintain a similarly chronological focus even while engaging in rebuttal of past understandings. Finally, by looking narrowly at one element of urban political engagement, it was highly possible to miss other periods because they failed to fit into the model that had been implied by Mertonian analysis.

Perhaps the best demonstration of the limitations of analyzing urban politics through the lens of bosses versus machines can be found in the case studies of Chicago,

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<sup>31</sup> In addition to the previously cited McCaffery and Deutsch works, see Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); John C. Putnam, *Class and Gender Politics in Progressive-Era Seattle* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008); and Philip J. Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Tellingly, even these works have tended to follow the tradition of focusing on urban politics during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era at the expense of the 1920s.

<sup>32</sup> The Stave work cited above is of significance as being the first major scholarly challenge to this theory. For a more detailed challenge of the social welfare functions of political machines, see Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

Detroit, and Boston. Chicago was a city where both parties had multiple factions fighting one another for political office, and while both parties had factions that were farther along in consolidating control over their respective party, neither could claim to have completed this during the 1920s. The Chicago general election was a race where all three candidates offered variant types of reform: William Dever and Arthur Lueder respectively represented social and structural reform as understood by theorists of urban politics since Melvin Holli, while William Cunnea's reform message was highly tied to Socialism.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, these were reformers who while not machine hands were not independent of party organizations: Dever ran with backing of a united Democratic Party, while Lueder was the candidate of anti-Thompson Republicans. If Chicago had too many factions to make machine formation plausible, Detroit and Boston did not have enough, as structural changes in both cities had removed political parties from having a major direct role in urban politics. In Detroit, the three candidates of 1924 reflected divides in the city's population, with John Smith as a candidate of working-class Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans, Joseph Martin a candidate of the city's upper-crust, and Charles Bowles running with working-class Protestant support. In Boston, politics worked on a personality basis, with even successful politicians like James Michael Curley having their political support range significantly between elections. In both Detroit and Boston, reform and machine lines were a subject of debate, as various candidates considered themselves reformers and their foes machine candidates. These case studies demonstrate that urban politics were not reductive to a boss/reformer framework, nor a display of

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<sup>33</sup> Holli, 157-181, offers a detailed comparison of social and structural reform. Finegold's models of municipal populists, traditional reform, and a reform coalition basically apply the same model.



apathy, but instead demonstrate reform as being a nebulous concept that seemingly everyone tried to claim, leaving an electorate judging this on grounds influenced by ethnic and class concerns.

### **Understandings of Three Cities**

Another point in which these case studies hold significance is in their offering a new understanding of urban politics in these particular cities. Chicago, Detroit, and Boston have all been the subjects of various degrees of scholarly study in general terms and in terms of urban politics, including in all three cases some consideration of urban politics during the 1920s. However, an important point of difference involves the use of these case studies as a means of understanding urban politics in these cities. None of these cities has had a systematic consideration of the elections under review for this study. In the case of Boston, that has meant more or less complete neglect, as, other than a few references essentially in passing, there has been no scholarly consideration of the events of 1925 and only limited considerations from more popular sources.<sup>34</sup> Detroit has received more substantial study, with accounts of the events of 1924 in both Kenneth Jackson's study of the urban Ku Klux Klan and in Raymond Fragnoli's research into the Detroit Citizens League.<sup>35</sup> Neither of these, however, can be considered complete: Fragnoli's focus on the Detroit Citizens League made his work somewhat narrow in terms of considering the election generally, and Jackson's work, while of great value in

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<sup>34</sup> For one of these popular treatments, see *Boston Globe*, 8/21/1983.

<sup>35</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); Raymond R. Fragnoli, *The Transformation of Reform: Progressivism in Detroit- And After, 1912-1933* (New York: Garland, 1982).

describing the rise of the Detroit Klan, was limited in its consideration of the broader Detroit context, and in the close to fifty years since its original publication has tended to be largely followed by other scholars rather than fully reexamined.<sup>36</sup> Finally, the 1923 Chicago election received a study shortly afterwards involving non-voting that is of value in understanding the motives of the Chicago electorate, but later scholarly writing has had limitations: the most substantial consideration, that of John Schmidt in his biography of William Dever, suffers as does much of that work from Schmidt being excessively worshipful of Dever as a politician, while Jackson's review of the Chicago Ku Klux Klan, while generally valuable, largely was not applied to electoral politics.<sup>37</sup> In these ways, it is clear that there is much room for scholarly consideration, as none of these topics can be considered as having exhaustive coverage.

The broader literature on all of these cities further demonstrates limitations in our understanding of urban politics. The historiography on Chicago is vast and encompasses many subjects, requiring a study much vaster than that which can be offered here. In terms of urban politics, several phases are present in terms of scholarly analysis. The first of these, extending from the 1920s into the 1940s, was dominated by political scientists

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<sup>36</sup> Even other works on the Klan in Michigan have tended to demonstrate this: Craig Fox, *Everyday Klansfolk: White Protestant Life and the KKK in 1920s Michigan* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011) and JoEllen McNergney Vinyard, *Right in Michigan's Grassroots: From the KKK to the Michigan Militia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011) have largely relied on Jackson for the Detroit element of their work.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Edward Merriam and Harold Foote Gosnell, *Non-Voting: Causes and Methods of Control* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924); John R. Schmidt, "The Mayor Who Cleaned Up Chicago": *A Political Biography of William E. Dever* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989).

and consisted of analysis of the practice of politics in Chicago.<sup>38</sup> This literature includes much of value for understanding elements of Chicago political life, such as Sonya Forthal's work on precinct captains in Chicago and the work of Harold Gosnell during the 1920s and 1930s. However, the very contemporaneous status of this work makes its use something to take care with: most of this work does not offer a historical context, and some of this work is partisan in ways that can be dangerous if not adequately accounted for. The 1930s also saw the rise of much popular writing on Chicago politics, which have great value in offering interpretations of these matters not found among scholars, but which had tendencies in myth-making that require care in their use.<sup>39</sup> These two groups of work were deeply important for later writings on Chicago politics, as many of the works to come in later decades would use this material among their chief primary sources. As a result, this work has colored understandings of Chicago, often serving to emphasize it at its most corrupt and dysfunctional in ways that later writers would find it hard to break from.

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<sup>38</sup> For some of these works, see Charles Edward Merriam, *Chicago: A More Intimate View of Urban Politics* (New York: MacMillan, 1929); Carroll Hill Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926: A Study in Election Methods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926); Carroll Hill Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith: A Study in Representative Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931); Sonya Forthal, *Cogwheels of Democracy: A Study of the Precinct Captain* (New York: William-Frederick Press, 1946); Harold F. Gosnell, *Machine Politics: Chicago Model* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937); Harold F. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935); Edward Moss Martin, *The Role of the Bar in Electing the Bench in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936).

<sup>39</sup> Examples of these popular works include Fletcher Dobyns, *The Underworld of American Politics* (New York: Fletcher Dobyns, 1932); John Bright, *Hizzoner Big Bill Thompson: An Idyll of Chicago* (New York: J. Cape and H. Smith, 1930); William H. Stewart, *The Twenty Incredible Years, as "Heard and Seen"* (Chicago: M.A. Donohue and Sons, 1935); while Herbert Asbury, *Gem of the Prairie: An Informal History of the Chicago Underworld* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1940), offers much on linkages with crime and politics.

Historical writing on Chicago urban politics largely began in the late 1940s, and at first came from the same mixture of political scientists and non-academics responsible for contemporary writing on the subject.<sup>40</sup> In the period between the 1940s and 1970s, two distinctive trends can be noted in scholarly writing on Chicago politics. A series of unpublished dissertations from the late 1940s to the early 1970s considered urban politics largely with a Gilded Age/Progressive Era focus, and tended to focus on the nature of reform in Chicago between the 1890s and the 1910s.<sup>41</sup> This literature can be regarded as part of the general questioning of the nature of reform that emerged in response to Merton, and tended to portray reform in Chicago as dominated by business and professional elites. At the same time, the telling of Chicago political history through biography, which had begun to emerge in the 1920s, rose as an approach to understanding urban politics. This approach tended to look at organization leaders in Chicago politics, and tended to use their lives to explain political practices in Chicago.<sup>42</sup> At their best, these works succeeded in explaining broad political processes that were not

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<sup>40</sup> For some examples of this, see Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, *Lords of the Levee: The Story of Bathhouse John and Hinky Dink* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943); Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, *Big Bill of Chicago* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953); Alex Gottfried, *Boss Cermak of Chicago: A Study of Political Leadership* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962).

<sup>41</sup> Ralph Russell Tingley, "From Carter Harrison II to Fred Busse: A Study of Chicago Political Parties and Personages from 1896 to 1907" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1950); Michael Patrick McCarthy, "Businessmen and Professionals in Municipal Reform: The Chicago Experience, 1887-1920" (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1970); Donald D. Marks, "Polishing the Gem of the Prairie: The Evolution of Civic Reform Consciousness in Chicago, 1870-1900" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1974); Sidney I. Roberts, "Businessmen in Revolt: Chicago, 1874-1900" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1960).

<sup>42</sup> In addition to the previously-cited Gottfried work, see Claudius O. Johnson, *Carter H. Harrison I, Political Leader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928); Joel A. Tarr, *A Study in Boss Politics: William Lorimer of Chicago* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971). The essays in Paul Michael Green and Melvin G. Holli, editors, *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), while written somewhat later, keep this tradition.

always fully understood by contemporary observers. However, this work tended to further institutionalize a perspective of Chicago politics as one where leaders held dominance over local affairs, which has served to hide both the limitations of political organizations in pre-1930s Chicago and ignore other groups and forces that were of political significance. Both these sets of literature relate directly to the Merton approach in understanding urban political practice, and can be understood as deeply linked in their times.

Starting in the 1970s, fragmentation has taken place in Chicago political historiography, resulting in the emergence of several approaches to understanding urban politics. One of these has been the rise of literature focusing on the roles various ethnic groups had in the urban political sphere.<sup>43</sup> This literature in the aggregate has been very important in understanding the ethnic alignment of Chicago politics, in terms of understanding both the increasing ethnic participation in Chicago politics in the early twentieth century and the eventual alignment of ethnic voters into the Democratic organization in the early 1930s. Similar studies concerning race, gender, and class politics in Chicago have also been engaged in and have pointed to ways in which these subjects must be considered in order to fully understand urban political practices during

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<sup>43</sup> John M. Allswang, *A House for All People: Ethnic Politics in Chicago, 1890-1936* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1971); Arthur W. Thurner, "The Impact of Ethnic Groups on the Democratic Party in Chicago, 1920-1928" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1966); Edward R. Kantowicz, *Polish-American Politics in Chicago, 1888-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Humbert S. Nelli, *Italians in Chicago, 1880-1930: A Study in Ethnic Mobility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Edward Herbert Mazur, *Minyans For A Prairie City: The Politics of Chicago Jewry, 1850-1940* (New York: Garland, 1990).

the period.<sup>44</sup> There has also been much consideration on the roles of certain subjects in urban politics, including the schools, mass transit, and housing, which have served to demonstrate the importance of issues in Chicago politics, against previous writing that had dismissed issues as mattering much in Chicago.<sup>45</sup> A third approach to the study of Chicago politics came from a group of PhD candidates in universities in the Chicago area during the 1980s.<sup>46</sup> Their work has served to offer detailed scholarly understandings of much concerning Chicago politics from the mid-1900s to the end of the Second World War. Much of this work, however, has come from the biographical tradition, and has ranged internally as a result: this literature has tended to be effective at breaking with older understandings of Chicago politics, but in many cases has been limited by scholars

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<sup>44</sup> For race, see Margaret Garb, *Freedom's Ballot: African American Political Struggles in Chicago From Abolition to the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); William J. Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Dianne M. Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987). For gender, see the previously-cited Flanagan work and Wanda A. Hendricks, *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998). For class, see Elizabeth Cohen, *Making A New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Georg Leidenberger, *Chicago's Progressive Alliance: Labor and the Bid for Public Streetcars* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006); Mitchell Newton-Matza, *Intelligent and Honest Radicals: The Chicago Federation of Labor and the Politics of Progression* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013).

<sup>45</sup> Perry Duis, *The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Mary J. Herrick, *The Chicago Schools: A Social and Political History* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1971); David John Hogan, *Class and Reform: School and Society in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Paul F. Barrett, *The Automobile and Urban Transit: The Formation of Public Policy in Chicago, 1900-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983); Thomas Lee Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Neighborhood Deterioration and Middle-Class Reform, Chicago, 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>46</sup> In addition to Schmidt, Roger Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War: Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984); Douglas Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Maureen A. Flanagan, *Charter Reform in Chicago* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987); and Richard Allen Morton, *Justice and Humanity: Edward F. Dunne, Illinois Progressive* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997), were all based on dissertations worked on during the 1980s.

with an undue amount of favoritism for their subjects. Overall, this work has generally demonstrated vitality in understanding Chicago politics, but has yet to be fused together for an overall analysis of Chicago politics.

Detroit has a considerably different scholarly tradition than Chicago: Detroit largely did not produce the sort of contemporary studies that Chicago did, and much of the contemporary political writings that do exist tend to be highly partisan in ways that make its use complicated.<sup>47</sup> In the last few decades, Detroit has been the subject of much literature designed to understand how it emerged as a city, and, especially, how it has declined.<sup>48</sup> This literature on the whole has been rather impressive, including both systematic quantitative study of the emergence of Detroit as an industrial hub in the early twentieth century and careful considerations about the roles of public policy in the decline of Detroit after the Second World War. No one, however, has yet considered both of this together and considered how the fall of Detroit was rooted in its rise, as most scholarly analysis of the fall has tended to root this to later conditions. Of similar importance since the 1970s has been the large amounts of literature produced on the African-American experience in Detroit for both scholarly and popular audiences which has managed to document the racial tensions that were highly present in Detroit during the 1920s, pointing to how these tensions would serve to make race the electric rail of

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<sup>47</sup> Of these, Cash Asher, *Sacred Cows: A Story of the Recall of Mayor Bowles* (Detroit: The Author, 1931) is a pro-Bowles work connected to his recall, while William Pierce Lovett, *Detroit Rules Itself* (Boston: R.G. Badger, 1930) is largely self-promoting for the Detroit Citizens League.

<sup>48</sup> Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); George C. Galster, *Driving Detroit: The Quest for Respectability in Motown* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

Detroit politics from the 1940s onwards.<sup>49</sup> Strangely enough, the Detroit Klan has not really been considered since Kenneth Jackson; while there has been much literature on 1920s racial tensions and even a couple of studies of the Michigan Klan, this has tended to use Jackson's work as their chief, if not sole, source on the subject, in spite of the massive changes to the general historiography on the Klan since he wrote. Aggregated, these works on Detroit urban politics have a peculiar hole present in them. Taken together, the work that has been done on the decline of Detroit and on Detroit racial tensions has served well in explaining the realignment of Detroit politics in class terms that took place in the 1930s parallel to the rise of the United Auto Workers. There have similarly been work of interest concerning the Detroit political structure that emerged in the early twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> However, these two sets of literature have worked somewhat in cross-purposes, as this work has largely not managed fully explain how one set of practices transformed into the other.<sup>51</sup> In these ways, it is clear that there is a need

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<sup>49</sup> Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004); Phyllis Vine, *One Man's Castle: Clarence Darrow in Defense of the American Dream* (New York: Amistad, 2004); Richard Walter Thomas, *Life is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Beth Tompkins Bates, *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); David Allan Levine, *Internal Combustion: The Races in Detroit, 1915-1926* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976).

<sup>50</sup> For some examples of this literature, see Martin Marger, *The Force of Ethnicity: A Study of Urban Elites* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1974); Jayne Morris-Crowther, *The Political Activities of Detroit Clubwomen in the 1920s: A Challenge and a Promise* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013); Henry J. Pratt, *Churches and Urban Government in Detroit and New York, 1895-1994* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004); B.J. Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972).

<sup>51</sup> Karen R. Miller, *Managing Inequality: Northern Racial Liberalism in Interwar Detroit* (New York: New York University Press, 2014) has tried to explain this transition as well as anyone, focusing on evolving racial attitudes during the period between the World Wars. However, this work is not fully effective, in large part because of a lack of clarity in what is being argued concerning these attitudes, as well as broader structural problems within this work.



to link findings about Detroit in earlier and later times to the situation that was present in Detroit during the 1920s, in order to explicate the connections between events in these times.

Boston, compared to both Chicago and Detroit, has had far less written about it as a city, especially for the period between 1850 and 1950. Moreover, in the case of urban politics, both the presence of prominent ward level politicians and the general association of the “Last Hurrah” hypothesis with the career of James Michael Curley has tended to result in a study of urban politics that is heavily focused on individual actors, which, compared to similar work in both Chicago and Detroit, has been weak in terms of connecting them to the larger context in which they operated.<sup>52</sup> Even the case studies on both Brahmin Mugwump reformers in 1890s Massachusetts and on Boston during the Great Depression have had these issues present due to a focus on personalities, rather than on broader events.<sup>53</sup> Writings on Boston affairs contemporaneous with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has tended to be useful in understanding the nature of ethnicity in the neighborhoods of the city, but tended to take a strong judgmental tone in understanding

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<sup>52</sup> Leslie G. Ainsley, *Boston Mahatma* (Boston: B. Humphries, 1949) is a weak work on Martin Lomasney in spite of access to primary sources that no longer exist, Henry Greenleaf Pearson, *Son of New England: James Jackson Storrow, 1864-1926* (Boston: T. Todd, 1932) offers virtually no real analysis, Joseph F. Dineen, *The Purple Shamrock* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949) is full of errors, and even Jack Beatty, *The Rascal King: The Life and Times of James Michael Curley, 1874-1958* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1992), while detailed on Curley, is weak on overall context.

<sup>53</sup> Geoffrey Blodgett, *The Gentle Reformers: Massachusetts Democrats in the Cleveland Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Charles H. Trout, *Boston, the Great Depression, and the New Deal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

political practices that has limited its use in that sense.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, while there have been some useful studies of Massachusetts politics generally in the first third of the twentieth century, these works have tended to largely consider Boston only in passing, in spite of the close ties between state and local government due to the high level of state control over Boston administration.<sup>55</sup> Ultimately, the best work by far on Boston in political terms has been that of James Connolly, who demonstrated that ethnic politics, often regarded as endemic in Boston, has only emerged in the 1900s and 1910s after ward politics, often regarded as dominant, had been wiped out by charter reform.<sup>56</sup> This work, however, cuts off in the early 1920s, and therefore misses the evolution of ethnic politics in Boston that came during that period. Overall, Boston offers perhaps the greatest room for a revisionary understanding, as it is the place where in relative terms we understand the least concerning political life.

### **Changes in Methods**

This study breaks from general trends in urban political history in several different regards. One of the most important of these is the use of four elections in three cities as a lens for studying urban political practices over a narrow span of time. While there have been some other studies to engage in this comparative approach, for the most part this has been neglected in favor of studies that narrowly focus on one city. The use of

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<sup>54</sup> Robert A. Woods and Albert J. Kennedy, *The Zone of Emergence* (Cambridge, MA: MIT and Harvard University Press, 1962); Robert A. Woods, *Americans in Process: A Settlement Study* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1920).

<sup>55</sup> J. Joseph Huthmacher, *Massachusetts People and Politics, 1919-1933* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1959); Richard M. Abrams, *Conservatism in a Progressive Era: Massachusetts Politics, 1900-1912* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

<sup>56</sup> James J. Connolly, *The Triumph of Ethnic Progressivism: Urban Political Culture in Boston, 1900-1925* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

an approach looking at a few major cities has value in terms of how specific and general points can be made using this approach. By using actual case studies, very specific details related to the case studies can be noted, in contrast with approaches that have attempted to engage in broader generalizations and as a result have tended to make claims that do not match affairs as they actually were. At the same time, the fact that there are three different places under review at very close intervals in time holds value, in pointing to common trends taking place in each of these cities and in noting when things remain relatively constant and when substantial change took place. As a result, I hope to be able to make broader conclusions concerning electoral politics at this point that have a larger impact, whereas many single-city case studies cannot be sure if what they are observing has any broader meaning. Overall, this shall serve as a way to include the best elements of a comparative and case study approach while trying to avoid the pitfalls of either method.

Another place where a substantial difference in approach is present concerns the relative importance in this study of actions taken by the electorate compared to those of individual actors. Due to source limitations, much about these case studies will concern the actions of various individual figures in the urban political sphere. However, my study is meant to avoid a traditional interpretation of urban politics in which elite actors hold all the cards and pull all the strings. This approach is one that does not work because it excessively simplifies the nature of power in the urban political sphere. In none of my case study cities was there one person, one organization, or one force that could be said to completely control local political practices. As a result, an approach that assumes people

acted solely in accordance with the desires of the powerful cannot work as in practice the general public was a lot more fickle than this assumption allows. Therefore, this consideration of urban politics notes practices which have a grassroots basis: the actual vote is a main case in point, but such things as polling, political demonstrations, letters to the editor, organizing committees, and even acts of violence can serve to demonstrate the nature of urban grassroots politics. Most importantly, by engaging in this approach, I hope to shed light on urban political practices that have been ignored in top-down considerations of the subject because they do not fit into the traditional model of political activity, and which serve to further explicate what the electorate thought was of importance.

Still another change made in understanding urban politics concerns my efforts to incorporate elements of social history and cultural history into political history. At the political level with which this work is concerned, political practices were rarely isolated from the broader social and cultural worlds of the general public, and in all three of my case studies, differences in terms of social and cultural matters played a chief role in explaining political practices among various groups in the electorate. As a result, it is necessary in terms of understanding events in these cities to include material and findings from a variety of approaches to history in order to fully understand the logic motivating political actions, as a purely political approach will be partial at best and bewildering at worse. As a result, such approaches as ethnic history, place studies, gender history, religious history, labor history, transportation history, and the history of mass media have been considered in this work, as all of these approaches shed light on the nature of urban

electoral politics during the 1920s. It is also my hope to demonstrate that in many regards political history on the urban level is social history, and that regarding it as something that can be held apart from the broader history of society is not tenable in practice. The voters in this work did not engage in political practices in a vacuum, as their political practices directly intersected with and was a product of their social and cultural experiences.

My use of chronology in this work serves as yet another break from standard studies of urban politics in a couple of different regards. On the one hand, very few of the studies that have been made on urban politics use individual elections to the degree that I do, instead choosing to have a somewhat broader sweep in time. By focusing on particular case studies, I hope to use events in a relatively narrow space in time to shed greater light on matters taking place over longer periods of time, thereby engaging in the writing of political microhistories. At the same time, my case studies in terms of specific elections only gain meaning when placed in their larger context, in which I look decades in the past to understand the origins of the events under consideration and decades into the future in order to understand what significance these elections ultimately held. This approach breaks from other writing on the subject of urban politics in two separate regards: quite a few writing on the subject have completely neglected offering broader context, and many of those offering this context tend to be much briefer in their remarks, particularly as they relate to events after the period under study. In taking this approach, I hope to provide the ultimate significance of my work by demonstrating how the events I

am considering resulted in substantial changes in political practices in ways which have not always been clearly apparent in previous studies.

The last important difference comes in terms of my understanding of the 1920s, and how my analysis offers a new way of understanding that decade in urban politics. In all three of my case studies, it becomes clear that the decade was not a conservative interlude which can be understood outside the broad sweep of other political events. Rather, the events in these cities were transformative, resulting in a system of political practices that was substantially different from what had been engaged in beforehand. By itself, this would not be particularly noteworthy, as much writing about the 1920s generally has been making these points for many years, making their application to urban politics simply a move long overdue. Rather, the significance of this decade for later political practices in all three of my case studies is where this gains importance. I hold that the events of the 1920s were key for all three of these cities in terms of changes that occurred in the urban political sphere. In the decades that followed the 1920s, urban political practices in Chicago, Detroit, and Boston would become far different than they were in the previous decades, at times to almost unrecognizable degrees. In all three of these cases, I shall root the differences present to the 1920s, by demonstrating that the essential differences that caused later practices to break with previous ones all became visible in these elections. This interpretation changes how the 1920s is understood by showing it to be a key time for urban political practice, rather than a time that can safely be ignored. In doing this, I hope to push for a new approach to urban politics, by

suggesting the need to avoid past chronological pitfalls in order to completely understand urban political practices.

In addition to these general changes in terms of the study of urban politics, there are several interventions present concerning certain aspects of political life during the period which are represented by the various case studies. A longstanding debate has taken place concerning how reform in the urban political sphere should be understood. This has included ranging interpretations of the nature of reformers (who have been everything from the saviors of the city to those that ruined matters), as well as a substantial debate involving the ways in which reform should be classified, and even the question as to the nature of electoral support for reform.<sup>57</sup> One point I demonstrate in each of these case studies is that the image of fighting for reform was of great importance during this decade, and that there was a desire to claim this imagery by politicians with a range of views on various substantive matters. Chicago serves of importance as a means of testing two elements concerning how reform worked in practice. The first of these involves understanding how much of reform at the urban level was motivated by elite actions versus grass-roots action: while much reform was led by elites, I plan to demonstrate that reform was not simply something dictated by elite actors, but was something very present on the grassroots level. The other item of relevance notes how all candidates in 1923 considered themselves reformers while at the same time offering wildly different ideas about reform. I plan to use the electoral performance of these reformers as a means to understand how religious, ethnic, and class resulted in different interpretations of what

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<sup>57</sup> Of the works previously cited, Holli, Finegold, Fragnoli, Schiesl, Connolly, and both works by Flanagan all consider reform meanings to various degrees.

reform was. In doing this, I hope to better explain how various groups in the city understood reform, and better explain the reasons why reform was popular in some cities and unpopular in others.

Another point that I shall explore in this dissertation is the Ku Klux Klan as a force in urban politics. Kenneth Jackson, in his seminal work on the urban Klan, argued for the Klan being a force that mobilized lower-middle-class Protestants, often ones that for various reasons felt challenged in the urban sphere. There has been no overarching consideration of the Klan specifically in urban areas since Jackson, but there have been a large number of case studies looking at the Klan in cities considered by Jackson and ones he ignored.<sup>58</sup> Combined, this work has complicated Jackson's interpretation of the Klan, pointing to the Klan as being broader in class terms than Jackson argued, and in being able to pull out evidence demonstrating greater complexities to the Klan situation than Jackson in his study was able to mobilize. In my work, I offer points of interest about the urban Klan in several regards. The Klan appeared in all three of my case studies, and I plan to use this as a means of demonstrating the rise and fall of the Ku Klux Klan, as it went from being an emergent political force to being something used more as a political scare tactic than a viable political threat. For the city in which the Klan was most visible, Detroit, I plan to test a point that has been neglected in previous writing about the urban Klan. Often, there is a vague tendency to imply that the Klan came from nowhere, and

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<sup>58</sup> For some of these case studies, see Robert Alan Goldberg, *Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); William D. Jenkins, *Steel Valley Klan: The Ku Klux Klan in Ohio's Mahoning Valley* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990); and Shawn Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo, New York* (New York: New York University Press, 1995).



ignore the question of what roots the Klan had in political terms. In the case of Detroit, I will test this by examining how urban political practices prior to the rise of the Klan enabled it to gain a foothold in local politics. In these ways, I hope to continue the interpretation of the Klan as an urban mass movement that has been of growing importance in writing about that organization, while at the same time demonstrating that its emergence could be as much a continuation of past political traditions as a break with them.

Another point that will be tested in general terms is the nature of ethnic divisions in political matters. Much of the literature that exists on ethnic groups participating in urban politics has tended to focus on their entrance into the urban political sphere, and has considered their mobilization and their development as a bloc of political significance. This type of study, while clearly noting that all members of an ethnic group did not vote the same way, has tended not to explain why differences in opinion occurred, or suggest any reasons that might be underlying these differences. Of all three of my case studies, Boston serves as the best way to test the nature of ethnic group divisions, due to its status as a city then heavily dominated by one ethnic group and the presence of a large number of candidates from that ethnic group. By looking at the stances that the Irish candidates for Mayor took, I shall demonstrate that the collapse of ethno-religious solidarity in 1925 was not merely the result of political ambitions but was rooted in the ways in which growing class divides among the Boston Irish had resulted in different political perspectives. The election results demonstrate that these differences were not simply rhetorical ones by candidates, but reflected an electorate that in terms of class and

spatial location had heavily fractured, resulting in widely-differing views on what matters were of political importance. In these ways, I plan to offer a consideration of the roots concerning political differences in ethnic groups to a degree not engaged in before in previous scholarship, and demonstrate its presence both in terms of stances and in electoral behavior.

Turning back to the incidents that opened this work, the ways in which these incidents can be seen to reflect these revisions in approach to urban politics becomes relevant. All three of these incidents reflect the actions of non-elite actors: the candidates for office seem not to have masterminded the chaos in 1923 Chicago, Charles Bowles found the Arena Gardens riot damaging to his campaign, and even Daniel Coakley probably did not want to have a heckler almost die in front of him. Detroit and Boston both indicate the importance of culture in their political actions: the Arena Gardens riot reflected a clash on matters involving the Protestantism that mobilized the Klan, while the appeals of Coakley were heavily rooted in working-class Irish culture. The election chaos in Chicago simultaneously demonstrates why the turn to reform would take place, while its relative mildness suggests reform influences already in play. That the Klan could mobilize thousands demonstrates the strength of the Klan as a mass movement, offering suggestions towards understanding it. Finally, it seems important that the heckler of Coakley was another Irishman, rather than someone of another ethnic heritage. In these respects, the importance of these incidents becomes clearer, making their relevance for understanding urban politics readily apparent.

## **Chapter 1: A Game of Factions: Chicago Politics to 1923**

1923 was a distinctive year in Chicago politics. In that year, all three candidates for mayor ran on reformist lines, offering various proposals concerning the reform of the city. On the one hand, this seems peculiar given the political traditions of Chicago, which has been regarded as “the city not ready for reform” for over half a century. However, this development gains intelligibility when looking at the previous decades of Chicago history. From the 1890s onward, Chicago politics was strongly contested between both major parties and a variety of third-party forces, with no party being able to completely dominate local politics. This was furthered by the fact that both major parties were heavily factionalized: contrary to popular mythology, no political machines existed in the Chicago of the early twentieth century, as the instability of local politics was such that no faction was able to claim dominance for long. As a result, reform, especially when connected with popular issues like opposition to traction interests, was able to find a political foothold, never powerful enough itself to clear its foes completely from Chicago politics, but strong enough to have major influence on Chicago political life. In these ways, the period to 1923 was dynamic, with factions in both major parties, a host of minor parties, organized labor, and reform groups all having ups and downs throughout the period.

This state of affairs was epitomized in the 1923 primary. Chicago reform groups, after several years of decline and fracture, managed to recover by focusing on the goal of removing from office William Hale Thompson, who through a combination of political scandals and difficulties responding to racial and economic tensions had managed to

alienate most voters in Chicago. Reformers formed several committees proposing candidates for mayor, and, in doing so, had perfect timing: both Democrats and anti-Thompson Republicans were looking for figures who could unite disparate factions, in large part due to recollections of how split opposition reelected Thompson in 1923. Both of these groups selected candidates proposed by reform committee: Democrats went with Appellate Court Judge William E. Dever, while Republicans backed Postmaster Arthur Lueder. This reform turn scared Thompson out of the race, and left his faction without an actual candidate. In the primary, Dever and Socialist candidate William Cunnea both spent time preparing for the general election, while Lueder fought three Republican opponents, representing forces respectively against the anti-Thompson coalition, for the Ku Klux Klan, and against Prohibition. Ultimately, these forces could not prevent Lueder from getting the Republican nomination, but did combine to reflect political weaknesses of his. Meanwhile, the primary also demonstrated reform on the grassroots, as various local organizations, united under the Better City Council Committee banner, managed to sweep pro-Thompson aldermen from the City Council.

### **Setting The Scene: Chicago in The 1890s**

The late 1880s and early 1890s was a time of transformation for social and political life in Chicago in several regards. First among these was spatial reordering of the city: in 1889, after several years of effort, the city of Chicago annexed several suburban townships located adjacent to the old city core, tripling the area of the city,

adding 200,000 residents, and making Chicago the “Second City” in population.<sup>59</sup> This annexation had several consequences: it would take a decade of struggle to resolve the jumble of township governments, and it further encouraged the suburbanization of Chicago industry, as Western Electric joined the Union Stock Yards, Pullman, and the steel industry as being Chicago industries outside the old city.<sup>60</sup> Finally, this ended the annexation wave for Chicago, which would never again make as substantial claims for new land as it had in 1889.<sup>61</sup> Another major turning point in the late 1880s and early 1890s was a change in the ethnic composition of Chicago. Chicago had always been a major hub of immigration, and by the late 1880s large populations of Germans, Irish, and Swedes had established themselves.<sup>62</sup> In the late 1880s, new migrants entered, and, while never in as homogenous neighborhoods as in myth, had distinctive settlement patterns: the Polish community centered around Milwaukee Avenue in an area that would gain the

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<sup>59</sup> For a broad summary of this annexation, see Michael Patrick McCarthy, “Businessmen and Professionals in Municipal Reform: The Chicago Experience, 1887-1920” (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1970), 1-22. For the use of the phrase “Second City” for Chicago, see A.J. Liebling, *Chicago: The Second City* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1952).

<sup>60</sup> For township governments, see Douglas Sutherland, *Fifty Years on the Civic Front: A History of the Civic Federation's Dynamic Activities, the Evolution of a Citizen Movement in Chicago and the Development of Organized Public Interest in the Costs and Procedures of Local Governments* (Chicago: Civic Federation, 1943), 12-13, 22-23. For the stockyards, see Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-54* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); for Pullman, see Stanley Buder, *Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning, 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); for the steel industry, see Elizabeth Cohen, *Making A New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 21-26. For materials studying those working at the Hawthorne Works, see Western Electric Company Hawthorne Studies Collection, Harvard Business School.

<sup>61</sup> Michael P. McCarthy, “Chicago, the Annexation Movement and Progressive Reform”, in Michael H. Ebner and Eugene M. Tobin, editors, *The Age of Urban Reform: New Perspectives on the Progressive Era* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1977), 51-52.

<sup>62</sup> For ethnic calculations involving voting strength in Chicago in 1892, see Giovanni E. Schiavo, *The Italians in Chicago: A Study in Americanization* (Chicago: Italian American Publishing Company, 1928), 102.

nickname of “Polish Downtown” and in the Back-of-the-Yards in Southwest Chicago, while Russian Jews settled around Maxwell Street on the West Side, Italians in the “Bloody 19<sup>th</sup>” on the West Side and on the Near North Side, and Czechs (or, to use the local phrase, Bohemians) around South Lawndale on the West Side, with the location of sites of employment often influencing residency patterns.<sup>63</sup> In the following thirty years, these migrants started to play an active political role, with Poles and Bohemians emerging in the 1890s, Russian Jews a decade later, and Italians in the 1920s.<sup>64</sup> This rise in ethnic politics paralleled a restructuring of Chicago labor politics. Chicago had long had a reputation as a site of labor unrest, with major strikes in 1877 and 1886 and a labor party that had briefly been of significance in the late 1880s, a tradition that demonstrated its continued relevance in the Pullman Strike of 1894.<sup>65</sup> During the 1890s, a centralized citywide labor organization was established with the rise of the Chicago Federation of Labor (or CFL), incorporating virtually all organized labor in Chicago.<sup>66</sup> After spending

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<sup>63</sup> For this point about a lack of ethnic homogeneity, see Thomas Lee Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Neighborhood Deterioration and Middle-Class Reform, Chicago, 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 67-68. Ernest W. Burgess, “Urban Areas”, in T.V. Smith and Leonard D. White, editors, *Chicago: An Experiment in Social Science Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), 124. For ethnic settlement patterns, see Cohen, 17.

<sup>64</sup> For recollections of this rise at the turn of the century, see Carter H. Harrison, *Growing Up with Chicago: Sequel to “Stormy Years”* (Chicago: R.F. Seymour, 1944), 224-225. While Harrison’s opinions always must be taken with a grain of salt, he would have been in a position to observe. Edward R. Kantowicz, *Polish-American Politics in Chicago, 1888-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Humbert S. Nelli, *Italians in Chicago, 1880-1930: A Study in Ethnic Mobility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Edward Herbert Mazur, *Minyans For A Prairie City: The Politics of Chicago Jewry, 1850-1940* (New York: Garland, 1990).

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Jacke Townsend, *The Germans of Chicago* (Chicago: n.p., 1932), 47-53. Buder, *passim*, especially in Chs. 12-16.

<sup>66</sup> Georg Leidenberger, *Chicago’s Progressive Alliance: Labor and the Bid for Public Streetcars* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), Ch.1 *passim*.

much of the 1890s dominated by grafters associated with the city's building trades, the CFL started having some organizational success in the 1900s, managing to organize the Teamsters and the school teachers of Chicago, while at the same time failing in efforts to organize the steel and meat-packing industries.<sup>67</sup> Overall, this combination of new territory, new people, and newly organized labor combined to suggest a reorganization of Chicago society.

One thing that did not transform during this period was the basic structure of Chicago government, as city government, county government, the Metropolitan Sanitary District (which controlled the city's water supply), three major and a dozen minor park boards, the Board of Education, and the Chicago Library Board all served as authorities with taxation and patronage powers.<sup>68</sup> The mayor of Chicago had limited powers and faced a City Council that had substantial powers over the budget, legislation, and appointments, in a city that lacked home rule and was limited in its legislative abilities.<sup>69</sup> This combination of circumstances had several consequences. In order to claim the strength that was lacking in their official position, mayors of Chicago tended to build political power. The large amounts of patronage present in Chicago government

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<sup>67</sup> For labor racketeering, see Thomas R. Pegram, *Partisans and Progressives: Private Interest and Public Policy in Illinois, 1870-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 66. For organizational successes and failures, see Leidenberg, 19-20, 22, 24-25; Dominic A. Pacyga, *Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago: Workers on the South Side, 1880-1922* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 175-178, 191-193.

<sup>68</sup> Carroll Hill Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926: A Study in Election Methods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 9-13; Sutherland, 19; McCarthy, 44-48.

<sup>69</sup> Blair A. Ruble, *Second Metropolis: Pragmatic Pluralism in Gilded Age Chicago, Silver Age Moscow, and Meiji Tokyo* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2001), 68; Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 45. For the absence of home rule, see Pegram, 87-88.

encouraged the building of factions to gain followers, while the sheer multiplicity of these authorities made a monopoly by any one figure impossible. Prior to the 1890s, both parties had already developed organizations: the Republicans had leadership closely affiliated with the major newspapers of the city, while the Democrats had both the gambler Michael McDonald and perpetual mayor Carter H. Harrison I serving as leading party figures.<sup>70</sup> However, this leadership had a limited citywide impact, with local political leadership still heavily centered on the ward level, best demonstrated in Chicago by the “Gray Wolves” that at that time dominated the City Council.<sup>71</sup> These operatives tended to work well with each other across partisan lines, using their elective positions in order to engage in personal enrichment in ways that hindered broader partisan development.<sup>72</sup> Even Harrison was reliant on his personal following among ethnic voters in Chicago for his repeated elections, rather than any real citywide organization.<sup>73</sup> This set of conditions was one that was open for a challenge, with room present for those wishing to form a stronger organization citywide.

During the early 1890s, both major parties began to build citywide organizations. Among Democrats, Mayor John P. Hopkins and Probate Court Clerk Roger C. Sullivan

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<sup>70</sup> For the newspapers, see Joel Arthur Tarr, *A Study in Boss Politics: William Lorimer of Chicago* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 25-28. For Harrison, see Claudius O. Johnson, *Carter H. Harrison I, Political Leader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928). For McDonald, see Richard Lindberg, *The Gambler King of Clark Street: Michael C. McDonald and the Rise of Chicago's Democratic Machine* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009).

<sup>71</sup> Paul Michael Green, “The Chicago Democratic Party, 1840-1920: From Factionalism to Political Organization” (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975), 54-56.

<sup>72</sup> Green, 95-96.

<sup>73</sup> Johnson, 173-200 *passim*.



formed a centralized organization under their leadership by Hopkins' election in late 1893.<sup>74</sup> The Republicans developed a citywide organization consisting of factional leaders associated with various portions of the city: the West Side-based William Lorimer was the acknowledged leader of this group, with Henry L. Hertz of the Northwest Side, James Pease of the North Side, and Thomas N. Jamieson of Hyde Park also serving as major figures.<sup>75</sup> While these organizations created a centralized leadership that had not previously existed, there were limitations to their powers over their parties as a whole. Hopkins and Sullivan were politically damaged by their role in the Ogden Gas scheme of 1895, in which the Chicago City Council awarded franchise rights to a company that only existed on paper in order to enrich Hopkins, Sullivan, and some of their political associates.<sup>76</sup> Lorimer, meanwhile, was reliant on his abilities to appease various factions among Chicago Republicans to keep his status as a party leader, and had an unsavory reputation that similarly hindered organizational development.<sup>77</sup> This was further complicated by realignment that took place in the 1890s: when the Depression of 1893 hit, Chicago had rapidly transitioned from being a Democratic-leaning but competitive

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<sup>74</sup> Buder, 111, 115; Virgil W. Peterson, *Barbarians in Our Midst: A History of Chicago Crime and Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1952), 66; Green, 47-51. There is no biographical account for Hopkins; for Sullivan, see Harold Zink, *City Bosses in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1930), 291-301.

<sup>75</sup> Mazur, 116; Ralph Russell Tingley, "From Carter Harrison II to Fred Busse: A Study of Chicago Political Parties and Personages from 1896 to 1907" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1950), 14-15; Harold L. Ickes, *The Autobiography of a Curmudgeon* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1943), 34; Tarr, 29.

<sup>76</sup> Tarr, 80; Green, 56-58; Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, *Lords of the Levee: The Story of Bathhouse John and Hinky Dink* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943), 118-122 and 120 footnote.

<sup>77</sup> Tarr, 43-45, notes Lorimer doing so with George Swift in 1895, and how this backfired with Swift, upon being elected Mayor, broke their agreement on patronage.

city to one that would favor Republicans for local office into the 1910s and for federal and state offices into the 1930s.<sup>78</sup> This realignment complicated matters in both parties. For Hopkins and Sullivan, this meant that they were limited in terms of their abilities to use patronage as a way to build an organization, as Republicans held most positions, and the few Democrats who were winning elections often felt no obligation to grant them patronage powers.<sup>79</sup> Lorimer had the opposite problem: while Republicans held most patronage, he was limited in his abilities to dominate its distribution by his need to share with other factions in order to maintain their loyalties and by the fact that federal patronage ended up in the hands of his opponents when he failed to back William McKinley for the Republican nomination.<sup>80</sup> As a result, the climate of the 1890s had been good for building factions, but was less effective in these factions managing to claim dominance over their parties.

### **The Rise of Reform**

Serving as a challenge to machine building in 1890s Chicago was the rise of political reformers in the city as a political force. Reform groups had been present in Chicago for decades, with such groups as the Citizens Association emerging and thriving

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<sup>78</sup> For realignment and election results generally, see John M. Allswang, *A House for All People: Ethnic Politics in Chicago, 1890-1936* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1971). For it with a focus on 1893 and 1894, see Green, 52-54, and Paul Kleppner, *The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900* (New York: Free Press, 1970), 214-217.

<sup>79</sup> Green, 85-86, notes the bad relationship between Sullivan and Carter Harrison II, who would be Mayor between 1899 and 1905 and from 1911 to 1915.

<sup>80</sup> Tarr, Chs. 3 and 5 *passim*.

during this period.<sup>81</sup> During the 1890s, two groups sprang up that would challenge these nascent political organizations with claims of mass support. The Civic Federation was organized in December 1893, partly in response to the crusading efforts of William T. Stead, and in its early years tried to serve as a broad organization concerning problems in Chicago, forming numerous committees concerning various elements of city life.<sup>82</sup> The Municipal Voters League (or MVL) emerged in February 1896 as an offshoot of the Civic Federation in direct response to various scandals concerning franchises in the city of Chicago, trying to influence elections to the Council by both reviewing the records of members of the Council and backing their own candidates for that office.<sup>83</sup> Both of these organizations were dominated by professionals and businessmen, leading over time to a narrowing of the interests of the Civic Federation and debate over whether or not the MVL can be considered an instrument of class and partisan activists.<sup>84</sup> Importantly, both of these organizations had success in establishing themselves as permanent reform institutions. The MVL was especially effective, serving from the late 1890s onward as a

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<sup>81</sup> Philpott, 44-45; David Paul Nord, *Newspapers and New Politics: Midwestern Municipal Reform, 1890-1900* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981), 37-40; Donald D. Marks, "Polishing the Gem of the Prairie: The Evolution of Civic Reform Consciousness in Chicago, 1870-1900" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1974), Ch. 3 *passim*.

<sup>82</sup> Marks, Ch. 4 *passim*; Sutherland, 1-2; Rubel, 246-247; Laura M. Westhoff, *A Fatal Drifting Apart: Democratic Social Knowledge and Chicago Reform* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 48-50, 58-62.

<sup>83</sup> Graham Taylor, *Pioneering on Social Frontiers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), 56-58; Wendt and Kogan, 144; Steven J. Diner, *A City and its Universities: Public Policy in Chicago, 1892-1919* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 155-156; Nord, 77-78; Tingley, 29-31; Charles Edward Merriam, *Chicago: A More Intimate View of Urban Politics* (New York: MacMillan, 1929), 105-108.

<sup>84</sup> Sutherland, 49; Marks, 176-177. For a defense of the broad base of the MVL, see McCarthy in Ebner/Tobin; for the more traditional view, see Tarr, 67-69; Mazur, 118.

force organizing the City Council across partisan lines with an especially strong base in the areas annexed to the city in 1889.<sup>85</sup> In these ways, the strength of the concept of reform in Chicago was apparent, as reform organizations managed to become long-term political forces, rather than the “morning glories” of popular memory.

This success of reform in Chicago related directly to the checkered career of Charles Yerkes, who played a major role in setting transportation as the chief issue in Chicago politics for decades. Arriving in Chicago with an unsavory reputation in Philadelphia, Yerkes spent two decades starting in the 1880s as a leading force in terms of the city’s traction, controlling streetcar franchises for the West and North Sides of the city.<sup>86</sup> On the one hand, Yerkes engaged in important modernization, including the introduction of cable and electric lines, the construction of the streetcar Loop (which would, in elevated form, become a city symbol), and general efforts to consolidate a fragmented industry.<sup>87</sup> However, he also had a reputation as a major corrupting force on the City Council, came across as contemptuous of the concerns of the straphangers, and was generally unpopular with the business community in Chicago.<sup>88</sup> As a result, he became a symbol of all that was wrong with the utility franchise system in Chicago. This became an increasingly serious issue in the 1890s: transportation became more complicated in Chicago as the city continued to spread out, while Yerkes simultaneously

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<sup>85</sup> Pegram, 91; Tingley, *passim*; Wendt and Kogan, 231; Peterson, 79-80.

<sup>86</sup> Carter H. Harrison, *Stormy Years: The Autobiography of Carter H. Harrison, Five Times Mayor of Chicago* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935), 110-111; Ickes, 83.

<sup>87</sup> Ruble, 145-147; Tarr, 87-88.

<sup>88</sup> Peterson, 69; Merriam, 20-21; Tarr, 80-81.

proposed a set of bills that would have been greater than any ever given to a franchise-holder in Chicago.<sup>89</sup> Aided by strong press attention and the opposition of the MVL, these issues served to motivate the electorate of Chicago against Yerkes. In the short run, this led to Yerkes failing to get franchise extensions in 1898, leading him to sell his interests and leave Chicago for London.<sup>90</sup> In the long run, however, it resulted in the development of a political climate in which traction issues would become the key issues in Chicago politics, as Yerkes' defeat had not settled the long-term question as for whom traction was to be run and operated in Chicago.<sup>91</sup> For decades to come, these issues would serve to make and break many politicians in Chicago.

The rise of the traction issue also served to limit the building of machines in Chicago. Both the Hopkins-Sullivan organization and Lorimer had been allies of Yerkes, and this allegiance served to damage both of them in terms of party organization. Among Democrats, this led to the rise of Carter Harrison II as the leading figure in opposition to Hopkins and Sullivan, as he built a combination of ethnic and middle-class supporters through opposition to traction interests and vice legislation that would enable him to serve as Mayor for twelve of the eighteen years between 1897 and 1915.<sup>92</sup> This managed

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<sup>89</sup> For transportation as an issue, see Pegram, 138. For the franchise legislation, see Tarr, 85-86; Green, 61; Harrison, *Stormy Years*, Chs. 10-12 *passim*; Hoyt King, *Citizen Cole of Chicago* (Chicago: Horder's, 1931), 57-58, 72, 75.

<sup>90</sup> Nord, Ch. 6 *passim*; Wendt and Kogan, 244; Ruble, 155; King, 76-77.

<sup>91</sup> Tarr, 87, 122; Green, 61-62; Pegram, 137-144 *passim*.

<sup>92</sup> In terms of understanding Harrison's political career, the best source to go to are his own autobiographies, *Stormy Years* (which focuses more on his terms as mayor) and *Growing Up with Chicago* (which largely notes other experiences). The Carter Harrison Papers at the Newberry Library are limited as a source, as Harrison engaged in substantial culling and writing editorial comments. There is no scholarly biography, with the closest to one being Edward R. Kantowicz, "Carter H. Harrison II: The Politics of

to check machine building by Hopkins and Sullivan by keeping the patronage of the mayor's office out of their hands, while Harrison was unable to supplant them from party leadership, leading to a twenty-year period in which their factions warred with each other. Among Republicans, resistance to Lorimer took several forms. John Maynard Harlan spent the decade following 1897 as the leader of independents within the Republican Party, with traction as one of his key issues.<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile, the unity of factions around Lorimer collapsed by 1900: Hertz and Pease formed an independent organization on the North Side in response to Lorimer's stance on traction bills that within a few years was dominated by State Treasurer, Postmaster, and Mayor Fred Busse.<sup>94</sup> In 1903, States Attorney Charles S. Deneen, a longtime Lorimer ally with power on the Southwest Side of Chicago, turned against Lorimer, and the following year worked with Busse and Pease to remove Lorimer as leader of Chicago's Republicans, securing for himself nomination for Governor in the process.<sup>95</sup> While claiming support from good-government voters generally, Deneen's following was largely based on the South Side, where he had a base in Englewood and had sent Jamieson into political

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Balance", in Paul Michael Green and Melvin G. Holli, editors, *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 16-32. For his rise, see Green, Chs. 2 and 3 *passim*. For his policy stances, see Tarr, 84; Harrison, *Stormy Years*, 118-119; Mazur, 142.

<sup>93</sup> Tarr, 83-84, 106-107; Green, 77; Taylor, 66-67; Mazur, 116.

<sup>94</sup> Tarr, 86, 96-98, 177-178; Tingley, 3; Ickes, 92-93. Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 14-15, states Busse as already in charge on the North Side at the turn of the century, and this claim has influenced much other writing.

<sup>95</sup> Tarr, 126-135 *passim*.

retirement.<sup>96</sup> Lorimer, meanwhile, remained strong on the West Side of Chicago and in areas downtown and along the Chicago River, leading to a situation where three organizations divided by spatial location fought one another and independents for control of the Republican Party.<sup>97</sup> In these ways, the traction debate further blasted party unity, as it resulted in the further fragmentation of both major parties.

Traction issues served to shape Chicago politics in several other ways. The coalition behind Carter Harrison reelected him three times against Republicans seen as too close to Lorimer and as unable to compete with him among ethnic voters or on traction matters.<sup>98</sup> By 1903, this coalition began to fall apart, as Harrison failed to swing behind the growing movement for municipal ownership of traction in Chicago and only narrowly won reelection in that year.<sup>99</sup> In 1905, faced with both a potential fight for renomination and familial difficulties, Harrison chose not to run for a fifth term, resulting in the nomination of “immediate municipal ownership” supporter Edward F. Dunne with Hopkins-Sullivan support.<sup>100</sup> In the general election, Dunne fought with John Maynard

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<sup>96</sup> Merriam, 95; Tarr, 134-135; Ickes, 34-35; Carroll Hill Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith: A Study in Representative Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 185-186.

<sup>97</sup> As noted above, the comment in Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 14-15, on the spatial locations of the factions is inaccurate in terms of its implications as origins. It is, however, accurate in terms of locating the factions as they largely were from the mid-1900s to the mid-1910s.

<sup>98</sup> Kenneth Finegold, *Experts and Politicians: Reform Challenges to Machine Politics in New York, Cleveland, and Chicago* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 127-135; Tarr, Chs. 5 and 6 *passim*; Tingley, Chs. 3-6 *passim*.

<sup>99</sup> For the growing popularity of municipal ownership, see Ickes, 101-102; Harrison, *Growing Up with Chicago*, 298; Ruble, 155. For his performance in 1903, see Finegold, 134-135.

<sup>100</sup> Green, Ch. 3 *passim*; Tingley, 170-171; Harrison, *Stormy Years*, 252. For Dunne, the best account of his overall career is in Richard Allen Morton, *Justice and Humanity: Edward F. Dunne, Illinois Progressive* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997), with a brief account in Edward D. Buenker, “Edward F. Dunne: The Limits of Municipal Reform”, in Paul Michael Green and Melvin G. Holli, editors,

Harlan over municipal ownership, charging him with being too vague involving how Harlan would obtain it.<sup>101</sup> Ultimately, Dunne won by combining support from the ethnic voters that had long backed Harrison with support from outlying areas of the city where transit was an important issue.<sup>102</sup> In office, however, Dunne, with attention sidetracked by a teamsters' strike and a dispute between his appointees to the Board of Education and the major newspapers of Chicago, found the transportation issue harder to handle in practice.<sup>103</sup> Due to debt limitations, he could not simply purchase the streetcar lines of Chicago directly and there were debates about the legality of a proposal to issue certificates as a way to pay for the purchase.<sup>104</sup> As a result, Dunne spent his two years in office equivocating on resolving this matter, leading to his first special counsel on traction matters, Clarence Darrow, resigning over these equivocations, while his second appointee, longtime civic reformer Walter L. Fisher, had the settlement ordinance he proposed extending franchises for a twenty-year period rejected by Dunne.<sup>105</sup> As a result of his actions, working-class voters felt betrayal, residents of outlying areas got tired of his inability to come up with a solution, and the electorate as a whole gave decreased

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*The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 33-49.

<sup>101</sup> For accounts of the 1905 campaign, see Finegold, 139-140; Tingley, Ch .7 *passim*; Ickes, 102-106.

<sup>102</sup> Morton, 15; Finegold, 140-141.

<sup>103</sup> For the Teamsters, see Morton, 17-18; Pegram, 141-142; Leidenberg, Ch. 4 *passim*; for the Board of Education, see Pegram, 144-146; David John Hogan, *Class and Reform: School and Society in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 202-207; Mary J. Herrick, *The Chicago Schools: A Social and Political History* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1971), 110.

<sup>104</sup> Buenker in Green and Holli, 35-36.

<sup>105</sup> Morton, 23-24, 31-32, 43; Finegold, 142-143; Pegram, 143-144; Leidenberg, 119-126 *passim*.



support for municipal ownership in advisory votes.<sup>106</sup> Dunne's actions also sank him among Democrats: the Hopkins-Sullivan forces had no real loyalty to him, Harrison had remained opposed, and he gained a reputation as being excessively close to William Randolph Hearst politically.<sup>107</sup> This led to the defeat of both Dunne and municipal ownership in 1907: Dunne, having only won renomination due to continued opposition to Harrison by the Hopkins-Sullivan organization, lost to Republican unity candidate Fred Busse in an election where Busse did not campaign due to injuries from a train accident, while the settlement ordinance that Fisher proposed and Dunne rejected was backed by Chicago voters by an even greater margin.<sup>108</sup> Overall, municipal ownership failed in the short term due to an inability by Dunne to articulate a proposal that was both feasible under Chicago's limited home rule while still popular with straphangers and hard-core municipal ownership backers, leading to it being temporarily sidelined.

Professional and business reformers had a mixed performance during the late 1900s. In some cases, there was continued success: the MVL still succeeded in electing a

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<sup>106</sup> Leidenberg, 123-124, 134; Wendt and Kogan, 249.

<sup>107</sup> Buenker in Green and Holli, 36; Morton, 40-41; Leidenberg, 126.

<sup>108</sup> For Dunne's renomination, see Wendt and Kogan, 250; Green, 117-120. The one published account dedicated to Busse is Maureen A. Flanagan, "Fred A. Busse: A Silent Mayor in Turbulent Times", in Paul Michael Green and Melvin G. Holli, editors, *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 50-60. For accounts of the 1907 election, see Maureen A. Flanagan, *Charter Reform in Chicago* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 99-105 *passim*; Dick W. Simpson, *Rouges, Rebels, and Rubber Stamps: The Politics of the Chicago City Council from 1863 to the Present* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 64-66; Morton, 45-48. For the settlement ordinance, see Buenker in Green and Holli, 45; Morton, 47; John R. Schmidt, "*The Mayor Who Cleaned Up Chicago*": *A Political Biography of William E. Dever* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 35; Tingley, 219. For the results of the election, see Finegold, 148-149; Leidenberg, 134.

majority to the City Council and influencing the organization of that body.<sup>109</sup> In other placed, they had less political success: most of them had backed Harlan over Dunne in 1905, and in Busse found a mayor who was not particularly friendly to their interests.<sup>110</sup> Most notable among their failures was their effort to obtain a new City Charter, which peaked in the Charter Convention of 1906 and 1907.<sup>111</sup> The convention focused narrowly on matters concerning city finances and changes to election and political practices, neglecting, among other issues, women's suffrage, the initiative and referendum, municipal ownership, opposition to the regulation of saloons, and a publically elected school board.<sup>112</sup> In doing this, the Charter Commission turned several groups against the proposed charter, including the CFL, the ethnically based anti-prohibition United Societies For Self-Government, and the Chicago Teachers Federation.<sup>113</sup> This situation grew worse when the charter was submitted to the state legislature, who removed such reforms as the direct primary and corrupt practices law and inserted City Council lines that could not be changed until after 1920 that, by seeming to be a Republican gerrymander, guaranteed opposition by the Democratic Party.<sup>114</sup> This mobilized much of the electorate of Chicago against the charter, and demonstrated a reform slippage by

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<sup>109</sup> Tingley, for instance, demonstrates their continued significance on City Council elections.

<sup>110</sup> Finegold, 139; McCarthy, 143-144.

<sup>111</sup> The Flanagan book cited above serves as a good general account of these matters, and material about the Charter not otherwise cited comes from this work.

<sup>112</sup> Pegram, 104-105; Finegold, 147.

<sup>113</sup> Alex Gottfried, *Boss Cermak of Chicago: A Study of Political Leadership* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), 56; Tarr, 185.

<sup>114</sup> Pegram, 114; Simpson, 68.

coming across as too narrowly middle-class in interests. This resulted in a landslide defeat that sank home rule as a goal in Chicago politics and damaged the prestige of reform in Chicago.

### **1911: Reform's Peak**

These failures, however, were surmounted by events in the late 1900s and early 1910s that resulted in the peak performance for Chicago political reform. After a stalemate that had lasted for months, William Lorimer was elected to the United States Senate by a combination of anti-Deneen Republicans and Democrats in the Illinois legislature, resulting in charges of his using corrupt means to get elected.<sup>115</sup> These charges peaked in 1910 when a member of the State Legislature charged a business associate of Lorimer's with providing bribe money to obtain Democratic support for Lorimer, leading to his removal from the Senate in 1912 and in a landslide defeat for Republicans locally in 1910.<sup>116</sup> In addition to damaging the Lorimer faction among Republicans, this also served to damage the Hopkins-Sullivan faction among Democrats, as this group provided much of Lorimer's Democratic support. Similar scandals took place locally against the Busse administration: after an uneventful first two years in office, Busse was embarrassed in 1909 by investigations into city purchasing demonstration significant graft and political favoritism in contracts.<sup>117</sup> This led to the

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<sup>115</sup> Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 151; Gottfried, 56-58; Tarr, 199-222 *passim*.

<sup>116</sup> For a full account of this investigation, see Tarr, Chs. 10 through 12 *passim*. For 1910, see Arthur W. Thurner, "The Impact of Ethnic Groups on the Democratic Party in Chicago, 1920-1928" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1966), 10.

<sup>117</sup> McCarthy, 139-143, 147-149.

creation of the Bureau of Public Efficiency to examine more efficient administration in Chicago, further investigations into public utilities and vice in Chicago, and a campaign against Busse to deny him reelection.<sup>118</sup> This campaign was aided by a change to Chicago's election laws: the 1911 elections would be the first with a direct primary in a municipal election, making it possible to nominate a candidate without support of the major factions in Chicago politics.<sup>119</sup> Overall, the combination of scandal locally and scandal nationally, when combined with structural change, undermined the factional system present in Chicago politics

This upheaval presented itself in both parties in the 1911 primary. Busse dropped out in February of 1911, leaving his faction and that of Lorimer united behind former County Treasurer and prominent restaurateur John R. Thompson, Deneen backing former State Treasurer and leader of Chicago's Polish Republicans John Smulski, and independent Republicans backing University of Chicago political scientist and anti-Busse alderman Charles Merriam.<sup>120</sup> The Democrats similarly split into three, with Hopkins-Sullivan backing political banker Andrew J. Graham and both Dunne (with his old municipal ownership following, and running an anti-political campaign) and Harrison (running with the backing of Hearst and many of his own old followers, with seventy-

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<sup>118</sup> For the Bureau of Public Efficiency, see Finegold, 154; Pegram, 186; Sutherland, 35-36. For the investigations, see Diner, 170; Louise Carroll Wade, *Graham Taylor, Pioneer for Social Justice, 1851-1938* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 197-202. For the campaigns against Busse, see Ickes, 115; Diner, 170.

<sup>119</sup> Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 37-38; McCarthy, 151.

<sup>120</sup> Barry Dean Karl, *Charles E. Merriam and the Study of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 67-68; Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 188; Ickes, 129; Kantowicz, 60-64. For Merriam's own account of this campaign, see Charles E. Merriam, *Chicago: A More Intimate View of Urban Politics* (New York: MacMillan, 1929), 281-286.

cent gas as his chief issue) running against the Hopkins-Sullivan organization.<sup>121</sup> The results of both primaries demonstrated the decline in the electoral support of the major organizations: Merriam received more votes than Thompson and Smulski combined, carrying their home wards and sweeping middle-class and suburban territories in Chicago, while Graham finished a distant third in a race where Harrison narrowly outpolled Dunne.<sup>122</sup> This antipathy continued into the general election: in a race in which the major factions refused to aid their party nominees, Harrison narrowly won due to the continued ethnic support he had obtained earlier in his career.<sup>123</sup> In these ways, 1911 in later years emerged as the peak for anti-organization sentiments in Chicago politics.

The following years reshaped the factional alliances around Chicago politics. Lorimer retained a strong following even after his removal from the Senate, as his followers organized a Lincoln Protective League to advance his interests and gave him a hero's welcome when he returned to Chicago.<sup>124</sup> More crippling was financial events: the Lorimer-run La Salle Street Trust and Savings Bank collapsed in June of 1914, with revelations of mismanagement and Lorimer's use of political connections to try to save it.<sup>125</sup> While Lorimer was acquitted of criminal charges, he was finished as a major leader among Chicago Republicans, as his faction's leadership transferred to Fred Lundin, a

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<sup>121</sup> Morton, 55-57; Finegold, 157; Kantowicz, 77-79.

<sup>122</sup> For the Republican primary, see Mazur, 145, 147. For the Democratic primary, see Harrison, *Stormy Years*, 262-271 *passim*.

<sup>123</sup> Finegold, 157-163; Kantowicz, 79-82; Green, 144-145.

<sup>124</sup> Tarr, 286-287, 308.

<sup>125</sup> Tarr, 309-311.

longtime political leader among Scandinavians on the Northwest Side of Chicago.<sup>126</sup> Busse died in 1914 and was replaced by former Cook County Commission President and Corporation Counsel Edward Brundage as North Side leader.<sup>127</sup> Only Deneen had survived, and his own status was damaged when he was defeated for reelection as Governor in 1912, which cost him both patronage and his image as a political power.<sup>128</sup> The early 1910s was a period of factional flux for the Republicans: the 1910, 1912, and 1914 elections were three landslide defeats in a row, while the independents that had backed Merriam in 1911 largely transferred to the Progressive Party in 1912, carrying Chicago for Theodore Roosevelt and winning a substantial number of seats in the state legislature.<sup>129</sup> The massive success of the Democrats similarly had a major influence in terms of reshaping party dynamics. On the one hand, Roger Sullivan, now sole leader of the chief faction, had limited influence in the highest offices held by Democrats: Harrison was Mayor and Dunne was elected Governor in the 1912 landslide, and neither consulted Sullivan much on patronage.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, while Sullivan played a significant role in the nomination of Woodrow Wilson in 1912, he had limited federal patronage due to the influence of Dunne and Dunne ally and Senator James Hamilton Lewis.<sup>131</sup> Sullivan also

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<sup>126</sup> For Lundin's career, see Zink, 275-290, and Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 166-183.

<sup>127</sup> Fletcher Dobyns, *The Underworld of American Politics* (New York: Fletcher Dobyns, 1932), 78; Gottfried, 363; Merriam, 95.

<sup>128</sup> Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 189-190.

<sup>129</sup> Thurner, 11; Diner, 171; Ickes, 163-164, 166.

<sup>130</sup> For Dunne's election, see Morton, 59-67; for his animosity to Sullivan, see Morton, 83-84.

<sup>131</sup> Harrison, *Stormy Years*, 329.

had not fully shaken the Ogden Gas image of him as disreputable, resulting in his narrow defeat for Senate in 1914 in spite of the continued Republican/Progressive split.<sup>132</sup>

However, the Sullivan faction still had a large amount of patronage at hand, as most of the Democrats elected to county office in the 1910, 1912, and 1914 landslides held loyalties to this faction.<sup>133</sup> Just as important, however, was that it was gaining a position of being able to deliver votes to candidates solely through their support, and not needing to take as much advantage of the personal followings of candidates. As a result, Sullivan was in a strong position to build a faction in Chicago politics, and take advantage of the decline of the Republicans in this period.

Aiding the rise of the Sullivan faction were limitations in the other two major factions present in Chicago Democratic politics. By 1911, most of Carter Harrison II's original backers had either retired from politics or turned against him.<sup>134</sup> His last term in office only served to make this situation even greater as an issue: after a career of supporting segregated vice, Harrison began to support the growing anti-vice crusades in Chicago, including shutting down the Levee, center of prostitution in Chicago.<sup>135</sup> This cost him much of his remaining support among both ethnic ward politicians (such as First Ward vice lords and aldermen Michael "Hinky Dink" Kenna and "Bathhouse John" Coughlin) and ethnic voters generally, and he was unable to make this up: his lack of

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<sup>132</sup> Morton, 85-87; Zink, 297-298; Green, 215-217.

<sup>133</sup> For this dynamic, see Green, Ch. 5 *passim*.

<sup>134</sup> Finegold, 127-128; Green, 99-100.

<sup>135</sup> Kantowicz in Green and Holli, 29; Perry Duis, *The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 270-271; Green, 97, 98-99.

interest in municipal ownership resulted in many anti-Sullivan Democrats continuing to back Dunne, while he was unable to reconcile difference between long-term support and the Hearst allies he had gained in 1911.<sup>136</sup> Dunne, meanwhile, was in a complicated position in terms of faction organization: he had a loyal following from his terms as mayor as well as state patronage, but neither had a group of elected officials who owed their election to him like Sullivan, nor did he have a base among ward notables of the sort that Harrison had used.<sup>137</sup> As a result, he was immediately behind in forming a faction, and was faced with the choice of either fighting both existing factions at once or with building coalitions with them.<sup>138</sup> This was complicated by past events: many of his followers were anti-Sullivan for various reasons, but the Harrison faction had opposed him since Dunne's first race for Mayor, making neither especially viable for a coalition. As a result, Dunne tried to alternate between supporting both, which was not particularly effective at either building a faction or at forming long-term alliances.<sup>139</sup> In these ways, neither Harrison nor Dunne were in a good position to challenge Sullivan for control over Chicago's Democrats.

As these events were taking place, the electorate of Chicago began shifting in two separate ways. During Dunne's term as Governor, women were granted a limited form of

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<sup>136</sup> For Harrison's loss of ethnic support, see Green, 200-201; Wendt and Kogan, 322-323. For municipal ownership, see Green, 182-183. For Hearst, see Green, 187-188.

<sup>137</sup> Neither Morton nor Green, for instance, not either of these as being in place.

<sup>138</sup> For the balancing act facing Dunne, see Green, 169-170.

<sup>139</sup> Green demonstrates this throughout his work.



the franchise that applied in presidential races and in municipal elections.<sup>140</sup> Chicago developed a large movement of reform-oriented women in the 1890s and 1900s, with a focus across class and ethnic lines on social matters that made them distinctive from their male counterparts.<sup>141</sup> How this activism would adapt to electoral politics was up in the air, making this new vote of interest. Similarly of great importance was an ethnic shift in terms of Chicago politics. By the 1910s, the immigrant groups that started arriving in Chicago in the 1880s were now in a position to engage in political activities on a broader scale than the secondary roles that they had played in previous decades.<sup>142</sup> The various factions in Chicago politics, however, were in difficult positions to incorporate these new groups. Among Republicans, the Lorimer faction on the West Side had been trying to incorporate these new groups since the 1890s, but the other factions were more limited: Deneen's strongest support was among middle-class Protestant voters, and Brundage largely focused on the Germans, Scandinavians, and native-born of the North Side.<sup>143</sup> The Progressives similarly were limited in their ethnic appeals, and were further hindered by their limited ability to gain strength as a party rather than as followers of Theodore Roosevelt's coattails.<sup>144</sup> The Democratic faction leaders were in similarly complicated situations in terms of ethnic incorporation. The Sullivan organization had been

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<sup>140</sup> Morton, 77-78; Merriam, 154.

<sup>141</sup> For a book-length study of this gendered element to reform, see Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

<sup>142</sup> For considerations of this shift, see Allswang, Kantrowicz, Mazur, and Nelli.

<sup>143</sup> Tarr, *passim*.

<sup>144</sup> For the rapid collapse in Progressive support, see Ickes, 167-168, and Pegram, 180-181.

disproportionately Irish from its beginnings, and was deeply reluctant in terms of incorporating other ethnic groups into its fold.<sup>145</sup> Harrison, had traditionally done much better at incorporating new immigrant voters into his political following, but his actions as Mayor after 1911 had cost him much of that support. Finally, Dunne had been able to get votes from ethnic Chicagoans, but did not have an organization that could organize that vote into more than a personal following. As a result, the votes of new immigrants in Chicago were still very much up in the air, leaving the possibility of considerable realignment through their involvement in politics.

### **Enter Big Bill**

In 1915, these factional and ethnic political issues came to a head in the mayoral election. In the Democratic primary, Robert Sweitzer, backed by his brother-in-law Roger Sullivan, charged the Dunne and Lewis-backed Harrison with being a political relict, and managed to carry thirty-three of Chicago's thirty-five wards in a landslide victory.<sup>146</sup>

Among Republicans, Lundin and Brundage had made the first move, entering former alderman and county commissioner William Hale Thompson in the race in late 1914.<sup>147</sup>

Anti-Lorimer forces delayed in their response: Municipal Court Chief Justice Harry Olson only entered the race five weeks before the primary as a compromise between the

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<sup>145</sup> For just how excessively Irish this organization could be, see Green, 157-158.

<sup>146</sup> Harrison, *Stormy Years*, 346; Green, 232-239.

<sup>147</sup> The one work of a scholarly nature concerning William Hale Thompson is Douglas Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); while not perfect by any means, it clearly supplants such earlier journalistic accounts as John Bright, *Hizzoner Big Bill Thompson: An Idyll of Chicago* (New York: J. Cape and H. Smith, 1930) and Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, *Big Bill of Chicago* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), as well as the pro-Thompson William H. Stewart, *The Twenty Incredible Years, as "Heard and Seen"* (Chicago: M.A. Donohue and Sons, 1935).

Deneen faction and former Progressives.<sup>148</sup> In the Republican primary, Thompson, through a combination of charisma, a strong organization backing him, and the support of African-American and new immigrant voters, narrowly defeated the personally unappealing Olson.<sup>149</sup> In the general election, issues concerning ethnicity and factionalism again came to the fore. Sweitzer charged Thompson with making religious appeals concerning Sweitzer's Catholicism, and with making different pledges to African-American voters to those in Hyde Park.<sup>150</sup> Of the various appeals both candidates made to ethnic voters, the most notable came about towards the end of the election, when Sweitzer issued a German-language flyer in which he had made appeals to the fatherland.<sup>151</sup> The Thompson campaign obtained this flyer and issued it among ethnic groups, such as Bohemians and Poles, to whom this appeal was offensive, and managed to damage Sweitzer among both non-German voters and among Germans who did not approve of this sort of appeal.<sup>152</sup> Just as important as these ethnic appeals was the nature of factionalism. Thompson received united Republican backing and support from most rank-and-file Progressives, while most Harrison backers either openly supported

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<sup>148</sup> Ickes, 174; McCarthy, 185.

<sup>149</sup> For consideration of the 1915 Republican primary of some detail, see George Cairon Hoffman, "Big Bill Thompson: His Mayoral Campaigns and Voting Strength" (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1956), 3-8; Eric R. Lund, "Swedish-American Politics and Press Response: The Chicago Mayoral Election of 1915", in Philip J. Anderson and Dag Blanck, editors, *Swedish-American Life in Chicago: Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Immigrant People, 1850-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 299; Hoffman, 6-7.

<sup>150</sup> Hoffman, 9, 11; Green, 247.

<sup>151</sup> Kantowicz, 146; Green, 248-249; Bukowski, 27; Peterson, 97.

<sup>152</sup> Hoffman, 11.

Thompson or (like Harrison himself) refused to aid Sweitzer.<sup>153</sup> Combined, this led to a Thompson landslide, as he carried twenty-five of the thirty-five wards of the city, performing even better among women than among male voters and making significant inroads in ethnic Chicago.<sup>154</sup> Overall, Thompson had managed a landslide success in 1915 by being able to maintain partisan unity, take advantage of Democratic disunity, and use his personality and the blunders of his opponent to cross over to the voters that had made Harrison a perpetual mayor.

In the years following the 1915 election, a series of events took place that reshaped factionalism in Chicago politics. In 1916, the 1915 coalition of Lundin and Brundage succeeded in sweeping the Republican primary for state and county offices against Deneen and ex-Progressive opposition, while Sullivan forces similarly swept the Democratic primary.<sup>155</sup> The general election only furthered this factional unity: the Republicans won almost all local offices, while the election of the Lundin and Brundage-backed Frank Lowden as Governor eliminated Dunne as a major figure in Democratic politics.<sup>156</sup> These results suggest a decline of reform in Chicago politics: the Progressives were dead and buried, with most of those involved in the movement having returned to

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<sup>153</sup> For Progressive support of Thompson, see Ickes, 175; for Republican unity, see Bukowski, 25. For the Democrats, see Bukowski, 27-28; Hoffman, 9.

<sup>154</sup> Hoffman, 14. For women, see Green, 249-250. For various calculations involving the Thompson ethnic vote, see Hoffman, 15; Bukowski, 29; John M. Allswang, *Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 99; Mazur, 242; Kantowicz, 138-139.

<sup>155</sup> Morton, 109; Pegram, 197; Green, 267-268.

<sup>156</sup> Morton, 112, 115; Green, 285-286. Unfortunately, there are substantial gaps in the Frank Lowden Papers at the Joseph Reigenstein Library, University of Chicago, at least in part due to a fire, and little concerning 1916 campaigning is in this collection.

the Republican fold, and with progressives in both parties being unable to keep their opponents from consolidating control.<sup>157</sup> Further indicating the decline of reform in Chicago was the conduct of William Hale Thompson as mayor. Thompson had the backing of the MVL when originally elected to the City Council, and had cared enough about reform sympathies to speak on it in favorable terms during his 1915 campaign.<sup>158</sup> This approach, did not last long in office: after offending the United Societies with his efforts to enforce Sunday closing laws, he turned to favoring an open town, going against the anti-vice trends of the previous years<sup>159</sup> His undermining of civil service regulations and politicizing of city departments similarly resulted in scandals, including being charged with driving the director of the city's Tuberculosis Hospital to suicide.<sup>160</sup> In this way, he had alienated Chicago's reformers by dismissing the concerns about the structure of local government that had been a major concern since the 1890s. Offending them even more was his approach to politics: as time went on, he increasingly concerned himself with issues outside the municipal realm, which his foes regarded as avoidance of local issues.<sup>161</sup> In these ways, he symbolized a weakness of reform in Chicago: the reformers had never been able to elect a mayor to their liking, and his service seemed to epitomize the sort of mayor they did not want in office.

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<sup>157</sup> The Progressives did not run a slate in 1916, and Progressive State Representative Medill McCormick was slated to be a Republican candidate for Congressman-at-Large.

<sup>158</sup> Allswang, *Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters*, 97; Hoffman, 12.

<sup>159</sup> Bukowski, 42-43; Peterson, 99, 100-101; Duis, 286-288.

<sup>160</sup> Bukowski, 43-44; Philpott, 108; Green, 256, 263-264; McCarthy, 189-190.

<sup>161</sup> Merriam, 189-190, notes a tendency to shift on issues.

This approach to politics by Thompson undermined the support he had in 1915. This was especially notable during the lead-up to American intervention in the First World War: Thompson had been strongly opposed to this, and engaged in actions concerning the war that irritated many, including offering aid to meetings protesting American involvement.<sup>162</sup> These actions cost him some of his prior backers: Lowden, who had been reluctant to give him patronage, became a staunch political foe, and the Brundage faction (including West Side ward leader and County Chair Homer Galpin) broke with Thompson to form an alliance with former Progressive leader Medill McCormick.<sup>163</sup> In the Republican primary of that year, McCormick beat Thompson for the Republican nomination for Senate in a race heavily focused on Thompson's war record, while a coalition of Brundage and Deneen forces won most nominations to county offices and Sullivan forces swept the Democratic primary.<sup>164</sup> The general election results were mixed: McCormick beat James Hamilton Lewis for Senate and further undermined anti-Sullivan Democrats, while Republicans and Democrats split offices in a way that prevented any faction in either party from claiming full victory.<sup>165</sup> In these ways, it was apparent that Chicago politics was still in flux, and that the seemingly inevitable rise of dominant factions in both parties was not yet fully the case.

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<sup>162</sup> Bukowski, 62-63; Green, 294; Hoffman, 17-18.

<sup>163</sup> Pegram, 203-204; William M. Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Athenaeum, 1970), 205-206. Dobyys, 78. Ickes, 236-239, offers a typically scornful view of Medill McCormick's political career, but one with some factual errors. The Medill McCormick Papers at the Library of Congress have some interest, but are clearly only a fraction of the papers that once existed.

<sup>164</sup> Bukowski, 72-73; Hoffman, 18; Green, 305-306.

<sup>165</sup> Green, 307-308.

Because of these elections, Thompson was regarded as politically weak and ready for a challenge. However, such a challenge did not fully develop in the Republican primary: Deneen and Brundage failed to find a viable anti-Thompson candidate and were basically stuck with Harry Olson, who was reluctant to run and had not gained in political skill or personal appeal since 1915, while Charles Merriam, back from war service, ran a somewhat haphazard campaign in which he was backed reluctantly at best by many of his past allies.<sup>166</sup> Ultimately, this split opposition ran a chiefly negative campaign against Thompson that did not clearly articulate specific reasons to support either candidate, resulting in Thompson receiving a majority of the vote and ending Merriam's political career through his distant third finish.<sup>167</sup> Thompson was still weak in a general election, given the history of defections from the Republicans that had kept Carter Harrison II in office for many years. However, the Democrats were in no position to take advantage of that: the Sullivan faction, seeing no need to compromise with their party foes, chose to run Sweitzer for a second time.<sup>168</sup> While Dunne and Lewis chose to back Sweitzer this time, States Attorney Maclay Hoyne, who had a reputation for fighting corruption and vice in Chicago and who was the last Harrison association in a major office, chose to run as an independent, gaining the endorsement of Carter Harrison II.<sup>169</sup> This disrupted one

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<sup>166</sup> Lund in Anderson and Blanck, 301; Hoffman, 18-21; Ickes, 220-222; Bukowski, 75-78.

<sup>167</sup> For the tone of the Merriam campaign, see the Charles Merriam Papers at the Joseph Reigenstein Library, University of Chicago. The Harry Olson Papers at Northwestern University, regrettably, do not include any materials from either of his campaigns for Mayor. For the results, see Hoffman, 21; for the effects on Merriam, see Bukowski, 78-79, and McCarthy, 193.

<sup>168</sup> Green, 312-313.

<sup>169</sup> Hoffman, 22-23; Green, 314, 320; Wendt and Kogan, 318-319, 335; Mazur, 248; Bukowski, 53-54; Peterson, 96.

major element of the Sullivan plan, as Hoyne was in a position to get the backing both of die-hard anti-Sullivanites among Democrats and good-government voters among Republicans. Further complicating the Chicago political scene was the rise of labor politics in Chicago. The Chicago Federation of Labor had been a growing political force since 1905 under the leadership of John Fitzpatrick, and, having had succeed in organizing during the war years, was preparing to extend its reach into the steel and meatpacking industries, the two last major unorganized industries in Chicago.<sup>170</sup> Moreover, they were also annoyed with Thompson, noting that he had opposed their interests in such matters as the Loeb Rule involving teacher participation in labor unions and backing Checker Cab in their fights with organized labor.<sup>171</sup> In late 1918, after several previous considerations of direct political action, they finally took the plunge, organizing the Labor Party of Cook County, with a platform combining labor concerns as collective bargaining and the eight-hour day with municipal ownership, gender equality, a strong civil service, and the initiative, referendum, and recall.<sup>172</sup> Fitzpatrick himself ran for mayor, with backing from many of the major figures in the Chicago labor movement and ward and precinct organizations backing him.<sup>173</sup> In the general election, these three

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<sup>170</sup> Mitchell Newton-Matza, *Intelligent and Honest Radicals: The Chicago Federation of Labor and the Politics of Progression* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), *passim*. For general efforts at organization in 1919, see Cohen, Ch. 1 *passim*; Pacyga, Ch. 5 *passim*; James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), Ch. 8 *passim*.

<sup>171</sup> Herrick, 122; Hogan, 209; David Dolnick, "The Role of Labor in Chicago Politics Since 1919" (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1939), 9.

<sup>172</sup> Newton-Matza, 58, 62-63; Leidenberg, 147-148; Eugene Perlstein, "The Progressive Movement in Chicago, 1919-1924" (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1948), 2-3, 5-6.

<sup>173</sup> Perlstein, 6-9.



foes to Thompson tried different approaches: Sweitzer relied on his organizational support, Fitzpatrick denounced big business and corruption, and Hoyne combined support from reformers (especially reform women) with denunciations of Thompson's African-American support and Sweitzer's use of ethnic appeals.<sup>174</sup> Ultimately, this fractured opposition saved Thompson: in spite of massive declines in both his ethnic and native-born support, Thompson maintained just enough support from Germans, Scandinavians, African-Americans, and residents of the suburban fringe to win with 37% of the vote, compared to 34% for Sweitzer (who carried most of the ethnic wards of the city), 16% for Hoyne (who did best in the upper-class Hyde Park area), and 8% for Fitzpatrick (better than any left candidate had done in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but still regarded as underperforming given the size of organized labor).<sup>175</sup> Overall, the results of 1919 demonstrated the fractured nature of Chicago politics: even with a majority again Thompson, those opposed to him were too divided to form a viable coalition against him, resulting in his reelection.

In the following year, Thompson experienced a political revival. His enemies within the Republican Party had not gone away: the *Chicago Tribune*, regarded his organization as being similar to that of Tammany Hall, and many of his foes regarded the municipal ownership-backing platform he ran on as being socialistic.<sup>176</sup> This, however,

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<sup>174</sup> Tuttle, 201; Green, 325; Bukowski, 80-81; Perlstein, 9.

<sup>175</sup> For the changing nature of Thompson's ethnic vote, see Kantowicz, 102 and Hoffman, 27-28; for the final result, see Hoffman, 26; Mazur, 251-254; Flanagan, *Seeing with Their Hearts*, 152; Newton-Matza, 69-70; Perlstein, 11, 13.

<sup>176</sup> Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 11-12; Thurner, 45-47; Dobyns, 69-70; Ickes, 228-229.

had no real effect: the Thompson-Lundin slate swept races for ward leadership and county offices and nominated their preferred candidate for Governor against the “anti-Tammany” slate of Brundage, Deneen, Lowden, and the ex-Progressives, extending far enough to play a role in blocking Lowden’s becoming the Republican nominee for President in 1920.<sup>177</sup> Chicago’s Democrats, meanwhile, were in a state of flux: the party was generally unpopular nationwide, and there was no clear leader after the death early in the year of Roger Sullivan.<sup>178</sup> As a result, the general election was a Republican landslide, as the Republicans won all county and state races and carried almost every ward in Chicago for Warren Harding.<sup>179</sup> This was a peak for the Thompson-Lundin organization: while federal patronage was in the hands of Brundage and McCormick, they had access to city patronage, much of the available county patronage, and the patronage of Illinois, and were seemingly on the cusp of building a citywide organization.

### **Social Upheaval: The Fall of Big Bill**

While these political triumphs were taking place, however, events in the social climate were taking place that would rapidly change the political situation. Chicago had an African-American community that had been active in politics since the 1870s.<sup>180</sup> In the 1910s, this community rapidly grew: it is estimated that around 50,000 African-

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<sup>177</sup> Turner, 44-45; Bukowski, 110-111.

<sup>178</sup> Green, 358-369 *passim*.

<sup>179</sup> Turner, 68-69, 71-72.

<sup>180</sup> For a book-length study of early African-American political participation in Chicago, see Margaret Garb, *Freedom’s Ballot: African American Political Struggles in Chicago from Abolition to the Great Migration*. For the emergence of the African-American community generally, see Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

Americans arrived in Chicago in 1917 and 1918 alone, as the community underwent rapid expansion along State Street.<sup>181</sup> This expansion faced several problems: jobs were frequently limited to the most unpleasant ones available, and the community was more segregated than any white ethnic community in Chicago, as both their working-class neighbors to the west and their upper-class neighbors in Hyde Park and Woodlawn used any means possible (the working-class preferred gang activity, the upper-class bombings) in order to keep African-Americans out of their neighborhoods.<sup>182</sup> These ill-relations peaked in 1919, when a major race riot occurred involving violence against African-Americans on the streets, in streetcars, and on the way to and from work.<sup>183</sup> While this was going on, the African-American community was claiming an increased level of political clout.<sup>184</sup> William Hale Thompson had from his earliest days in Chicago politics held an image as a strong political ally to African-Americans, resulting in the Hoyne denunciations of 1919 and in City Hall being called “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” over African-American employment.<sup>185</sup> Thompson was more responsive to African-Americans than any prior mayor of Chicago, resulting in praise from the *Chicago Defender* and his

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<sup>181</sup> Christopher Robert Reed, *The Rise of Chicago’s Black Metropolis, 1920-1929* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 22; Grossman, 123-126.

<sup>182</sup> Grossman, 188-189; Philpott, Ch. 5 *passim*; Spear, 211-212.

<sup>183</sup> The previously-cited Tuttle work sets the 1919 race riot in its overall context. Other accounts are in Spear, 214-216; Cohen, 36-38; and Garb, 227-228.

<sup>184</sup> Harold F. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935) is still a useful starting point in terms of studying African-American politics between the 1910s and mid-1930s.

<sup>185</sup> Bukowski, 15; Tuttle, 188; Gosnell, 49-51.

receiving a large African-American vote in both 1915 and 1919.<sup>186</sup> However, there were limits to what he could offer: while Thompson could engage in symbolic gestures well, he either could not or did not act involving working conditions, made no real effort to solve the housing problem among African-Americans, and was dilatory in his response to the 1919 race riot because he was playing a game of political chicken with Lowden.<sup>187</sup> As a result, Thompson was in a difficult situation, in which what he did was not enough to fully satisfy African-American needs, but was enough to gain him increased white hostility.

Labor conditions similarly caused problems during this period. In the years following the First World War, many of the recent advances made by organized labor in Chicago began to decline. The campaigns to organize the steel and meatpacking industries both failed by the early 1920s, leaving these industries unorganized until the 1930s, while the only industry to successfully organize during this period was the garment industry.<sup>188</sup> This failure to organize demonstrated a major racial limitation to union organizing, as, especially in the case of the meatpacking industry, there was an inability to engage in biracial organization of white and black workers: the former regarded the latter as scabs and the latter tended to not believe that organized labor was in their best interests.<sup>189</sup> In other industries, a backlash to organized labor was at issue: the Chicago

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<sup>186</sup> Gosnell, 102; Tuttle, 202-203; Hoffman, 15, 27.

<sup>187</sup> Reed, 150-151; Tuttle, Ch. 2 *passim*.

<sup>188</sup> For the failures in organization, see Pacyga, 227-257 *passim*. For their ultimate organization, see Cohen. Ch. 7. For the garment industry, see Cohen, 47.

<sup>189</sup> For detailed considerations of this issue, see Grossman, Ch. 8 *passim*; Tuttle, Ch. 4 *passim*.

Federation of Labor spent much time campaigning against labor injunctions, while the Landis Award resulted in heated contests between management and labor over the reduction of wages to building trade workers.<sup>190</sup> The Chicago Teachers Federation, which had been one of the most militant and most effective Chicago unions, was unable to stay in the CFL due to the Loeb Rule, limiting labor's ability to form a united front.<sup>191</sup> Even the independence of labor unions was threatened, as gangsters increasingly infiltrated labor unions to use them for the purposes of racketeering.<sup>192</sup> These stresses also had a political impact: the Labor Party had peaked in the 1919 elections, and, after a poor showing in 1920 (affiliated with the Farmer-Labor Party nationally), began to fade from existence.<sup>193</sup> Overall, while Chicago was more unionized than many similar cities, organized labor was now fighting more to hold onto what it had than to expand further, demonstrating a decline in relative strength.

These poor conditions for organized labor reflected economic issues affecting Chicago generally: following the First World War, the Chicago economy slumped, as many of the industries associated with the city were affected by the declining demands of the post-war period.<sup>194</sup> These conditions intersected with the political sphere in several

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<sup>190</sup> Newton-Matza, Ch. 4 (injunction issues) and 5 (Landis Award) *passim*.

<sup>191</sup> Pegram, 147.

<sup>192</sup> Peterson, 142; Newton-Matza, 135-136. Bukowski, 214-215, notes a tendency for those commenting on racketeering to be working for the open shop more generally.

<sup>193</sup> Newton-Matza, 76-91 *passim*.

<sup>194</sup> Reed, 120; Arvarh E. Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 20-21; Tuttle, 18-19, 131-132.

regards. William Hale Thompson had a tendency to support rhetorically things he could not deliver in practice, and the economic slump pointed to this by demonstrating that the public works program he used to claim to be “Big Bill the Builder” was not sufficient as a way to resolve unemployment.<sup>195</sup> It further did not help matters that, by alienating both organized labor and many of the major employers in Chicago, neither side in this debate was particularly trusting of him.<sup>196</sup> Moreover, there was also an indirect consequence to this: as times grew worse, his administration received a growing level of scrutiny, of a sort he had not received when times were good. The issue of traction served as a demonstration of this problem with Thompson and local issues. During his time in office, Thompson had focused his campaigning largely on carfares, fighting to keep fares at five cents.<sup>197</sup> This pledge won him some support, especially connected to the high inflation of the late 1910s, but over time became more visibly limited: while Thompson stated support in general terms for municipal ownership, he tended not to offer any ways in which this could be brought into effect.<sup>198</sup> This was not aided by his political associates: Samuel Ettelson, his Corporation Counsel, was associated in his legal practice with Samuel Insull, who over the first quarter of the twentieth century built an economic empire that included most of the major utilities in the Chicago area, resulting in charges

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<sup>195</sup> For this reputation, see Bukowski, 52; Reed, 61-62; Hoffman, 41.

<sup>196</sup> Tuttle, 200.

<sup>197</sup> Hoffman, 19.

<sup>198</sup> Hoffman, 19, contains pledges for municipal ownership of transit and gas, with the noted issues.

of Thompson being an Insull stooge on municipal ownership.<sup>199</sup> This became an increasing issue in the early 1920s: the existing streetcar franchises were set to expire in 1927, and increasing pressures were developing to establish municipal ownership upon expiration.<sup>200</sup> Overall, Thompson's inability to come up with a clear plan served to demonstrate his weaknesses on substantive matters, as it served to alienate more of his former backers.

These social trends against Thompson were epitomized by political trends against him. Thompson and Lundin engaged in overreach in 1921, refusing to renominate incumbent Circuit Court judges in order to claim the patronage in their power.<sup>201</sup> The Brundage/McCormick and Deneen factions chose to fight this, and formed a coalition with George Brennan, who had replaced Roger Sullivan as leader of the largest Democratic faction, in forming a judicial slate.<sup>202</sup> This combined opposition, aided by a strong campaign by the Chicago Bar Association, successfully defeated all Thompson/Lundin candidates for the bench, including several incumbents, in a landslide election, and in doing so both pinned to Thompson the stereotypes of him as grasping for

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<sup>199</sup> Bukowski, 168. For a consideration of Insull's career, see John F. Wasik, *The Merchant of Power: Samuel Insull, Thomas Edison, and the Creation of the Modern Metropolis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). For the charge concerning Thompson and Insull, see the 1930 and 1931 addresses on the Chicago transit situation by Harold L. Ickes Papers, Box 446, Folder 12, Library of Congress.

<sup>200</sup> John R. Schmidt, "William E. Dever: A Chicago Political Fable", in Paul Michael Green and Melvin G. Holli, editors, *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 88-89.

<sup>201</sup> Bukowski, 132-133; Hoffman, 30; Gottfried, 106.

<sup>202</sup> Ickes, 130-131, notes this unity, and, in a fairly typical move, notes this in criticizing the refusal of the Deneen faction to support his candidacy for the Circuit Court. For the rise of Brennan, see Schmidt, 59; Green, 361-362.

patronage and demonstrated that he was not invincible politically.<sup>203</sup> Later events only continued the political damage: Thompson's victory in the ward committee races in the 1920 primary was invalidated by the courts, resulting in his losing control over the party central committee and the fragmentation of Chicago Republicans, who formed various ward and precinct organizations behind the various factions in Chicago.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, the Thompson/Lundin forces began to splinter: in the aftermath of the 1921 Circuit Court election, States' Attorney Robert E. Crowe and Board of Review member Charles V. Barrett broke away to form their own faction, with a base in the West Side wards that had been strongholds since the days of William Lorimer.<sup>205</sup> The 1922 Republican primary devolved into a brawl in which the Thompson/Lundin forces were largely reduced to backing Deneen candidates against the combined forces of Brundage/McCormick and Crowe/Barrett.<sup>206</sup> In this climate, no faction could claim victory, extending into a general election where the Thompson/Lundin forces lost the position of County Judge, and, with it, control over the election machinery of Chicago.<sup>207</sup> Because of these events, the Thompson/Lundin organization had clearly lost control over the Republican party apparatus and had deteriorated in their abilities to elect candidates for office.

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<sup>203</sup> For an account of the Bar Association role, see Edward Moss Martin, *The Role of the Bar in Electing the Bench in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), 69-73. For this loss as a blow for Fred Lundin, see Zink, 287.

<sup>204</sup> Gottfried, 107-108; Sonya Forthal, *Cogwheels of Democracy: A Study of the Precinct Captain* (New York: William-Frederick Press, 1946), 16.

<sup>205</sup> Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 18-21; Gottfried, 363; Dobyms, 60-61.

<sup>206</sup> For a listing demonstrating the breakdown of any clear factions, see *Tribune*, 4/9/1922, 4.

<sup>207</sup> Kantowicz, 197-198.



Thompson's political situation was further damaged by the return of vice as an issue in Chicago. After his early attempt at enforcing the Sunday closing laws, Thompson largely stuck to allowing Chicago to be a wide-open town, including dismantling the Morals Squad that was established during Harrison's last term in office.<sup>208</sup> This stance had aided Thompson among certain voting groups (including African-Americans, who tended to regard themselves as unfairly targeted by vice opponents), while costing him upper-class support in 1919. The introduction of Prohibition to Chicago at first meant limited changes to this situation, as Prohibition became just another liquor law that was not enforced in Chicago. However, changes in the climate around vice began to take shape, as the traditionally cooperative relationship between vice lords in Chicago was replaced with a more directly competitive and more violent system of relations.<sup>209</sup> While Thompson did not originate this system nor appears to have been influenced by personal corruption, his efforts to continue the hands-off approach of the Carter Harrisons was not practical, as a public that tolerated vice when it was discreet did not accept it associated with open violence, made worse by charges of Thompson/Lundin forces benefiting from vice.<sup>210</sup> While the public in Chicago remained strongly opposed to Prohibition, it drew a line between vice and violent crime, and the inability of Thompson to handle the latter in connection with the former helped to further damage him politically.

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<sup>208</sup> Walter Cade Reckless, *Vice in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 76-77; Peterson, 100-101; Mazur, 243-244.

<sup>209</sup> The previously cited Peterson and Reckless books give a good glimpse as to the history of vice in Chicago.

<sup>210</sup> Bukowski, 255; Reckless, 78-79, 86-88, 93-94.

In addition to these specific issues, Thompson was also affected during the early 1920s by a string of corruption charges against his administration. Some of these were tied to the social climate of the period: the Chicago police, for instance, were charged with accepting payoffs in order to avoid enforcing Prohibition laws, continuing the Chicago tradition of vice interests paying off the police.<sup>211</sup> Other charges, however, were more closely connected to Thompson's specific policies: his public works policies, for instance, were damaged when it became known that a handful of political associates had made millions by receiving percentages as real-estate experts in connection with land acquisitions, resulting in a lawsuit concerning these payments between the *Chicago Tribune* and the Thompson administration.<sup>212</sup> Other corruption charges affected Thompson political associates: Len Small was in legal trouble from almost the time he was sworn in as Governor concerning his use of state funds as Treasurer of Illinois, and, while ultimately acquitted of criminal charges, was found personally liable for the funds, owing the state of Illinois hundreds of thousands of dollars.<sup>213</sup> The most important corruption charge related to the administration of Chicago's schools. Thompson had been in trouble concerning school administration in several ways since 1915: his administration frequently fought with the Chicago Teachers Federation, had difficulty constructing facilities to meet an influx of students, and at one point had two rival Boards

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<sup>211</sup> Peterson, 101, 111. For vice corruption in Chicago, see Reckless, *passim*; Peterson, *passim*.

<sup>212</sup> Schmidt, 56; Merriam, 29-30; Hoffman, 30-31; Alice Mildred O'Reilly, "Colonel Robert Rutherford McCormick, His Tribune, and Mayor William Hale Thompson" (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1963), 75-76. The papers concerning the *Tribune's* end of the matter are located in the Chicago History Museum.

<sup>213</sup> Bukowski, 134.

of Education with two rival superintendents claiming to be the lawful administrators of the public schools.<sup>214</sup> In late 1922, a major scandal emerged, charging that members of the Board of Education had taken bribes in exchange for contracts on school materials.<sup>215</sup> These charges extended beyond the Board of Education, entangling a large number of political officials associated with Thompson. Most important of those entangled in this was Fred Lundin, who had previously managed to avoid being implicated in political corruption, and who at that point was frequently charged with being the Svengali making Thompson's decisions on both policy and political matters.<sup>216</sup> This managed to serve as a blow to Thompson's reputation, while costing him the services of a close political associate. Moreover, these particular charges were especially damaging, as they served as a way to unite disparate people with objections to his administration of the Board of Education. Overall, these scandals served to further undermine Thompson politically, adding to the growing sense of his being politically weakened.

These blows to Thompson were complicated in terms of who could take political advantage of it. The Democratic organization controlled by George Brennan was the best-organized political group in Chicago, and the 1921 and 1922 elections demonstrated that they had recovered from their decline starting in 1916. However, the events of 1919 demonstrated that this organization could not elect a mayor unless they were able to make

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<sup>214</sup> Herrick, 122-143 *passim*; Hogan, 211, 213-214; Merriam, 125-129.

<sup>215</sup> For a day-by-day account of the events of this scandal, see *Women's City Club of Chicago Bulletin*, January 1923, 214-217.

<sup>216</sup> Zink, 288. For Lundin as Svengali, see Ickes, 172-173; Thurner, 12; O'Reilly, 38. Bukowski, 134, is more skeptical on this matter.

peace with other Democratic factions, and that they would need a candidate who could appeal beyond the party base. This limitation was especially notable when considering a basic element of recent Chicago political history: that faction had not elected an associate as Mayor since John P. Hopkins in December of 1893, pointing to a long-standing inability to find a candidate with such appeal.<sup>217</sup> Meanwhile, Harrison and Dunne, who had been political allies since the late 1910s, were in no position to name the candidate, as demonstrated by landslide defeats for anti-Brennan forces in the 1922 Democratic primary.<sup>218</sup> However, they and their associates were in an important bargaining position, as the events of 1919 demonstrated that they could defeat a candidate, even if they could not elect one. As a result, Brennan clearly need to unite his party and work with his old rivals, in order to avoid a repeat of the issues present in prior elections.

Chicago's Republicans were in an even more complicated position entering 1923. The Thompson-Lundin faction was in clear political trouble, and was beginning to splinter between Lundin associates on the West Side and Thompson allies on the South Side.<sup>219</sup> Without Thompson, this organization was on the brink of disintegration due to the lack of any replacement for him. However, Thompson was unclear about his political plans as 1922 ended, and could still win renomination if faced with split opposition. Here, the weakness of his factional rivals became apparent: the Brundage/McCormick, Deneen, and Crowe/Barrett factions of the Republican Party had considerably different

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<sup>217</sup> Merriam, 280-281, notes this failure by Roger Sullivan.

<sup>218</sup> Turner, 108-109.

<sup>219</sup> *Daily News*, 1/5/1923, 4, notes these points. Throughout this chapter and Chapter 2, all references to a newspaper that do not name a city can be assumed to be Chicago newspapers.

geographic and social bases for their support, and had never been able to act as a united front. Further complicating matters was finding a figure who could serve to unite all three factions politically: Brundage, McCormick, and Deneen had no interests in running as candidates, and Crowe and Barrett's past status as Thompson supporters made their chances of getting support slim. As with the Democrats, the anti-Thompson Republicans were faced with having to engage in compromise and negotiation, while also faced with a party that was already heavily fragmented.

Finally, there was the question of what the reform communities of Chicago would do, as each of these communities was faced with a challenge entering 1923. For women reformers, the receipt of full suffrage had not yet had a clear political impact: women, especially from recent immigrant groups, still turned out in smaller numbers than men, had not developed any sort of bloc vote, and had not been well incorporated into the organizations of either major political party.<sup>220</sup> Labor and other left reformers were struggling to hang on in the early 1920s, faced with both economic challenges and failure in political organization.<sup>221</sup> The traditional reformers of Chicago, associated with such groups as the Civic Federation and the MVL, might have been in even worse shape than the rest, as their audiences shrank to ones more predominantly native-born, Protestant, and middle or upper-class than the electorate as a whole. The Civic Federation had abandoned the broader goals it had at its foundation and focused narrowly on government

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<sup>220</sup> For these issues, see Flanagan, *Seeing with Their Hearts*, 137-139; 141-144.

<sup>221</sup> The Dolnick and Perlstein theses go into this in some detail, as does Newton-Matza.

finance.<sup>222</sup> The MVL, meanwhile, was losing its effectiveness in influencing the City Council, finding itself unable to get the Council to serve as a strong check on the political activities of Thompson.<sup>223</sup> Moreover, these various reform groups were unable to work closely with one another. This was demonstrated by the traditional reformers' greatest failure: in 1919, they had managed to call a Constitutional Convention to replace the badly outdated state constitution.<sup>224</sup> However, this Convention was deeply unappealing to many in Chicago, as the members of the Convention permanently restricted legislative representation, did not grant complete home rule, gave the judiciary increased powers in local politics, and generally either ignored or took stances diametrically opposed to those of many Chicago reformers.<sup>225</sup> By the time a Constitution was completed in 1922, many of these groups engaged in mass mobilization against the new Constitution, and even traditional reformers found very little appealing in it, making their support lukewarm at best.<sup>226</sup> In late 1922, the proposed Constitution was overwhelmingly defeated in a vote by the residents of Illinois, with Chicago residents opposing it by a twenty to one vote.<sup>227</sup> This demonstrated the limitations of traditional reform by the early 1920s, as it was clear that it needed to link to broader issues to maintain its relevance. At the same time, it was

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<sup>222</sup> Sutherland, 49.

<sup>223</sup> Bukowski, 110, notes a Council break with the MVL in 1920, and the MVL reports on the City Council published in many of Chicago's newspapers during January of 1923 similarly indicate a sense of a broken relationship.

<sup>224</sup> Flanagan, *Charter Reform in Chicago*, 146; Morton, 121; Merriam, 16; Pegram, 207.

<sup>225</sup> Flanagan, *Charter Reform in Chicago*, 146-147; Newton-Matza, 155, 157; Martin, 317.

<sup>226</sup> Morton, 121-122; Perlstein, 57-58; Pegram, 209-210. King, 138-143, implies these limitations that traditional reformers had towards the Constitution.

<sup>227</sup> Diner, 160-161; Newton-Matza, 158; Green, 356; Perlstein, 56-57.

unclear if this could be done, as Chicago reform had been more unified in opposing the new constitution than they had been in favor of anything for years. Approaching the 1923 election, reform groups were in a complicated position in terms of making appeals, as the lack of any sense of unity heavily complicated their ability to act in the political sphere.

### **Reform Leaps In: The Candidate Committees**

As 1923 began, several groups formed to influence the selection of mayoral candidates. The Committee of 100, operating out of the Hamilton Club, then the premier social club for Chicago Republicans, made “A Clean Sweep” its motto and a broom its logo.<sup>228</sup> While attempting to be broad along ethnic, religious, and partisan lines, it was an organization dominated by white Protestant Republicans, largely recruited from the clubs and business organizations of Chicago.<sup>229</sup> In its focus on business-based administrative issues, it was not alone: the Chicago Association of Commerce similarly announced that it would monitor government waste.<sup>230</sup> A second group, the Citizens’ Committee, organized out of the Chicago City Club, with a membership associated with various reform groups in Chicago.<sup>231</sup> This organization, unlike the Committee of 100, noted a desire for someone with a progressive outlook as mayor, naming seven candidates on

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<sup>228</sup> *Daily News*, 1/2/1923, 3; *Daily News*, 1/4/1923, 5. For various interpretations of the Hamilton Club, see Ickes, 147; Tarr, 243-244; and Harold F. Gosnell, *Machine Politics: Chicago Model* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 84.

<sup>229</sup> *Daily News*, 1/2/1923, 3; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/5/1923, 4.

<sup>230</sup> *Daily News*, 1/10/1923, 3.

<sup>231</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/4/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 1/4/1923, 5. For the City Club, see King, 119-120.

January 10<sup>th</sup> that fit their particulars.<sup>232</sup> In the Citizens' Committee's preferred set of candidates, five Democrats and two Republicans were named, all of whom had some sort of legal qualifications, and none of whom were particularly close to any of the major factions in Chicago politics. In this way, the Citizens' Committee indicated a preference for a professional-class background, complementing the business-class preferences of the Committee of 100.

Within a relatively short period, two of the candidates suggested by the Committee of 100 began to dominate candidate discussions. Arthur Lueder, son of a Lutheran minister/college professor, had entered the real-estate business after Spanish-American War service and receiving a law degree, rising to hold positions on the real estate board for Chicago and Cook County and becoming president of the German Club of Chicago.<sup>233</sup> After a relatively quiet career out of the public eye, he entered political notability when appointed Postmaster of Chicago in 1921 with the backing of the anti-Thompson factions of the Republican Party.<sup>234</sup> In several regards, he seemed an ideal candidate for the Citizens' Committee: a member of an older ethnic group, no strong association with local politics, and a clear administrative background. Equally important, however, was his acceptability to the anti-Thompson factions in Republican politics: the claim was present that his appointment had been masterminded by Medill McCormick,

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<sup>232</sup> *Daily News*, 1/4/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/11/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 1/11/1923, 9; *Post*, 1/11/1923, 11. Unless otherwise cited, all commentary on the candidates is taken from these sources.

<sup>233</sup> *Daily News*, 3/14/1923, 1,4; *Tribune*, 1/17/1923, 2; *Broad-Ax*, 1/20/1923, 1; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/16/1923, 5.

<sup>234</sup> *Tribune*, 8/23/1921, 17, notes this lack of political notability, and a scan of the *Tribune's* ProQuest archive contains little outside of his work in real estate before his appointment as Postmaster.



who as a Chicago-residing Senator had massive influence over appointments in Chicago, and he was seen as similarly unobjectionable to other factions.<sup>235</sup> In contrast, the other Republican suggested by the Citizens' Committee, former County Board President Alexander McCormick, had chosen the Progressives over the Republicans in his 1914 reelection bid, alienating party regulars. As a result, Lueder had a practical political advantage to go along with his background, aiding his potential candidacy.

The other leading candidate, William E. Dever, came from a considerably different background than Lueder. After an early life spent working as a tanner, Dever left this business shortly after arriving in Chicago in 1887, establishing a law practice in the Humboldt Park section of the city.<sup>236</sup> Around the turn of the century, Dever came to the attention of Graham Taylor, longtime director of the Chicago Commons settlement house, who starting in the middle-1890s had established himself as a political force in the Seventeenth Ward by taking advantage of equally balanced parties and low eligible voters to form a Chicago Commons political clubhouse that could swing City Council races, becoming the one settlement worker in the city with a degree of electoral clout.<sup>237</sup> After an unsuccessful campaign in 1900, Dever was elected to the City Council in 1902,

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<sup>235</sup> For this understanding involving Medill McCormick, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/16/1923, 5.

<sup>236</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 4/4/1923, 3; Schmidt, Ch. 1 *passim*. The William Dever Papers at the Chicago History Museum, for the most part, are skimpy concerning elements of his life before his election as Mayor.

<sup>237</sup> For a general overview of Taylor's activities, his own autobiography and the Wade biography are useful places to begin. Unfortunately, I have yet to examine the Graham Taylor Papers at the Newberry Library. For various accounts of Taylor in politics, see Nelli, 111-112; Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 165-167; Philpott, 85-88; Taylor, 72-76; King, 70-71; Wade, 128-134. Even Philpott, the most critical of these accounts, notes Taylor as being more effective politically than his peers.

where he served for eight years.<sup>238</sup> On the City Council, Dever gained a reputation as a leading member of the reform bloc then dominant on the Council, backing Carter Harrison II against the Hopkins/Sullivan forces, and serving as floor leader for Edward F. Dunne, including being one of the few members of the City Council backing Dunne's veto of the Settlement Ordinances.<sup>239</sup> Faced with a Humboldt Park where the Irish, German, and Norwegian voters who had elected him were being replaced by Poles and Italians who did not follow Graham Taylor politically, Dever left the City Council in 1910, being elected to the Superior Court and almost immediately moving to Rogers Park on the lakefront.<sup>240</sup> Dever quickly obtained distinction on the Superior Court bench, participation in such trials as those for William Lorimer and the early stages of the Black Sox trial for throwing the 1919 World Series, as well as being assigned for service on the Appellate Court.<sup>241</sup> This career gave Dever political advantages in several regards: he had a general-distinguished record in public office, his stance for municipal ownership was highly popular and relevant given the pending expiration of the streetcar franchises, and he had the ability to appeal to both reformers and to the Harrison and Dunne factions without offending George Brennan, who at this point had veto power over any potential

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<sup>238</sup> Schmidt, 24-28.

<sup>239</sup> Schmidt, 29, 34-36. For reform dominance over the City Council, see Tingley.

<sup>240</sup> Philpott, 85-86; Wade, 136; Schmidt, 39-45. Taylor, 75-76, essentially admits to this failing, in an oblique manner.

<sup>241</sup> For Dever at the Lorimer trial, see Tarr, 311-312; For the Black Sox, see Schmidt, 48. For Dever on the Appellate Court, see Schmidt, 46. Prior to 1964, judges of the Appellate Court were seconded from the Circuit and Superior Courts of Cook County, rather than being elected in their own right.

Democratic nominee.<sup>242</sup> In these ways, Dever was promising as someone who could unite the Sweitzer, Hoyne, and Fitzpatrick vote from 1919, and thereby build a political majority.

There were some complications present, however, to Dever, Lueder and the other Citizens' Committee candidates rising to the forefront. The Committee of 100 had been delayed in suggesting a candidate, apparently because of a desire to run a specifically dry candidate due to Anti-Saloon League influence.<sup>243</sup> This limited the pool of available candidates, and, while some were rumored as being preferred, it reached the point where Charles S. Peterson, member of the Cook County Commission and leading member of the organization, threatened to run himself if no one else would run.<sup>244</sup> Similarly at issue was the nature of the response by various factions in Chicago politics. The Brundage/McCormick, Barrett/Crowe, and Deneen factions among the Republicans were at this point engaged in negotiations to find a candidate that was mutually appealing.<sup>245</sup> Of the Republicans suggested by the Citizens' Committee, McCormick was objected to by ward committeemen (especially associated with Barrett/Crowe) due to his handling of patronage matters, while Lueder was seen as reluctant to run and as not being preferred by the Deneen faction, while both the Deneen and Barrett/Crowe factions were seen as

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<sup>242</sup> For the franchise expiration, see Dever's own remarks in *Journal of Commerce*, 3/24/1923, 4. For Dever as distant from politics by 1922, see Schmidt, 48-49. For Brennan as ultimately being able to select a candidate, see Thurner, 130.

<sup>243</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/13/1923, 1, 4; *Tribune*, 1/3/1923, 6.

<sup>244</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/11/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/13/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>245</sup> *Post*, 1/9/1923, 1; *Tribune*, 1/12/1923, 4.

ready to run their own candidates if unity was not acquired.<sup>246</sup> The Democrats, meanwhile, were similarly divided. Dunne had already declared for longtime political ally William L. O'Connell, who was not going to be acceptable to Brennan.<sup>247</sup> Harrison, meanwhile, seems to have been on the sidelines, avoiding making a commitment. George Brennan, meanwhile, had on the one hand pledged not to run a party wheel horse for mayor and had been receptive to these committees, but was faced with an onslaught of potential candidates, which many of the notable Democrats of Chicago being suggested as deserving nomination.<sup>248</sup> As a result, the conflicting demands were such that neither the anti-Thompson Republicans nor the Democrats could easily select a candidate.

The political forces around William Hale Thompson, meanwhile, were in as difficult a political situation as their opponents. A strong effort was made to encourage Thompson to run for a third term through the use of pledge cards promising to support Thompson, but with some debate: 120,000 reached Thompson by January 4<sup>th</sup>, but with the charge that many of these were the product of promised jobs and political pressure.<sup>249</sup> It was unclear if Thompson even wanted to run: he apparently both had desires to engage in world travel and was concerned that a loss in 1923 could cause permanent damage to

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<sup>246</sup> For McCormick, see *Tribune*, 1/13/1923, 3; *Daily News*, 1/12/1923, 3. For Lueder, see *Tribune*, 1/11/1923, 9; *Post*, 1/10/1923, 1. For Deneen factional fighting, see *Daily News*, 1/9/1923, 3; *Post*, 1/16/1923, 1, 2. For the Barrett/Crowe faction preparing to run Charles V. Barrett, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/15/1923, 1, 5.

<sup>247</sup> *Post*, 1/10/1923, 2.

<sup>248</sup> *Post*, 1/4/1923, 1; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/7/1923, Part 1, 5. For some of these candidates, see *Journal of Commerce*, 1/10/1923, 3; *Daily News*, 1/11/1923, 4; *Post*, 1/15/1923, 2.

<sup>249</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/4/1923, 4; *Post*, 1/10/1923, 1; *Tribune*, 1/9/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 1/10/1923, 7.

his political career.<sup>250</sup> Thompson clearly was desiring to defend his record in office: a string of articles in the Hearst-owned and pro-Thompson *Herald and Examiner* appeared under his name, engaging in a combination of praise of his record and a denunciation of the *Tribune* and the *Daily News*, with which he had long engaged in political warfare.<sup>251</sup> Meanwhile, the ability of the Thompson organization to function without him became an open question: personal followers of Thompson, led by City Controller George F. Harding, had been fighting with the old Lorimerites under the leadership of Fred Lundin, which would be particularly damaging because of Harding's control of Thompson funds and Lundin's control over ward and precinct organizations.<sup>252</sup> Further complicating matters was the question of Lundin's whereabouts: he had left Chicago in late 1922 to visit the Mayo Clinic, but over time increasingly seemed to be away due to concerns about indictment over the Board of Education scandals, leading to it becoming an open question whether or not he would ever return to Chicago.<sup>253</sup> As a result, the concerns about anti-Thompson forces about finding a viable candidate against Thompson paralleled questions among Thompson followers about their ability to function as a united entity in 1923, especially if Thompson did not run again.

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<sup>250</sup> *American*, 1/9/1923, 9. *Daily News*, 1/24/1923, 1, 3, for example, notes the threat that his political organization could collapse if he lost.

<sup>251</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/17/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/19/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/24/1923, 5.

<sup>252</sup> *Post*, 12/30/1922, 1; *Daily News*, 1/5/1923, 4.

<sup>253</sup> *Post*, 12/27/1922, 1. Zink, 288, similarly notes health issues at this time while being vague on details. For the Board of Education scandals relating directly to Lundin, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/4/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 1/4/1923, 1,6. For speculation on his whereabouts, see *Daily News*, 1/11/1923, 1, 3.

This messy political situation began to resolve itself in the middle of January. Negotiations between the anti-Thompson Republican factions had been complicated: on January 15<sup>th</sup>, newspapers with ideologies as far apart as the *Herald and Examiner* and the *Daily News* were expecting that efforts to form such a coalition would fail, resulting in at least a three-way Republican primary for mayor.<sup>254</sup> These beliefs centered on the Deneen faction being an obstacle, unable to either accept the candidates of other factions or suggest an acceptable one of their own, reflecting that the disputes present in the 1922 primary had not resolved themselves. The next day, however, the three factions managed to unite around Arthur Lueder as a candidate for Mayor.<sup>255</sup> This decision was seen as a victory for several different groups of people: the Citizens' Committee took credit, the *Tribune* and the *Daily News* both considered this unity a triumph, while Medill McCormick was regarded as having nominated his personal candidate.<sup>256</sup> In the immediate aftermath, Alexander McCormick agreed to back Lueder, as did the Deneen figures seen as most likely to run for mayor.<sup>257</sup> In these ways, the Lueder nomination seemed important as demonstrating actual unity among Thompson's Republican foes, making it clear that Thompson could not rely on split opposition, as had been the case in 1919.

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<sup>254</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/15/1923, 1, 5; *Daily News*, 1/15/1923, 3.

<sup>255</sup> *Journal of Commerce*, 1/17/1923, 1; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/17/1923, 3; *Post*, 1/16/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>256</sup> *Daily News*, 1/16/1923, 1, 3; *Daily News*, 1/17/1923, 8; *Tribune*, 1/17/1923, 8; *American*, 1/18/1923, 16.

<sup>257</sup> *Tribune*, 1/17/1923, 1, 2.

While the anti-Thompson Republican factions had been bickering with one another, George Brennan had been working from the Auditorium Hotel (where he was recovering from surgery related to problems with an amputated leg) to try to find an acceptable candidate for Mayor.<sup>258</sup> At the same time that Lueder was announced as the anti-Thompson Republican candidate for mayor, there was a growing belief that William E. Dever would be the Democratic candidate for that office.<sup>259</sup> This rise was something of a surprise: while he had Citizens' Committee backing, most newspaper commentators had assumed that Brennan preferred other candidates for Democratic support. The precise reasons for his slating are uncertain: Brennan left no records, and several different people took credit for proposing Dever as a candidate.<sup>260</sup> However, it appears that Brennan was influenced both by Dever's support from the Citizens' Committee and the belief that he would appeal to the Harrison and Dunne factions of the party.<sup>261</sup> Within a few days, things fell rapidly in line for Dever: the Brennan-controlled managing committee of the Democratic Party endorsed him on January 19<sup>th</sup> with almost no opposition, Carter Harrison announced his willingness to stump for Dever the next day, and it was believed that the approval of the vacationing Dunne was received via proxy.<sup>262</sup> As a result, Dever was seen as uniting the Democratic Party, making a repeat of the 1919 situation

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<sup>258</sup> *Tribune*, 1/18/1923, 3.

<sup>259</sup> *Post*, 1/16/1923, 1, 2; *Tribune*, 1/16/1923, 10.

<sup>260</sup> Schmidt, 62-63; Ickes, 248.

<sup>261</sup> For the former element, see Schmidt, 64-65; for the latter, see Thurner, 130-131.

<sup>262</sup> *Tribune*, 1/19/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/21/1923, Part 1, 6; *Tribune*, 1/22/1923, 6; *American*, 1/18/1923, 9.

impossible, while it was seen as important that factions in both parties had chosen to follow the advice of non-partisan groups in selecting their candidates. In the following days, Lueder and Dever engaged in different political approaches. Lueder fell ill shortly after accepting the nomination, leaving the immediate organization of his campaign to a committee combining members of the various anti-Thompson factions and those who had recently broke with Thompson.<sup>263</sup> Dever started campaigning immediately, giving his opening address before the Iroquois Club (then the leading Democratic clubhouse in Chicago) on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, where he pledged to clean up City Hall, promised to bring municipal ownership of traction to Chicago, and stated his opposition to blue laws.<sup>264</sup> In these approaches, two different forces of gaining support become apparent: Lueder and his backers concerned themselves with unity a fractured party, while Dever immediately focused on establishing his platform and gaining support through his ideas.

While the Dever and Lueder campaigns began, the Socialist Party and the Farmer-Labor Party began to consider what moves they would make. The Farmer-Labor Party had the seeming advantage of being the official party of the Chicago Federation of Labor and its' house organ *The New Majority*, as well as their strong fourth-placed showing in 1919. However, the previous few years had been just as poor for the Farmer-Labor Party as it had been for the CFL; while the CFL was fighting injunctions and the Landis Award, the Farmer-Laborites had failed to gain any traction following 1919. By mid-January, the Farmer-Labor Party decided not to enter the election, instead focusing on

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<sup>263</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/22/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 1/23/1923, 5.

<sup>264</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/23/1923, 1, 3; *Daily News*, 1/22/1923, 1, 3; *Tribune*, 1/23/1923, 5; and *Post*, 1/22/1923, 1, 2.



preparations for the 1924 election.<sup>265</sup> The Socialists, on the other hand, had been deteriorating for even longer, with a combination of harassment during the First Red Scare by Maclay Hoyne and splintering to the Farmer-Laborites and the Communists having resulted in a loss of political strength.<sup>266</sup> Unlike the Farmer-Laborites, the Socialists were able to keep an engagement in local politics, endorsing longtime labor attorney William Cunnea at a January 7<sup>th</sup> rally.<sup>267</sup> In their platform, the Socialists urged municipal ownership of the telephone, gas, and electric systems, the establishment of municipal markets, fuel yards, and housing, the unionization of city employees, and the establishment of a new city charter.<sup>268</sup> In these regards, the Socialists more than any other group were fighting this election based on a clear set of ideas, rather than the reactions to Thompson that influenced the Democrats and the anti-Thompson Republicans. As a result, this election would be important, to see if the Socialists could build on the Labor Party performance of four years earlier.

In addition to these events citywide, political antics were taking place at the ward level. In 1923, the Chicago City Council would be elected using a fifty-ward map with one alderman per ward, rather than the previous system of seventy aldermen representing thirty-five wards.<sup>269</sup> When combined with the migration of population outward from the

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<sup>265</sup> *Daily News*, 1/18/1923, 5; *New Majority*, 1/20/1923, 3.

<sup>266</sup> For harassment by Hoyne, see Thurner, 33.

<sup>267</sup> *Daily News*, 1/8/1923, 3; *Post*, 1/8/1923, 2.

<sup>268</sup> *Tribune*, 1/8/1923, 4.

<sup>269</sup> McCarthy, 197-198.

core of the city, redistricting created a situation where many aldermen shared wards while other wards had no resident aldermen.<sup>270</sup> A range of responses took place: some aldermen, like Michael “Hinky Dink” Kenna of the First Ward, chose to retire, while others left to assume a range of positions from the Superior Court to cemetery management.<sup>271</sup> Meanwhile, two groups attempted to influence elections to the new City Council. The Municipal Voters League by 1923 had a mixed reputation: the *Daily News* printed its statements verbatim, while the Hearst newspapers in Chicago considered it too close to traction interests and as having deteriorated in quality since the turn of the century.<sup>272</sup> They regarded the sitting City Council as largely being too close to Thompson, but regarded the coming election as a chance to form a better City Council. On the one hand, this demonstrated that the MVL still had the old reform impulses; on the other hand, compared to the anti-traction-interest stance of the 1890s and 1900s MVL, the MVL by 1923 had little to offer but an anti-Thompson message, which was limited in terms of being something that could mobilize a mass electorate.<sup>273</sup> The other major group to emerge in the 1923 election was the Better City Council Committee, which shared with the MVL a desire to obtain better Council representation by defeating

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<sup>270</sup> The various MVL reports on the City Council reflect this- the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Wards, for instance, had no incumbent aldermen, while the neighboring 7<sup>th</sup> had two (*Daily News*, 1/2/1923, 29).

<sup>271</sup> For the judge and the cemetery manager, see *Daily News*, 1/10/1923, 16; for Kenna, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/18/1923, 17.

<sup>272</sup> The *Daily News* reprints of MVL reviews of candidates ran from late 1922 to January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1923. All comments on the MVL’s opinions on candidates come from this source, unless otherwise cited. For the Hearst press, see *American*, 1/3/1923, 16; *American*, 4/18/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>273</sup> For an example of the limitations of this message, see *Daily News*, 1/24/1923, 5, which contains a purely negative critique of Thompson’s school policy without a clear solution.

incumbents.<sup>274</sup> Importantly, the BCCC had a different form of organization than the MVL: while the MVL had made its decisions from the top-down, the BCCC tried to coordinate civic groups in all fifty wards, with the civic groups in each ward selecting candidates rather than central leadership.<sup>275</sup> In its rise, the BCCC demonstrates how the MVL had declined in authority by 1923, but also that there was a continued grass-roots basis for reform in Chicago, as it engaged in activities in a wide variety of wards to mobilize voters.<sup>276</sup> In these respects, the BCCC demonstrates that reform was not simply a top-down process in Chicago, and that reform on the grassroots was still present as late as 1923.

### **Big Bill Drops Out: The Confusion of Reform**

As this planning was taking place, the wait continued for William Hale Thompson to make his move. By January 25<sup>th</sup>, 227,922 pledge cards had come for a Thompson candidacy, seeming to urge him to enter the race.<sup>277</sup> The presence of reform candidates in both the Republican primary and as the presumptive Democratic nominee complicated matters: it was suggested that he run as an independent to avoid risking primary defeat and to get his foes to split the anti-Thompson vote in the general election, but it was

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<sup>274</sup> For basic information on this group, see *Daily News*, 1/15/1923, 7.

<sup>275</sup> Post, 1/3/1923, 5 notes administration of the MVL by a 14-member committee. *Daily News*, 1/15/1923, 7, gives the BCCC's plans of operation.

<sup>276</sup> For a list of just some of the wards in which these activities were taking place, see *Daily News*, 1/26/1923, 36.

<sup>277</sup> *Journal of Commerce*, 1/25/1923, 3; *American*, 1/25/1923, 1. Notably, both of these sources claim that he had already entered the race.

unclear if his followers would vote for him as an independent candidate.<sup>278</sup> Thompson himself was not clear with his own supporters concerning his plans, making it hard for them to plan for the coming campaign.<sup>279</sup> As January continued, this grew as an issue, as several days passed when Thompson failed to make an anticipated formal announcement.<sup>280</sup> On January 25<sup>th</sup>, Thompson finally made a formal announcement, in which he continued to defend his record, but refused either to enter the race for mayor or back a candidate to replace himself.<sup>281</sup> This decision surprised his followers: he had apparently told no one ahead of time about this announcement, and many of them, expecting him to run again, had not arranged with other potential candidates or factions, especially complicating matters for his City Council supporters who had been hoping for coattail support for their reelection bids.<sup>282</sup> Meanwhile, Thompson's foes within the Republican Party were in some disarray: the Deneen faction had been especially reluctant to back Lueder, and, with Thompson out of the race, there was a question concerning if Lueder would even continue in the race, or if the various Republican factions would fight

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<sup>278</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/25/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 1/24/1923, 1, 3; *Tribune*, 1/18/1923, 3.

<sup>279</sup> *Tribune*, 1/24/1923, 6, for instance, notes that his friends couldn't agree on what he was doing, and at best agreed that he probably hadn't made up his mind.

<sup>280</sup> For examples of these missed deadlines, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/8/1923, 4; *Post*, 1/18/1923, 6.

<sup>281</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/26/1923, 1, 2; *Daily News*, 1/26/1923, 1, 5; *Tribune*, 1/26/1923, 1, 12; *Post*, 1/26/1923, 1, 2. Of these, the *Herald and Examiner*, as a direct reprint of Thompson's statement, has been used as main source text for all comments based on the statement.

<sup>282</sup> *Tribune*, 1/27/1923, 1, 2; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/26/1923, 2; *Daily News*, 1/27/1923, 3. *Daily News*, 1/6/1923, 14, suggests that these concerns were present for City Councilors long before Thompson's plans were made clear.

each other to nominate a mayor.<sup>283</sup> Only the Democrats had not changed plans, as there were no signs that Dever was going to withdraw or that Thompson's withdrawal changed his plans any.<sup>284</sup> In these respects, the forces backing Dever and Lueder managed to remove Thompson from office, but where unclear as for what to do now.

Conditions only continued to grow messier for the followers of William Hale Thompson in the coming days. After weeks of work, the grand jury investigating conditions in the Chicago school system indicted over twenty people, most notably Fred Lundin, who was charged with corrupt practices concerning the issuing of insurance contracts.<sup>285</sup> This further undermined the Thompson faction, particularly as it served as a pointer to poor school conditions, including 70,000 children in either part-time education or using substandard facilities.<sup>286</sup> A rumor emerged that it was the very warning of these indictments that resulted in Thompson's decision not to run for reelection.<sup>287</sup> This miserable situation was only further emphasized by the efforts of the Thompson faction to find a replacement candidate. George F. Harding, trying to maintain the Thompson

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<sup>283</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/27/1923, 1, 4. While caution must be used with this source (which was heavily anti-Lueder and pro-Dever), this seems to correspond well to the delays in selecting a candidate. *Herald and Examiner*, 1/26/1923, 2; *Post*, 1/26/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>284</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/26/1923, 4, points to both of these as being the case.

<sup>285</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/27/1923, 1, 4; *Daily News*, 1/29/1923, 1, 5; *Tribune*, 1/27/1923, 1, 2. *Tribune*, 1/27/1923, 2, focuses on Lundin, claiming that he had fled to Cuba.

<sup>286</sup> *Daily News*, 1/24/1923, 5.

<sup>287</sup> *Daily News*, 1/27/1923, 3.

faction as a unified group, was faced with a multiplicity of potential candidates, including both officials closely associated with Thompson and some of his friends.<sup>288</sup>

This range of candidates served to demonstrate that the Thompson faction lacked any point of unity beyond following Thompson, and that Thompson had failed to develop a clear successor. This situation was made even worse by its timing: Thompson had withdrawn shortly before the start of candidate filing, and, while it was relatively easy to get the required signatures to make the ballot, being able to build any sort of a citywide organization would not be so easy.<sup>289</sup> Ultimately, only a couple of Thompson associates chose to circulate petitions, and neither fully entered the race.<sup>290</sup> In this state of affairs, the weakness of the Thompson organization became very apparent, as this organization was unable to slate a candidate with Thompson out of the picture.

Given the ways in which the withdrawal of Thompson had caused factional chaos, it is perhaps surprising that the first Republican candidate to enter the race after Thompson withdrew denied having any interest in being the candidate of a faction.<sup>291</sup> Bernard P. Barasa arrived in Chicago from Michigan around the turn of the century, practicing law before being elected to the Municipal Court bench in 1916, and having a political career where he had run with Lorimer and Lundin support (for Municipal Court in 1912 and Circuit Court in 1921) and against them (running as a wet for States Attorney

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<sup>288</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/1/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 2/1/1923, 7; *Post*, 2/1/1923, 1; *Daily News*, 1/26/1923, 1, 5; *Post*, 12/29/1922, 1; *Daily News*, 1/2/1923, 3.

<sup>289</sup> For the start of filing, see *Tribune*, 1/28/1923, 1, 7.

<sup>290</sup> *Post*, 2/3/1923, 1, 3; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/5/1923, 4.

<sup>291</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/30/1923, 1, 4.

in 1920).<sup>292</sup> In his time on the bench, Barasa gained a reputation for his work as an arbitrator for labor disputes and in handling rent disputes, as well as prominence in fraternal organizations, within the Chicago Italian community, and as a foe of Prohibition.<sup>293</sup> While he had gained a personal following, leading the ticket for Municipal Court in 1918, his bouncing between factions led to his losing support from all factions, with the charge being made that he was hoping to leverage this campaign for higher judicial office.<sup>294</sup> This lack of factional support, if anything, encouraged Barasa, who saw the general weakness of the various factions as creating a vacuum that could aid him.<sup>295</sup> Barasa also chose to devise a platform, in which he combined support for personal liberties (both narrowly against Prohibition and broadly for equality for all under the law), home rule, municipal ownership, legalized boxing, opposition to rent gouging, and increases in parks and street cleaning.<sup>296</sup> In certain regards, his platform was limited by an inability to make it clear how he could have enacted his proposals, particularly concerning getting around the state and federal laws enforcing Prohibition. At the same time, this platform seems designed to appeal to as broad a base of Chicago residents as

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<sup>292</sup> For Barasa's background, see *Tribune*, 5/28/1939, 15; *Tribune*, 3/31/1912, 6; *Tribune*, 7/17/1920, 9; *Tribune*, 6/7/1921, 1.

<sup>293</sup> *Tribune*, 1/6/1922, 3; *Tribune*, 5/10/1922, 16; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/30/1923, 1, 4; *Tribune*, 8/31/1922, 3; Nelli, 120-121.

<sup>294</sup> *Tribune*, 11/7/1918, 5; *Tribune*, 1/30/1923, 5; *Post*, 1/30/1923, 1, 2; *Tribune*, 2/3/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 2/6/1923, 5.

<sup>295</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/7/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>296</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/4/1923, Part 1, 9; *Daily News*, 2/3/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 2/4/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/30/1923, 1, 4.

possible, and, through these appeals, gain Barasa support while Lueder stalled in either starting his campaign or giving a reason to support him.

Barasa was not the only candidate establishing a platform at that time. Dever took advantage of the fact that he had a secure nomination at hand and Lueder's delay in beginning active campaigning to begin establishing his platform, going quickly beyond the issue of needing to change city administration that had been made moot when Thompson withdrew.<sup>297</sup> In some places, Dever's stances on the issues were in reaction to Thompson antics: he stood against paying expert fees in land-use matters, proposed a higher-quality Board of Education, and promised to support civil service.<sup>298</sup> Dever also tried to positively position himself with prior Democratic administrations, noting that he hoped to emulate Carter Harrison II in office, and promising as the Harrisons had done not to enforce blue laws.<sup>299</sup> Other stances of Dever's reflected a positive approach to administration. Most notable in these terms was his strong support for municipal ownership of traction in Chicago, which he treated as inevitable due to the inability of private ownership to continue to plausibly offer transit services.<sup>300</sup> He seems to have admitted that his would be a difficult goal to obtain, and avoided offering precise details concerning his plan. He did, however, make it clear that municipal ownership would not mean simply the continuance of the current transit system, as one of his pledges was to

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<sup>297</sup> For Dever's statement of the issues of the campaign, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/26/1923, 4. All references not otherwise cited are to be understood as based on this document.

<sup>298</sup> For his civil service stance, see *Herald and Examiner*, 2/2/1923, 4

<sup>299</sup> For his opposition to blue laws, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/23/1923, 1, 3.

<sup>300</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/23/1923, 1, 3.



quickly establish a subway system extending throughout Chicago.<sup>301</sup> In his stance, he directly presented this matter as one in which he was following Dunne, including continued justification of his opposition to the Settlement Ordinances.<sup>302</sup> The experience of other places also played a role in this: Detroit had just obtained municipal ownership of its streetcar system after thirty years of political struggle, suggesting that Chicago could be next to obtain it.<sup>303</sup> Perhaps the most distinctive element of Dever's early campaign statements, however, was the attention he gave to the African-American community. Certain elements fit in with traditional reform concerns: he pledged to open a campaign against vice conditions in the Second Ward, following both the tradition of campaigns against vice as having been run by reformers since the 1890s and the spatial association of vice with African-American residency.<sup>304</sup> However, Dever also stated a desire to be the best mayor the African-American community had ever had.<sup>305</sup> This claim was not one that was usually made by Democratic politicians in Chicago: barely over two years earlier, James Hamilton Lewis had appealed to white supremacy when running for Governor, and several of the street gangs that had harassed African-Americans during the 1919 race riot were the tools of Democratic ward politicians.<sup>306</sup> Moreover, this attention

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<sup>301</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/2/1923, 4.

<sup>302</sup> *Daily News*, 1/21/1923, 4.

<sup>303</sup> For commentary on this during the election, see *Daily Drivers Journal*, 4/18/1923, 3.

<sup>304</sup> For this tendency with vice, see Spear, 25; for the vice investigations, see *Post*, 1/19/1923, 1; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/16/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 1/25/1923, 1, 3.

<sup>305</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/2/1923, 4.

<sup>306</sup> Lewis denied this in *Broad Ax*, 4/14/1923, 1, 2, but for an example of this, see *City Club Bulletin*, 11/1/1920, 214. For the political ties with Ragan's Colts, see Tuttle, 199-200.

was matched by other pledges: Dever promised to improve school conditions in both the Second Ward and for African-Americans elsewhere in the city, to clean local streets and alleys, and to campaign for better citizenship within the community.<sup>307</sup> In these pledges, Dever took advantage of the Thompson difficulties with extending symbolic and patronage recognition into more substantive matters. This also served as a notice that Dever was not taking any source of votes for granted, even among a group that had been charged with being responsible for electing and reelecting Thompson. Overall, these sets of stances suggest Dever as trying to expand his party's base, and with using control of the city's streetcars as his chief issue.

As early as January, there had been a report that Arthur M. Millard, a railroad agent who had served as manager of the Masonic Bureau of Service and Employment, would enter the race as an anti-Thompson candidate, a report fulfilled when Millard took out petitions in early February.<sup>308</sup> Millard, like Barasa, claimed independence for Chicago factional politicians, in his case going beyond Barasa by setting up his own ward organizations rather than accept support at the ward level.<sup>309</sup> Millard was clearly trying to exploit the same factional breakdown as Barasa, but, in his case, had the emergent question as for where he was receiving support, as he received over 100,000 pledge cards

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<sup>307</sup> *Tribune*, 2/2/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/2/1923, 4.

<sup>308</sup> *Tribune*, 1/13/1923, 3; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/3/1923, 4. For some details on Millard, see *Tribune*, 12/9/1946, 40.

<sup>309</sup> *Tribune*, 2/11/1923, 4.

by early February.<sup>310</sup> Some analysis assumed that Millard's Masonic connections what was gaining him support, while others noted that he was running like a traditional warfare in supporting a business administration, crime campaigning, and civil service.<sup>311</sup> The most probable backers of Millard, however, were suggested by the heavy amounts of secrecy present in his campaign. In 1922, the Ku Klux Klan had begun to rise as a mass movement in Chicago, being able by October to support a weekly publication, *The Dawn*, aimed at a local Klan audience, and with hundreds being inducted into membership at mass meetings.<sup>312</sup> By the end of the year, backlash to the Klan's growth had developed, with the American Unity League fighting the Klan by publicizing Klan memberships in its weekly publication, *Tolerance*, and with a committee on the City Council investigating Klan infiltration into the fire, police, and health departments.<sup>313</sup> This response did not take place without opposition, as the Klan had been particularly successful in organizing in the outlying districts of Chicago. Austin, on the West Side, was a major case in point: 300 had joined the Austin Klan in one mass meeting in October 1922, and by January of 1923 between 1200 and 2000 were estimated as having

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<sup>310</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/3/1923, 4.

<sup>311</sup> *Broad Ax*, 2/17/1923, 1; *Post*, 2/2/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>312</sup> For a general account of the rise of the Chicago Klan, see Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 94-100. *The Dawn*, 10/21/1923, 5, demonstrates both the existence of itself as a publication and serves to demonstrate mass joining.

<sup>313</sup> For the rise of the American Unity League, see Jackson, 102-106. The earliest edition of *Tolerance* I have seen is that of 11/26/1922; unfortunately, I have not been able to find any copies from during the 1923 campaign. For the City Council investigation, see Jackson, 107-109; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/2/1923, 1, 3; *Post*, 1/30/1923, 1; *Post*, 12/22/1922, 1.

joined it.<sup>314</sup> This led to Klan political pull: the two City Councilors representing Austin were the only ones to oppose the Council's Klan investigation, with Austin resident John Garner being outspoken in regarding these investigations as political and the Klan as being the equivalent of the Masons.<sup>315</sup> Even reform groups fighting the Thompson-supporting Garner were affected, with the local BCCC deserting its original candidate for Council when he sought Klan support.<sup>316</sup> In early February, the claim was made that the Klan had attempted to recruit Garner to run as a candidate for mayor.<sup>317</sup> While Garner ultimately ran for reelection, this claim suggests Klan interests in the mayoral election, and the secrecy of the Millard campaign, noted by newspapers that otherwise ranged significantly in ideology, matched the tendency for the Klan to be secretive.<sup>318</sup> While precise evidence appears to no longer exist, it appears quite likely that the Millard campaign at the least was trying to get Klan support, and that Millard might have been the out-and-out Klan candidate.<sup>319</sup> If this hunch is accurate, Millard's campaign is explained as being a case of the Klan establishing itself as a political organization, and thereby supplanting those already existing.

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<sup>314</sup> *The Dawn*, 10/21/1923, 5; the high estimate for the Klan is in *Herald and Examiner*, 1/18/1923, 1, 2, with the low estimate in *Tribune*, 1/13/1923, 8.

<sup>315</sup> *Daily News*, 1/9/1923, 1; *Tribune*, 1/13/1923, 8; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/18/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>316</sup> For Garner's Thompson ties, see *Daily News*, 1/9/1923, 26; for the BCCC issues, see *The Austinite*, 1/26/1923, 1. *The Austinite*, 2/23/1923, 37, contains an open appeal to white supremacy by still another candidate.

<sup>317</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/2/1923, 4.

<sup>318</sup> *Daily News*, 2/26/1923, 1, 5; *Tribune*, 2/25/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>319</sup> Jackson, 110, notes the rumors concerning Millard, while the charge of him having this backing was made after the fact, but still with no clear evidence, in *Daily News*, 2/27/1923, 1, 3. *The Dawn* issued no endorsements, and the absence of any surviving Chicago Klan records ultimately makes this unsolvable.

The last of the candidates to file for mayor was one who had been under discussion as a potential candidate long before he started to run. Edward R. Litsinger had entered politics during the 1890s, organizing in the stockyards section of Chicago.<sup>320</sup> After serving a single term as an alderman at the turn of the century, Litsinger established himself as a lawyer and in business, where he soon gained a close connection with Charles S. Deneen: other Deneen allies were partners in the banking and legal businesses, and Deneen appointed Litsinger an assistant state's attorney and a trustee of the Illinois Industrial Home for the Blind.<sup>321</sup> His greater rise to prominence came in 1916, when he beat a coalition of Thompson and Brundage forces to be nominated for the Board of Review, which, due to its ability to change and set assessments of taxes, had become a powerful position in Chicago politics. The partisan division of that board increased his power: from 1918 onward, he gained power by service as a fulcrum between Thompsonite-turned-factional leader Charles V. Barrett and Democratic leader Patrick Nash. His significance only increased in 1922, when his narrow reelection to the Board of Review left him one of the few Republican survivors of that election, as well as consolidating his status as a close Deneen ally, with Deneen himself arguing Litsinger's case when threatened with a recount.<sup>322</sup> When the Deneen faction engaging in early planning for candidate slating, Litsinger was regarded as one of the two Deneen followers most likely to run for mayor, and, when they decided to back Lueder instead, Litsinger

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<sup>320</sup> For Litsinger's background, see *Tribune*, 1/21/1956, B7.

<sup>321</sup> *Tribune*, 10/14/1928, 8.

<sup>322</sup> For Deneen defending Litsinger's election, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/9/1923, 4.

was seen as being needed to appease to keep out of the race.<sup>323</sup> At first, these appeals seem to have worked, as Litsinger became a member of the managing committee for the Lueder campaign.<sup>324</sup> This arrangement, however, was shaken by Thompson's decision not to run for reelection, as, without the need to remove Thompson from office as an issue, the ability to pressure Litsinger to back Lueder seems to have deteriorated.<sup>325</sup> On February 7<sup>th</sup>, in spite of efforts of Deneen and his associates to prevent this, Litsinger entered the Republican primary for mayor.<sup>326</sup> In running, he was seen as a strong threat to gain votes from the Deneen faction, which was seen as being deliberately sidelined by the nonpartisan committees that had considered candidates, as well as gaining support from Barrett/Crowe faction members and from Thompson followers left without any other candidate.<sup>327</sup> In these ways, Litsinger complicated matters, being the Republican candidate trying hardest to break the factional unity that then was surrounding Lueder.

While these factional challenges developed, Lueder began to campaign in earnest. Efforts continued to try to establish factional unity, with the representation of all anti-Thompson factions on various organizations backing Lueder, including those of veterans

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<sup>323</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/15/1923, 1, 5; *Daily News*, 1/9/1923, 3; *Post*, 1/10/1923, 1. *Daily News*, 1/13/1923, 3, noted the chance that Deneen could not keep Litsinger from running.

<sup>324</sup> *Daily News*, 1/23/1923, 5.

<sup>325</sup> For example, *Post*, 1/29/1923, 1, 2, notes his refusal to attend a unity meeting shortly after Thompson left the race.

<sup>326</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/7/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>327</sup> *American*, 1/18/1923, 16, makes this specific charge involving both Litsinger and County Recorder Joseph F. Haas, the other leading figure among the Deneen faction. *Post*, 1/26/1923, 1, 2, notes the belief immediately after Thompson dropped out that Charles V. Barrett would become the Barrett/Crowe candidate, and *Herald and Examiner*, 2/7/1923, 1, 4, considered a breakthrough among the rank-and-file likely.

and women.<sup>328</sup> At the Chicago Press Club and at ward meetings, Lueder began establishing his platform as a candidate for mayor.<sup>329</sup> In his maneuvering, Lueder shied away from wanting to be considered as a reformer, instead making the case that he would be a regenerator. This distinction, which seems connected with the association of reformers with anti-party measures in Chicago, was one without a difference, as he proposed reform stances even when avoiding the name. This fact is demonstrated when looking at his pledges: he promised not to set up a personal political machine, both following the anti-machine tendencies within reform and telling the factions backing him he was not a threat, made pledges concerning amusement investigation and youth delinquency following the anti-vice ideology of Chicago reform, and backed a unified traction system matching the anti-franchise tendencies of the MVL. Notably, William Hale Thompson had influence: Lueder avoided directly attacking Thompson, and his pledges to be a building mayor and to install a subway system, more public schools, and Loop infrastructure resemble the “Big Bill the Builder” image that Thompson had long used. In these regards, Lueder was trying to avoid the stereotypes of a political reformer (such as an excessively negative focus), while at the same time basically run as a reform candidate and support a reform agenda.

In terms of other citywide offices, little excitement was taking place: Lueder backers chose to run Deneen allies for clerk and treasurer who were not challenged by the other Republican candidates, while the Democrats similarly had uncontested races in

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<sup>328</sup> *Tribune*, 2/4/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/6/1923, 4.

<sup>329</sup> *Daily News*, 2/8/1923, 3; *Post*, 2/8/1923, 1, 2. When not otherwise cited, claims made about Lueder’s stances come from this source.

these offices.<sup>330</sup> More notable were the races for City Council: various candidates announced daily, with over three hundred candidates having filed their paperwork at various points.<sup>331</sup> The BCCC and similar organizations for better representation on the City Council were active, focusing their energies on Thompson allies.<sup>332</sup> For the most part, women did not end up trying to make an elective breakthrough: only four filed, and none received significant support.<sup>333</sup> More successful were various ethnic clubs, who threw support to their fellow members through Chicago.<sup>334</sup> The Socialists, hoping to regain the seats they lost in 1919, slated candidates across Chicago, and were seen as particularly strong among the Jews of Lawndale in the 24<sup>th</sup> Ward and in Pullman in the 9<sup>th</sup>.<sup>335</sup> In contrast to this were the Farmer-Laborites, meanwhile, who, in spite of the presence of labor officials as candidates, seem to have played no role in the City Council elections.<sup>336</sup> These were contentious races, with two separate groups of candidates getting into fistfights in the offices of the Board of Elections.<sup>337</sup> These races were the most exciting facing voters in late February, with registration for the coming elections being

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<sup>330</sup> *Journal of Commerce*, 1/31/1923, 1; *Daily News*, 1/31/1923, 5.

<sup>331</sup> *Post*, 2/26/1923, 3.

<sup>332</sup> To offer full citation of this would be impossible, but the various daily newspapers noted through January and February of 1923 these organizations in action, and the citations only grow when extended to the more specialized press.

<sup>333</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/3/1923, 4.

<sup>334</sup> *Daily News*, 2/15/1923, 14; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/25/1923, Part 1, 5; *Post*, 1/25/1923, 7.

<sup>335</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/31/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/27/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 2/1/1923, 6.

<sup>336</sup> *New Majority*, 2/3/1923, 1; *American*, 2/24/1923, Second Edition, 4.

<sup>337</sup> *Tribune*, 2/11/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/9/1923, 1.



greater in wards with strong aldermanic races.<sup>338</sup> Overall, events at the ward level provided excitement into the election that the temporary lull in the mayoral election had removed.

### **See How They Run: The Candidates Campaign**

Throughout February, the candidates for Mayor began their campaigns, using a range of approaches in order to obtain support. William Cunnea was in certain regards in the easiest position of any candidate: his nomination for Mayor had been secure from the moment he received it, and he was not under any immediate pressure to begin campaigning.<sup>339</sup> As a result, he appears to have spent much of February preparing for the general election rather than immediately campaigning, with his chief early statement challenging Barasa and Dever to resign their judicial positions.<sup>340</sup> In mid-February, the Cunnea campaign announced that Eugene V. Debs would be brought to Chicago in order to campaign for the Socialist Party.<sup>341</sup> In bringing Debs to Chicago, they seem to have been hoping to use the personal popularity of Debs, who had performed well in the 1920 election in Chicago, as a means to attract support for the party overall.<sup>342</sup> This was essentially confirmed in late February, as Debs, upon arriving in Chicago, noted he would

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<sup>338</sup> *Daily News*, 2/6/1923, 5.

<sup>339</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/7/1923, 4.

<sup>340</sup> *Daily News*, 1/30/1923, 5.

<sup>341</sup> *Daily News*, 2/12/1923, 3.

<sup>342</sup> Mazur, 232, notes Debs as being more popular than Cox among the Jews of Chicago, while *Tribune*, 11/4/1920, 3, shows Debs as being roughly equal with Democratic candidate James M. Cox in the old 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Wards.

be in town for three months, covering the entire election.<sup>343</sup> It also became clear early on that Debs was indeed a popular draw: in his first address of the campaign, Debs drew 3000 to Carmen's Hall.<sup>344</sup> Cunnea himself campaigned on a mixture of issues, backing such longstanding Socialist concerns as municipal ownership and police non-intervention in strikes, while also campaigning for administrative efficiency and adherence to the civil service laws and against commercialized vice.<sup>345</sup> Overall, Cunnea's campaign demonstrated the importance of reform in 1923 Chicago, as even his campaign for Socialism struck the same reform notes as candidates diametrically opposed to his economic stances.

William E. Dever was in a more complicated position than Cunnea during the primary election. Like Cunnea, he did not have anything to worry about obtaining the nomination. However, he had two different sets of concerns: for symbolic purposes, some of his managers wanted to obtain a strong primary turnout in order to prevent Republican crossovers, and there was the hope that they could introduce Dever to the voters while the Republicans were fighting each other.<sup>346</sup> In order to obtain this support, the Dever campaign engaged in two separate approaches during the primary. Dever spent February engaging in speeches, some of them public ones: he talked about municipal ownership to

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<sup>343</sup> *Daily News*, 2/24/1923, 3.

<sup>344</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/26/1923, 5.

<sup>345</sup> For a full statement of his views, see *Herald and Examiner*, 2/26/1923, 28.

<sup>346</sup> *American*, 2/23/1923, Second Edition, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/26/1923, 5.

the City Club, Women's City Club, and Executives Club of Chicago.<sup>347</sup> Dever also engaged in meet and greets for various groups representative of the residents of Chicago: he held open houses at noon in his campaign offices on North Clark Street, and travelled across the city to meet with various voters, including those at the stockyards.<sup>348</sup> The other approach involved a different sort of outreach: there were limitations to the ability to bring Dever to the entire electorate of Chicago, especially in an era when radio broadcasting was not yet in regular campaign use. To fill this gap, organizations for Dever were established, some of which involved mobilizing the ward organizations, and others involving cultural appeals, including a basketball team in Dever's honor.<sup>349</sup> Group appeals also played a major role the Dever campaign made a strong bid to gain the support of the roughly 150,000 veterans of Chicago, forming a Dever Ex-Service Men's Club, and, in a major early accomplishment, received the endorsement of A.A. Sprague, a business executive who had been noted for his work with disabled servicemen and who had been the national treasurer for Leonard Wood's 1920 presidential campaign.<sup>350</sup> Ethnicity and residency were also used to mobilize support for Dever: the Dever campaign claimed the backing of the Greek Democratic Club and the United Celtic

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<sup>347</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/8/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/16/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 2/21/1923, 5.

<sup>348</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/6/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/6/1923, 5. For an example of such a reception, see *Daily News*, 2/21/1923, 5. For Dever on the move, see *Herald and Examiner*, 2/16/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/8/1923, 4; *Post*, 2/12/1923, 4.

<sup>349</sup> For the basketball team, *Journal of Commerce*, 1/26/1923, 4. *Post*, 1/29/1923, 1, 2, notes a plan to have Dever focus his early campaigning on the ward organizations of Chicago.

<sup>350</sup> For the veteran estimate, see *Herald and Examiner*, 2/16/1923, 4; for the club, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/29/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 1/28/1923, 1, 7. For Sprague, see *Herald and Examiner*, 2/17/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 2/17/1923, 1; *Post*, 2/17/1923, 1, 3.

Societies of Chicago, while Neighbors Clubs were organized on the North Side and in other sections of the city.<sup>351</sup> Finally, while early work for women seems to have remained in the hands of existing Democratic Party organizations (such as the Democratic Women's Forum), the young voters in Chicago were organized on the ward level, with 3000 members in the 27<sup>th</sup> Ward alone.<sup>352</sup> In these respects, the Dever campaign seems to have been trying to mobilize masses of voters for Dever before the primary, in the hopes that gaining this support early would aid in the general election.

The four Republican candidates for mayor were faced with a significantly different political situation as they fought one another to obtain the Republican nomination, resulting in the use of a variety of campaign tactics. Arthur Millard focused on supporting Prohibition, going as far as charging Medill McCormick with being responsible for the failure of Prohibition enforcement in Chicago.<sup>353</sup> Millard stood as being anti-vice, anti-party organizations (claiming that Lueder would be subject to boss domination if elected), and for a lower tax rate, municipal ownership, and clean administration, all stances that put him in a generally reformist position.<sup>354</sup> He also had some unique political stances: he argued that every ward in the city should have its own high school, that both industry and labor in Chicago should be assisted, and the need for a

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<sup>351</sup> *Daily News*, 1/29/1923, 3; *Post*, 2/16/1923, 1, 2; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/10/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 2/8/1923, 4.

<sup>352</sup> For the organization of women, see *Post*, 2/13/1923, 2; for youth, see *Post*, 2/15/1923, 3.

<sup>353</sup> *Herald and Examiner*. 2/18/1923, Part 1, 8.

<sup>354</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/23/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/26/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 2/15/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/24/1923, 24.

greater involvement by women in Chicago politics.<sup>355</sup> In these statements, Millard obtained something of a following: he claimed to have 50,000 pledges of support and drew over a thousand spectators to some of his speeches.<sup>356</sup> This backing was regarded as largely being in outlying residential sections, though the Millard campaign made efforts to obtain support in the industrialized core of the city.<sup>357</sup> This support had a Protestant tinge: the Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church openly backing Millard, and the Anti-Saloon League (along with the Klan) was suspected of backing him behind the scenes.<sup>358</sup> Millard's appeals for support by women also had an effect, as he obtained the support of the Protestant Women's Club and drew hundreds of women to campaign events aimed at him.<sup>359</sup> Millard claimed the support of 11,000 campaign workers and in his denunciations of such figures as Brundage and Deneen demonstrated an independence of party leaders beyond any other candidate.<sup>360</sup> At the same time, he was limited in the audience he was reaching, making his ability to mobilize this audience (with or without the Klan's aid) essential in order to avoid a last-place finish.

Bernard Barasa engaged in a far different appeal to the electorate of Chicago, focusing on his platform, and especially on the matter of personal liberty as it connected

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<sup>355</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/21/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/15/1923, 5.

<sup>356</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/26/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/21/1923, 4.

<sup>357</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/26/1923, 1, 5; *Journal of Commerce*, 2/27/1923, 2.

<sup>358</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/25/1923, Part 1, 4; *Daily News*, 2/27/1923, 1, 3.

<sup>359</sup> *Post*, 2/22/1923, 1, 2; *Daily News*, 2/24/1923, 3.

<sup>360</sup> *Post*, 2/10/1923, 1, 2; *Post*, 2/22/1923, 1, 2; *Post*, 2/20/1923, 1, 2.

with the right to consume alcohol without police harassment.<sup>361</sup> Barasa made this argument to widely ranging groups of voters, with such unlikely groups as the Chicago Board of Trade hearing Barasa on the subject of personal liberty.<sup>362</sup> Barasa took pride in having a clear platform, arguing that its contents gave him a wide appeal to the voters of Chicago.<sup>363</sup> This element of mass appeal also showed in his campaign audiences: he spoke to various ethnic and labor groups within Chicago, and was able to obtain the backing of the Chicago Tenants' Protective League through his record as a judge and as a foe of rent gouging.<sup>364</sup> Some of his approaches had a more eccentric streak: Barasa attempted to organize the widows of the city in his support, and attempted to have Rudolph Valentino (who he claimed was a friend) campaign with him in an effort to obtain the votes of movie fans, although this might have backfired when Valentino missed a Barasa open house.<sup>365</sup> Finally, Barasa, unlike any of the other candidates, Barasa refused to engage in personal attacks against other candidates or against the Thompson administration, regarding such attacks as engaging in personalities and as unnecessary due to the strength of his platform.<sup>366</sup> In these ways, Barasa focused heavily

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<sup>361</sup> *Journal of Commerce*, 2/7/1923, 3; *American*, 2/8/1923, 4.

<sup>362</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/27/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>363</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/7/1923, 1, 4

<sup>364</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/11/1923, Part 1, 9; *Daily News*, 2/16/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 2/26/1923, 2; *Post*, 2/15/1923, 3.

<sup>365</sup> *Post*, 2/17/1923, 1, 3; *Daily News*, 2/22/1923, 5.

<sup>366</sup> *Daily News*, 2/24/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 2/24/1923, 5; *Post*, 2/16/1923, 3.

on ideological support for a particular set of issues, and would rely heavily on these stances appealing to a mass of voters in order to win the nomination.

Edward Litsinger's approach to campaigning notably differed from both Millard and Barasa. In his stances on the issues, Litsinger was closer to Millard than to Barasa, focusing on the need for lower taxes and increased economy in administration, as well as for a municipally-owned subway, law and order, and the removal of schools from politics.<sup>367</sup> In this focus, Litsinger made an appeal to traditional reform and to the middle-class voters that had backed the Deneen faction, while avoiding the explicitly Protestant elements found in the Millard appeal to a similar electorate. He also made appeals on cultural grounds, using his experience in semi-professional baseball as an excuse to set up a baseball-players club on his political behalf.<sup>368</sup> Most notable in terms of Litsinger as a candidate, however, was his use of an explicitly negative campaign. This became visible early on in the campaign, when he charged Lueder with lying about having resigned as Postmaster of Chicago and with being unwilling to commit to being a candidate for mayor.<sup>369</sup> Throughout the rest of the campaign, Litsinger was the most explicitly negative candidate in terms of his appeals to the electorate of Chicago.<sup>370</sup> Like Millard, this involved attacks on Lueder's: he demanded to debate Medill McCormick, charging McCormick with using his wife's fortune to buy the election, and went as far as asking

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<sup>367</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/10/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/24/1923, 1, 4, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/21/1923, 28.

<sup>368</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/11/1923, Part 1, 9; *Post*, 2/13/1923, 2.

<sup>369</sup> *Tribune*, 2/14/1923, 4.

<sup>370</sup> Indeed, *Daily News*, 2/26/1923, 1, 5, charged him with being the only mudslinging candidate, and while this was not the case, the newspaper coverage seems greater for him than for his rivals.

Warren Harding if Lueder had resigned as Postmaster.<sup>371</sup> Most notable of these attacks was one made on Brundage, charging him with meeting with Edward Wright and Oscar DePriest in a roadhouse outside of Chicago in order to obtain African-American support.<sup>372</sup> In this attack, Litsinger seems to have been trying simultaneously to undermine Lueder's image as a clean candidate by portraying his backers as plotting for every vote possible, and, by focusing on this particular meeting, played to latent feelings against African-Americans without directly admitting to doing so, and while still attempting to gain African-American support of his own. Overall, the Litsinger campaign was motivated by animosity towards the Brundage/McCormick faction of the Republican Party, and much of Litsinger's campaign was designed to unite voters in various factions that similarly disliked this faction. However, this approach left Litsinger with virtually no positive program, and meant that he would have no clear appeal if these attacks were not effective.

Arthur Lueder was in a complicated position compared to the other candidates because he had become the presumptive frontrunner after Thompson withdrew and his faction chose not to run a candidate.<sup>373</sup> This had an advantage in placing him automatically ahead of his rivals, but complicated his appeals, as his support came from

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<sup>371</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/19/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/24/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 2/19/1923, 10.

<sup>372</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/21/1923, 4; *Post*, 2/23/1923, 1, 5.

<sup>373</sup> Notably, even the anti-Lueder *Herald and Examiner* noted Democratic expectations that Lueder was going to win, even as they attempted to cast doubts on this (*Herald and Examiner*, 2/26/1923, 1, 5), and much about the tone of the Republican primary only makes sense if Lueder was an automatic frontrunner.



unified organizational backing and required him to maintain this unity.<sup>374</sup> This limited how he could campaign: he could not make appeals to the issues like Millard or Barasa, nor could he bait his opponents like Litsinger, as these approaches all served to risk his existing support. Lueder engaged in less primary campaigning than his rivals for the Republican nomination, reflecting this different position.<sup>375</sup> In his campaigning, Lueder travelled to the wards of Chicago, including ones unlikely to back Republicans, and addressed various civic groups in any location that could fit a large crowd.<sup>376</sup> In these addresses, Lueder largely hit notes associated with traditional reform in Chicago, such as higher-class appointments to office, the depoliticization of transit and educational matters, and campaigning against vice.<sup>377</sup> Lueder also brought up the need for school seats for all the children of Chicago, suggested a referendum on municipal ownership, and argued that his status as a drafted candidate was a positive as he was free of political entanglements.<sup>378</sup> This approach had its limitations: at a Women's City Club joint candidate appearance, Lueder admitted to lacking anything substantial policy differences from Dever.<sup>379</sup> Like Dever, Lueder also relied on the mobilization of groups on his behalf

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<sup>374</sup> Even Lueder himself, in appealing to voters, was using his status as a candidate picked for unity purposes as a positive (*Daily News*, 2/20/1923, 5).

<sup>375</sup> This comment is based on a comparison of the general reportage of the primary- Lueder seems to have received less publicity generally compared to his foes, in ways that suggest either less campaigning or less of note occurring in his campaigning, either of which would demonstrate a difference in approach.

<sup>376</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/6/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/9/1923, 3; *Post*, 2/13/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/10/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/22/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 2/13/1923, 6.

<sup>377</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/23/1923, 24; *Tribune*, 2/15/1923, 7.

<sup>378</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/15/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/23/1923, 24; *Daily News*, 2/20/1923, 5.

<sup>379</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/21/1923, 4.

for the primary. The Lueder campaign had made a strong effort to gain the support of women, hoping to take advantage of their image as a reformist force in both Chicago and national politics during this time.<sup>380</sup> At this, the campaign had some success: the Women's Roosevelt Republican League, an organization of Republican women then pledged to anti-Thompson candidates, and run by Medill McCormick spouse and future Congresswoman-at-Large Ruth Hanna McCormick, endorsed his candidacy.<sup>381</sup> Lueder also made an effort to appeal to ethnic voters: it was suspected that his candidacy was intended in part to draw German support away from William Hale Thompson, and he won the backing of the Dovre Club of Norwegians.<sup>382</sup> He did not surrender the vote of veterans to Dever, organizing his own Ex-Service Men's Club.<sup>383</sup> Perhaps the most important of the organizations set up on behalf of Lueder was the Lueder Real Estate League, which during the campaign would become the group responsible for much heavy lifting for the Lueder campaign.<sup>384</sup> Through all of these means, Lueder was trying to maintain his status as the Republican frontrunner, while avoiding any actions that could hinder his campaign.

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<sup>380</sup> For these efforts, see *Post*, 2/6/1923, 3; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/6/1923, 4.

<sup>381</sup> *Daily News*, 2/1/1923, 3; *Herald and Examiner*, 2/2/1923, 4. Regrettably, there is basically nothing concerning the 1923 election in the Ruth Hanna McCormick Papers at the Library of Congress.

<sup>382</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/16/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 2/14/1923, 4.

<sup>383</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/19/1923, 4.

<sup>384</sup> *Tribune*, 2/10/1923, 5. The activities of the Lueder Real Estate League will be noted in detail in the following chapter, as this organization largely spent the primary in an organizational mode.

The ultimate item underlining the campaigns of Millard, Barasa, Litsinger, and Lueder would be the behavior of the political factions of Chicago, both in terms of Lueder keeping his prior support, and in what actions the Thompson faction would take. Of these candidates, Arthur Millard, who did not seek factional support and hoped to supplant the factions with his own personal backers (including, possibly, the Ku Klux Klan), ran as if this matter was irrelevant.<sup>385</sup> Similarly, Bernard Barasa had largely been indifferent to obtaining factional support while campaigning.<sup>386</sup> The anti-Thompson factions were not going to give him their support due to his past ties with the Thompson faction, while the only notable figure within the Thompson organization to back him was Board of Local Improvements head Michael J. Faherty.<sup>387</sup> Even on the ward level, Barasa had largely been unable to covert backing from local workers into any organizational support, ultimately leaving him an independent candidate relying on his personal following.<sup>388</sup> Edward Litsinger turned out to be largely ineffective (in spite of commentary by the Hearst press) at drawing support from either the Deneen faction or the Barrett/Crowe faction, as these groups largely showed little interest in backing Litsinger.<sup>389</sup> He also was unable to gain the unified support of the Thompson faction:

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<sup>385</sup> For just how lasting his contempt was, see *Herald and Examiner*, 2/26/1923, 4, where he dismisses factions on the day before the primary.

<sup>386</sup> For Barasa having a free-lance image, see *Daily News*, 2/26/1923, 1, 5.

<sup>387</sup> *Daily News*, 2/2/1923, 2; *Post*, 1/30/1923, 1, 2. For Thompson followers as reluctant to back Barasa, see *Tribune*, 1/30/1923, 5. For Faherty's endorsement, see *Herald and Examiner*, 2/16/1923, 4.

<sup>388</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/18/1923, Part 1, 8; *Tribune*, 2/8/1923, 4.

<sup>389</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/8/1923, 4; *American*, 2/8/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/9/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 2/8/1923, 4.

early plans for their functioning as a bloc fell apart, as a group of officials associated with the South Side, led by George F. Harding, backing Lueder, leaving Litsinger largely with the support of those close to the indicted Fred Lundin.<sup>390</sup> Moreover, even this backing was largely one that was for Litsinger as the best available anti-Lueder option, rather than out of any love for his candidacy.<sup>391</sup> Overall, Lueder had largely succeeded in uniting the anti-Thompson factions in his support, while at the same time prevented the Thompson faction from presenting a unified front against his candidacy.

### **Primary Matters: The Results and Their Meanings**

In the Republican primary, Arthur Lueder won a landslide victory, carrying thirty-four of the fifty wards of Chicago.<sup>392</sup> However, his 130,250 votes only amounted to 42% of the primary vote, as Edward Litsinger received 75,117, Arthur Millard's 51,448, and Bernard Barasa's 47,685 votes, and at the same time was considerably fewer votes than Dever, who had received 165,338 votes while running without opposition. It is unlikely that Lueder foes could have united around one candidate: the wets backing Barasa would not have supported the dry Millard, and the anti-factional voters for Millard were unlikely to join with the Lundin associates backing Litsinger. However, it was still clear that Lueder would need to mend relations with the 58% of the votes who had opposed him in

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<sup>390</sup> *Tribune*, 1/31/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 1/28/1923, Part 1, 5. For the Harding endorsement, see *Daily News*, 2/7/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 2/25/1923, 1, 2. For Thompson officials backing Litsinger, see *Tribune*, 2/16/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 2/7/1923, 3; *Daily News*, 2/26/1923, 1, 5; *Tribune*, 2/27/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>391</sup> *Daily News*, 4/24/1923, 7.

<sup>392</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/28/1923, 1, 2; *Daily News*, 2/28/1923, 1, 5; *Tribune*, 2/28/1923, 1, 2; *Post*, 2/28/1923, 1, 2, all contain after-election commentary, while the final results are in *Tribune*, 3/4/1923, 5.

the primary in order to win the general election.<sup>393</sup> This need was emphasized by the vote for Litsinger, which more than any other candidate was purely an anti-Lueder vote. Of the eleven wards Litsinger carried in the primary, the largest cluster were found on his old base on the Southwest Side, where he carried six wards, as well as three West Side wards and isolated wards in South Chicago and on the Lakefront.<sup>394</sup> Notably, his performance was not one purely correlated to his backing by Thompson/Lundin committeemen: he carried four wards where Thompson/Lundin forces had not backed him, and lost (in some cases finishing third to Millard or Barasa) in eighteen wards where they had.<sup>395</sup> More notable are the sections of the electorate backing Litsinger. In general, the heavily Republican sections of the city, such as Hyde Park and the upper Lakefront, tended not to give Litsinger their vote, demonstrating his failure to gain the backing of Deneen supporters, while on the West Side he lost badly in the wards most heavily controlled by Barrett/Crowe. Instead, he did best among the working-class Catholics of the Southwest Side, among whom Litsinger had started his political career, and whom largely had been neglected by party leadership. This pointed to a large bloc of voters who

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<sup>393</sup> Notably, this interpretation's presence was based on newspaper preferences: the pro-Lueder *Post*, 2/28/1923, 1, 2, thought the results would make it inevitable, while the anti-Lueder *Herald and Examiner*, 3/1/1923, 8, interpreted the primary results as indicating a probably Dever landslide.

<sup>394</sup> This commentary of the results by ward is based on the final results published in *Tribune*, 3/4/1923, 5, and comparing these results to the map published in *Tribune*, 4/4/1923, 5, with alterations based on scattered press returns of the following days. Litsinger carried the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 18th, 24th, 28th, 30th, and 42nd. Commentary on relative performance, however, is based on the immediate post-election coverage: the *Tribune* only published final wards won and vote totals, and I have not been able to access any official election statistics.

<sup>395</sup> For the committeeman backing, see *Tribune*, 2/27/1923, 1, 2. Litsinger lost with Thompson backing in the 1st, 8th, 9th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 27th, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 39th, 40th, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 47th, 48th, 49th, and 50th Wards, and did not have that backing in the 12th, 13th, 15th, and 24th Wards.

supported Litsinger simply because the factions around Lueder ignored them, resulting in a need for their attention if Lueder would have a chance in the general election.

Millard's performance was a major surprise, as most commentators expected him to finish a distant fourth.<sup>396</sup> While Millard only carried two wards, he was able to draw support across the city, receiving over 1,000 votes in twenty-six different wards, compared to thirty-four such wards for Litsinger and only eight for Barasa. Millard did worse in the core of the city, with such areas as the Black Belt, the Southwest Side, the West Side, the Near North Side, and part of the Lakefront, even as they differed from one another in class, ethnic, and political terms, sharing a common antipathy for his campaign.<sup>397</sup> Instead, two strong belts existed of Millard support, located on the Far South Side and Northwest Side of Chicago. These were neighborhoods associated with middle-class Protestant homeowners, not quite as well off as their peers along the Lakefront and not as ethnic as the Germanic and Scandinavian neighborhoods of the North Side. They also were ones that would have been to some degree threatened by ethnic migration, as Catholics and Eastern European Jews moved in. On the Far South Side, large populations of Slavic heritage were present whom in the 1910s had voted for Socialists and who mobilized in favor of the steel strike in 1919.<sup>398</sup> The Northwest Side

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<sup>396</sup> Notably, even *American*, 2/27/1923, 1, 2, which predicted that he would be doing better than expected, still anticipated that he would finish fourth. For it as a surprise, see *Tribune*, 2/28/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>397</sup> For information on these areas in statistical terms, Louis Wirth and Margaret Furez, editors, *Local Community Fact Book, 1938* (Chicago: Chicago Recreation Committee, 1940), while obviously a source that need to be used with some care due to its use of 1930 Census statistics, has been of some use in general terms.

<sup>398</sup> For Pullman backing Socialists, see *Tribune*, 3/27/1923, 7; for the steel strike, see Cohen, 38, for Poles in the South Chicago area, see Pacgya, *passim*.

was faced with similar demographic issues, as Poles moved northwest along Milwaukee Avenue, Jews from Lawndale to Irving Park, and as a rising Catholic and Jewish middle-class settled in Austin on the Far West Side.<sup>399</sup> After the primary, Millard was openly charged with be a Ku Klux Klan candidate, and, while the archival sources to prove this seem non-extant, it appears that his support, if not outright one of Klan members, shared a similar motivation in reaction against neighborhood newcomers. In these ways, the Millard vote was a reaction against neighborhood change, helping to make him emerge from nowhere as a candidate.

Barasa's support was clustered heavily into a few wards: he carried the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup>, was a close second to Lueder in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and had a substantial showing in the 42<sup>nd</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, and 44<sup>th</sup>, but otherwise performed poorly, being outpolled by Millard in twenty-nine wards. To a heavy degree, the Barasa vote can be considered an ethnic vote, as his performance correlated strongly with the Italian neighborhoods of Chicago.<sup>400</sup> However, he had one impressive crossover: his victory in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and strong showing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> were the products of his being able to appeal to African-American voters on the grassroots, forcing ward leaders to jump to his candidacy at the last minute.<sup>401</sup> Here, his platform succeeded in gaining support: his stance for personal liberty and equal rights

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<sup>399</sup> For Irving Park, see Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), 278n2; for Austin, see Schiavo, 35-36; for the Polish migration, see Kantowicz, Ch. 14 *passim*; for this issue as seen where the Klan organized, see Jackson, 96.

<sup>400</sup> For the interpretation of Barasa as largely an Italian candidate, see Nelli, 223.

<sup>401</sup> *Daily News*, 2/27/1923, 1, 3, notes ward leader Edward Wright and future Congressman Oscar De Priest jumping to Barasa at the last minute. *Herald and Examiner*, 2/28/1923, 1, 2, notes this as a rare primary break from organized candidates, with the implication that this was not simply the result of ward leaders jumping ship.

had an appeal to an ethnic group familiar with being denied these, while his campaign against rent gougers appealed to a group notoriously charged above-market rents. He had also had a friendly image in the African-American community, particularly in relation to his work in the aftermath of the 1919 race riot.<sup>402</sup> This was further assisted by the weakness of his foes: Lueder had no reputation in the African-American community and was backed by forces (such as the *Chicago Tribune*) which were seen as heavily unfriendly, Litsinger appears to have been strongly disliked before the primary and only made it worse by focusing his campaign on Brundage's dealings with African-American politicians, and Millard was at the least implicitly the Klan candidate.<sup>403</sup> Between these weaknesses and the positive stances of Barasa, it is no surprise that he was able to obtain African-American support. Ultimately significant in understanding Barasa's showing is understanding how a wet candidate in a wet city failed to gain votes on that issue. Part of the issue was that in many of the most Republican parts of the city opposition to Prohibition was not the chief issue: such areas as Hyde Park and the Northwest Side might oppose Prohibition in referenda while at the same time have no problem electing dry politicians to office.<sup>404</sup> He also seems to have been hurt by the image of his focusing on issues he could not address in local office, and as ignoring issues (like taxation and

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<sup>402</sup> *Broad Ax*, 2/17/1923, 1.

<sup>403</sup> For criticism of the *Tribune* as Klan-friendly, see *Defender*, 12/16/1922, 2; for a colorful attack on Litsinger in the African-American press, see *Broad Ax*, 3/3/1923, 1.

<sup>404</sup> For a demonstration of this, see *Tribune*, 6/14/1923, 1, 6, which notes eight aldermen as voting against a call for Prohibition modification, a ninth opponent as being absent, and six others as being anti-saloon and for the enforcement of existing Prohibition laws.



corruption) that he could.<sup>405</sup> Most damaging was the fact that Barasa was an independent candidate who unlike Millard did not have any greater organization backing him. Notably, some of Barasa's best performances were aided by Thompson politicians, with Michael Faherty's backing having helped along the Lakefront.<sup>406</sup> The efforts to have a strong Democratic turnout for Dever also hurt Barasa, as many of the ethnic voters who Barasa needed support from instead backed Dever. Ultimately, Barasa was damaged by the fact that, more than any of the other candidates, he was reliant upon personal appeal in order to obtain votes, which in an era before modern broadcast media was not enough to resolve his lack of an organization.

The other races of significance were for City Council: thirty seats were decided when a candidate received a majority, while twenty went into runoffs.<sup>407</sup> Democratic candidates did very well, as twenty-four of the seats decided in the primary were won by Democrats, including ones in Republican areas on the Lakefront and in the North Side.<sup>408</sup> The Ku Klux Klan had a respectable performance: Klan members or sympathizers (including John Garner) qualified for the runoff in the 8<sup>th</sup> on the Far South Side and in three Northwest Side wards, demonstrating the ties between the Millard vote and general

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<sup>405</sup> *Post*, 3/1/1923, 8, felt he would be better served running for Congress, while the anti-Prohibition *Tribune*, 2/26/1923, 8, felt Barasa's campaign was irrelevant towards the chief issues concerning the election.

<sup>406</sup> For Faherty as helpful in the 44<sup>th</sup> Ward, see *Tribune*, 2/15/1923, 7.

<sup>407</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/28/1923, 1, 3; *Daily News*, 2/28/1923, 1, 5; *Tribune*, 2/28/1923, 1, 2; *Post*, 2/28/1923, 1. All comments not otherwise sourced are based on these articles.

<sup>408</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/28/1923, 1, 3.

Klan sympathies.<sup>409</sup> Most notable was the performance of incumbent members of the City Council: ten were defeated in the primary, which by itself was substantial.<sup>410</sup> With the exception of John Richert, who was caught in a factional dispute in the 11<sup>th</sup>, no anti-Thompson members of the City Council were defeated, while nine who were regarded as strong Thompson allies lost.<sup>411</sup> This performance suggests that anti-Thompson feelings were strong among the electorate, while the fact that four of these defeated Thompson supporters were Democrats indicated that this went beyond partisan loyalties.<sup>412</sup> This was also an impulse independent of the Municipal Voters League, as these voters felt free to ignore MVL advice even as they turned against Thompsonites.<sup>413</sup> Overall, this vote serves to confirm that anti-Thompson feelings were legitimately present in the electorate in 1923, and that these feelings would need to be considered by Dever, Lueder, and Cunnea, as they prepared for the general election.

Overall, then, the 1923 primary in its results can be considered a sign of a major reform revival in 1923 Chicago. With the nomination of Dever and Lueder, candidates suggested by non-partisan committee had managed to obtain the nomination of both

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<sup>409</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/28/1923, 1, 3; *Herald and Examiner*, 4/3/1923, 5.

<sup>410</sup> Losing their reelection bids were Guy Madderom (9<sup>th</sup> Ward), John Richert (11<sup>th</sup> Ward), Robert Mulcahy (12<sup>th</sup> Ward), S.O. Shaffer (29<sup>th</sup> Ward), Stanley Walkowiak (31<sup>st</sup> Ward), Oscar H. Olsen (35<sup>th</sup> Ward), Charles P. Agnew (42<sup>nd</sup> Ward), Leo Klein (43<sup>rd</sup> Ward), John Haderlein (45<sup>th</sup> Ward), and Thomas Caspers (47<sup>th</sup> Ward).

<sup>411</sup> For Richert's troubles, see *Herald and Examiner*, 2/16/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/26/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 2/27/1923, 2.

<sup>412</sup> Of the previously listed defeated Thompsonites, Mulcahy, Walkowiak, Haderlein, and Caspers were Democrats.

<sup>413</sup> Of the forty-seven MVL-backed candidates listed in *Daily News*, 2/24/1923, 1, 4, 5, nineteen won, nineteen lost, and nine qualified for run-offs.

major parties. Moreover, the results of the primary further indicate that reform was popular among voters generally in Chicago: the massive rejection of incumbent aldermen for Thompson ties matches the rejection of those with ties to utilities a generation earlier. At the same time, it was clear that there were still major questions to be answered about how reform would fare in the general election, as it was already becoming apparent that Dever and Lueder had far different agendas in terms of reform. Nevertheless, the results of this primary are important, as they demonstrate that the 1920s was a decade in which the concept of reform still had a following, in contrast to previous descriptions that suggest that it lost meaning in the 1910s. This also demonstrates how prior Chicago political history matters: the ability of reformers to get these nominations related directly to loose factional power, with reform being used as a way to unite in both parties.

## **Chapter 2: Dueling Reformers: 1923 and Its Consequences**

The 1923 general election in Chicago became a contest concerning three separate visions of reform. William Cunnea merged standard stances for Socialist candidates of the period, such as broad municipal ownership and limitations to police powers in strikes, to stances of a more reformist bent, such as opposition to vice and charges of substantial political corruption. Arthur Lueder, meanwhile, ran a traditional reform campaign, in which he focused on businesslike administration of government and improving school conditions, and in which he expressed decided skepticism involving how broad reforms could be made for society overall. William Dever, finally, ran on a platform with broad social concerns and a particular focus on municipal ownership of the city's streetcar lines. In the general election that followed, these reforms had different ethnic and class appeals. Dever won in a landslide, winning support from working-class Catholics, Eastern European Jews, and African-Americans, forming a particular ethnic coalition around social reform that had never existed before in Chicago politics. Lueder, in defeat, gained support from upper-class and middle-class white Protestants, including those of German and Scandinavian heritage, while Cunnea did best among Germans on the North Side. In these ways, different types of reform demonstrated different ethnic appeals, enabling a better understand of the contours of reform and its audiences.

The Dever administration was not a political success, resulting in a landslide defeat in 1927 in which many of his 1923 supporters backed a resurgent William Hale Thompson. Contrary to previous portrayals, this was not a rejection of reform in the generic, nor was it the result of Dever being politically betrayed. Rather, Dever in office

had turned on many of those who had supported him in 1923, failing to enact the municipal ownership plans he promised, making a strong effort to enforce Prohibition, and finally resorting to race-baiting in an effort to keep working-class whites from voting for Thompson, while at the same time appealing for support from the upper-class voters who had backed Lueder in 1923. As a result, many of his prior supporters abandoned him, as he represented a different type of reform than what they thought they were getting. Within a few years, reform lost its local significance, as the realignment of Chicago politics into a dominant Democratic machine and a Republican Party perpetually in the minority left reformers with little room for political maneuvering. At the same time, however, Dever's victory in 1923 had three lines of significance: he put together an ethnic coalition that in many parts of the country would become the urban New Deal coalition, by granting his patronage to George Brennan he helped in the final consolidation of Chicago's Democrats around one faction, and, in his rise and fall, he helps in understanding how reform fared nationwide, as the issue of finding a broad audience would make and unmake urban reformers across the nation before, during, and after the period.

### **First Steps of the General Election**

Immediately after the primary, the Dever campaign immediately moved to gain support from Chicago's reform circles. Charles Merriam endorsed Dever on March 1<sup>st</sup>, praising his experience and claiming he would be in best position for engaging in

municipal housecleaning after the election.<sup>414</sup> In the days that followed, longtime reform campaigner Harold Ickes, Dever's old political mentor Graham Taylor, and Taylor associate and national reform figure Raymond Robins also endorsed Dever, with the latter two praising his Council record and Ickes calling Lueder a novice.<sup>415</sup> Reform support for Dever crossed gender lines, with a group of women active in Chicago reform endorsing Dever, praising him for his fearlessness, experience, and understanding of human values.<sup>416</sup> This set of endorsements connected to a broader effort by the Dever campaign to gain the support of women: the Illinois Democratic Women's Forum, which general stuck to educating the electorate, chose to openly back Dever, and a campaign was in place to draw the support of Jewish women for Dever.<sup>417</sup> Overall, this set of endorsements served to establish Dever as the progressive figure in the race, and, because of their timing, kept this image in the public eye for close to a week. This also served to complicate matters for the Lueder campaign, as it indicated that he would need to engage in a strong fight for reform support in Chicago, which was backing he needed in order to get elected.

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<sup>414</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/2/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/1/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 3/2/1923, 3; *American*, 3/2/1923, 1, 2; *Post*, 3/1/1923, 1.

<sup>415</sup> For Ickes, see *Daily News*, 3/2/1923, 16; *Tribune*, 3/3/1923, 7. Notably, Harold Ickes to Margaret Dreier Robins, 2/7/1923, Harold L. Ickes Papers, Box 38, Folder 7, Library of Congress, indicates both that he had made up his mind a month before this announcement, and indicates that planning for this string of endorsements had been in place around that time. For Taylor and Robins, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/5/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/5/1923, 7; *Tribune*, 3/4/1923, 5.

<sup>416</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/7/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/6/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/7/1923, 5; *American*, 3/7/1923, Second Edition, 1, 2.

<sup>417</sup> *American*, 3/7/1923, Second Edition, 1, 2; *Post*, 3/7/1923, 3.

The Lueder general election campaign had a difficult start in several regards. After the primary, Lueder and his campaign manager, Homer K. Galpin, both chose to take out of state vacations for recuperation.<sup>418</sup> This served to delay planning for the general election, which could not begin until they returned to the city.<sup>419</sup> The problems with this hiatus became especially apparent when compared to Democratic work during the same time: while Galpin was on vacation, the Democrats began to make preparations for the general election, with Martin J. O'Brien resigning as Chief Clerk of the Board of Election Commissioners to run the Dever campaign.<sup>420</sup> These difficulties were added to by difficulties that Lueder had gaining the support of his primary foes. While Edward Litsinger and Bernard Barasa both quickly endorsed Lueder, Arthur Millard sent contradictory messages as for whether or not he would run as an independent.<sup>421</sup> This situation was further complicated by the action of Millard supporters: the head of his ex-servicemen's committee endorsed Dever, while a group of his supporters demanded that Lueder issue a statement on law enforcements, seemingly to get a pro-Prohibition pledge.<sup>422</sup> If Millard ran as an independent, his backing from outlying Protestant homeowners could secure a Lueder defeat, resulting in rumors that Democratic leaders

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<sup>418</sup> *Daily News*, 3/3/1923, 3; *Post*, 3/6/1923, 2.

<sup>419</sup> *Daily News*, 3/3/1923, 3, notes the delay in reorganization until Galpin's return.

<sup>420</sup> *Tribune*, 3/4/1923, 5.

<sup>421</sup> For Litsinger, see *Tribune*, 2/28/1923, 3. For Barasa, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/1/1923, 1, 4. For contradictory messages concerning Millard, see *Post*, 3/1/1923, 1; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/1/1923, 1, 4; *American*, 3/1/1923, Second Edition, 3.

<sup>422</sup> *Tribune*, 3/4/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/5/1923, 4.

were offering to fund Millard's campaign.<sup>423</sup> While Millard ultimately endorsed Lueder, the delay in his doing so demonstrated that party unity was not going to be automatically obtained.<sup>424</sup>

While the Lueder campaign dawdled and was faced with divisions, the Dever campaign immediately went to work. A.A. Sprague continued to organize servicemen for Dever, demonstrating efforts by the Dever campaign to organize veterans as a bloc<sup>425</sup> The campaign also tried to obtain 500,000 pledge cards from voters, an amount larger than the total vote for any previous candidate for mayor.<sup>426</sup> The Dever campaign also continued to gather endorsements, ranging from former Senator James Hamilton Lewis to prominent golfer Chick Evans.<sup>427</sup> Work was done to gain Dever ethnic support, as he received the backing of the head of the Dania Club, won a straw poll of the United Celtic American Societies, and had an Italian-American committee set up for him.<sup>428</sup> Finally, plans to campaign in industrial Chicago were made, with Dever planning to campaign in the stockyards and at the plants of International Harvester and Western Electric in order to reach industrial employees.<sup>429</sup> In all of these ways, the Dever campaign engaged in a concerted effort to quickly build an organization before the Lueder campaign could do so.

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<sup>423</sup> *Daily News*, 3/5/1923, 7.

<sup>424</sup> For his announcement that Millard would not be an independent candidate, see *Post*, 3/9/1923, 1.

<sup>425</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/4/1923, Part 2, 2.

<sup>426</sup> *Daily News*, 3/3/1923, 3.

<sup>427</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/4/1923, Part 1, 7; *Daily News*, 3/7/1923, 3.

<sup>428</sup> *Post*, 3/7/1923, 1; *Daily News*, 3/6/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/4/1923, Part 1, 7.

<sup>429</sup> *Daily News*, 3/5/1923, 7.



While the Lueder and Dever campaigns were just starting, William Cunnea and the Socialist Party were already in the midst of their campaign. In the early stages of the general election, they used the personal popularity of Eugene V. Debs as a means of obtaining support: Debs spoke four times a week in various locations scattered around the city of Chicago.<sup>430</sup> In addition to serving as a way to rally the Socialist faithful, these speeches appear to have been the chief source of Socialist campaign funds, with the Socialists being the only political group in Chicago who charged money to attend their rallies.<sup>431</sup> By mid-March, large crowds were being turned away at the gates of Socialist rallies, with as many as 1,500 being estimated as unable to attend due to limited space.<sup>432</sup> It was also noted that there was a fervent appeal present with the Cunnea campaign, considered as having a tinge similar to religion, in contrast to the placid state of the Dever and Lueder campaigns.<sup>433</sup> Speculation began concerning the size of the Cunnea vote. On the one hand, even Cunnea in his calculations was not expecting to win, estimating only 100,000 votes for himself.<sup>434</sup> However, the possibility of a strong Socialist turnout was rather important, as both the size and the nature of the Socialist vote could play a significant role in deciding who would win the election.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> *Daily News*, 3/10/1923, 4. Because the Chicago press largely gave secondary at best coverage to Socialist political events, it is hard to describe these events with any detail.

<sup>431</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/11/1923, Part 1, 4; *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5.

<sup>432</sup> *Daily News*, 3/8/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/11/1923, Part 1, 4.

<sup>433</sup> *Daily News*, 3/8/1923, 4.

<sup>434</sup> *Daily News*, 3/12/1923, 4.

<sup>435</sup> For commentary along these lines, see *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5.

The campaign for the general election began in earnest on March 8<sup>th</sup>, when Lueder returned from Chicago from Hot Springs.<sup>436</sup> Lueder immediately proposed to push for legislative enactment of a bill that would reform the Board of Education, and, among other elements, allow the mayor to dismiss the entire Board of Education. In this proposal, Lueder managed to respond to the scandal that had engulfed the Board of Education, while at the same time reflecting the lack of home rule that required such problems to be resolved by the state legislature. Lueder also connected this proposal specifically with his personal situation, as he noted that his daughter was a half-time student in the Chicago school system due to space limitations.<sup>437</sup> The Dever campaign immediately challenged Lueder on the issues: Dever noted the important of issues, stating that school concerns were not independent of the issues of crime and vice, and stating his support for both municipal ownership and a smaller school board, while a political associate argued that Lueder's experience in administration was too short to prove anything on talent.<sup>438</sup> This rhetoric was tied to a call for candidate debates: Dever agreed to this, and Cunnea wanted badly to challenge both of the other candidates on the issues, while the Lueder campaign argued that Dever and Lueder were too close on the issues to make this worthwhile.<sup>439</sup> Importantly, this set of arguments set the ways in which the two candidates would portray themselves: he Dever campaign pointed to Dever's experience in the political realm, while the Lueder campaign ran on their

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<sup>436</sup> *Daily News*, 3/8/1923, 4; *Post*, 3/8/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>437</sup> *Daily News*, 3/8/1923, 4.

<sup>438</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/11/1923, Part 1, 4.

<sup>439</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/10/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/12/1923, 4; *Post*, 3/10/1923, 2.

candidate being experienced in business and in administration.<sup>440</sup> Overall, this was a significant difference, as these different emphases would parallel the different styles of reform that Dever and Lueder would represent as candidates.

This sense of different emphases was further made clear by decisions by the Dever campaign in its organizing. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Dever campaign united the aggregated non-Democratic support of Dever, forming a Citizens' Committee under the leadership of Sprague.<sup>441</sup> This organization symbolized the efforts by the Dever campaign to unite Chicago voters after the political fragmentation that had been present for decades, notably serving in parallel with similar efforts to unity all factions among the Democrats.<sup>442</sup> There were strong efforts made using this committee to recruit Farmer-Labor backers for Dever, reflecting both the support the CFL had obtained politically in 1919, and suggesting a need to keep Cunnea from gaining this backing.<sup>443</sup> This also demonstrates an effort to mobilize former Progressives as a political bloc, rather than just receive support from past leaders.<sup>444</sup> The Lueder campaign, however, did not surrender to Dever campaigns of being the progressive candidate: within a couple of days of the formation of the Citizen's Committee for Dever, the Lueder campaign collected endorsements by over two dozen former Progressives, praising Lueder for his ability and

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<sup>440</sup> For examples of these appeals, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/3/1923, 4; *Post*, 2/15/1923, 3.

<sup>441</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/11/1923, Part 1, 4; *Daily News*, 3/10/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/11/1923, 5; *Post*, 3/10/1923, 2

<sup>442</sup> *Daily News*, 3/10/1923, 4.

<sup>443</sup> The *Herald and Examiner*, *Tribune*, and *Post* all make note of Farmer-Labor backing, in ways suggesting that this list was publicized in this manner.

<sup>444</sup> For articles giving this impression, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/2/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/6/1923, 8.

sincerity.<sup>445</sup> Lueder also worked to consolidate party support: Millard sent a letter denying he would run as an independent against Lueder, both Litsinger and Barasa volunteered their aid for any purposes the Lueder campaign saw fit, and a steering committee was organized, containing figures from the Brundage, Deneen, and Thompson factions within the party.<sup>446</sup> In these moves, it became clear that a large amount of how the race would be decided would involve both party unity and the vote of former Progressives, as Dever and Lueder worked to keep their own parties united and try to draw support from the other.

While this maneuvering was going on, Lueder began to establish his platform for the campaign. There was a moralistic streak present in his pledges: he promised to engage in an honest administration in which he would not take political dictate in his appointments, and that he would control licensing for public venues.<sup>447</sup> There was also a desire for budgetary control, with Lueder wanting to control the costs of both school building construction and paving. Lueder also made it clear that he was as bothered about the schools entering politics as he was about politics entering the schools, a statement that seemed aimed at the Chicago Teachers Federation.<sup>448</sup> Finally, Lueder, while supporting municipal ownership in the abstract, did not treat this as a major issue, being particularly

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<sup>445</sup> *Post*, 3/12/1923, 2; *Daily News*, 3/12/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/13/1923, 3.

<sup>446</sup> *Tribune*, 3/11/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/9/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/12/1923, 5.

<sup>447</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/11/1923, Part 1, 5, served as the most systematic listing of pledges, and it has been the source for all pledges not cited otherwise. For licensing, see *Post*, 3/15/1923, 1.

<sup>448</sup> *Daily News*, 3/14/1923, 1, 4.

equivocal as for whether there would be municipal operation of transit.<sup>449</sup> In these stances, Lueder established himself as supporting the conception of reform reflected by the MVL and the Civic Federation, in which government administration was the chief issue that needed reform, and in which social issues were largely secondary concerns. This also suggests a class basis for his proposals, as these seem largely applicable to the better-off in the city.

These stances by Lueder resulted in immediate challenges. Dever himself charged Lueder with trying to be vague in terms of his position on municipal ownership, claiming that municipal ownership could not be separated from municipal operation, and expressed a desire to debate Lueder on these issues.<sup>450</sup> Dever also challenged the claim that there would be no substantial difference between himself and Lueder if elected, noting that they shared very little in terms of background or experience.<sup>451</sup> The sincerity of Lueder as an anti-Thompson candidate was contested when it was noted that the list of members of his steering committee included someone indicted in the Board of Educational scandals, leaving the Lueder campaign claiming that they had issued a preliminary list by mistake.<sup>452</sup> Even Lueder's school plan was challenged, as it was noted that it relied on the good will of Len Small in order to be enacted, suggesting that it was not feasible.<sup>453</sup> This

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<sup>449</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/16/1923, 4, for instance, notes that he avoided mentioning either in early speeches.

<sup>450</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/13/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/12/1923, 4.

<sup>451</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/16/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/16/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/16/1923, 5.

<sup>452</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/15/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/15/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/15/1923, 7.

<sup>453</sup> *Tribune*, 3/13/1923, 3.

set of challenges emphasized a difference in approach on the issues: while Lueder focused on the maladministration of government, Dever had broader social concerns present. In these ways, his dispute over municipal ownership and operation was not a quibble over a minor matter, but demonstrated substantial differences in terms of how Dever and Lueder saw the problems facing Chicago.

### **What The Voters Thought: Straw Polls**

In considering these comparative stances by Dever and Lueder, it becomes important to see what the voters of Chicago thought about these matters, as their stances are ultimately of limited relevance unless connected with voter response. Of the six daily newspapers aimed at a general audience active in 1923 Chicago, the *Tribune*, the *American*, and the *Journal* are known to have run straw polls to obtain information involving which candidates Chicago voters preferred.<sup>454</sup> The *Tribune* began polling around March 7<sup>th</sup>, publishing daily reports until April 1<sup>st</sup>, while the *American* began around the 9<sup>th</sup> and published reports through April 2<sup>nd</sup>. In general, these polls tended to be taken by talking to people at specific locations, such as L stops and movie theaters, but with some efforts to obtain information on people in particular places, industries, and ethnic groups. While polling was in its infancy and poll analysis was slanted by the political interests of the Republican *Tribune* and the pro-Dever *American*, these polls remain of considerable value, as they are one of the few sources present to indicate popular opinion in connection with this election.

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<sup>454</sup> The *Journal* polls are known through references in Schmidt, but, having been unable to access the *Journal*, I cannot comment on their contents otherwise. All other commentary concerning polling is based on information obtained through reading the *Tribune* and *American* through March and April of 1923- individual poll reports will be cited, and uncited commentary will be based on these in general terms.

Perhaps the most notable elements of the polls was the strength shown by Cunnea: both the *Tribune* and the *American* admitted to being surprised by the level of support that the Socialists were receiving in this election.<sup>455</sup> This surprise seems to be reflected in their coverage, as the Chicago press general regarded the Socialists as something insignificant. Notably, there was a distinctive ethnic tinge to Cunnea's support: he received over 15% support from German-Americans, but only 5% among Poles and 4% among African-Americans, both below his citywide totals.<sup>456</sup> This ethnic tinge was also reflective of his support in Chicago industries: Cunnea was an overwhelming favorite in the clothing industry, where much of the labor force was Russian Jews, but did not do much better than his citywide average at either the heavily Bohemian and Polish Western Electric or at the stockyards, which at this point largely employed African-Americans and Slavs in unskilled labor and Germans, Irish, and Bohemians in skilled labor.<sup>457</sup> This, in turn, led to two more questions, wondering where Cunnea was drawing his support, and how this could impact the general election.<sup>458</sup> These polls indicated that Cunnea deserved greater attention as a candidate, but this was complicated by the fact that much of this consideration was as a potential spoiler, rather than in his own right.

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<sup>455</sup> *American*, 3/13/1923, Second Edition, 1; *Tribune*, 3/14/1923, 5.

<sup>456</sup> *Tribune*, 3/12/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 3/13/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 3/14/1923, 5.

<sup>457</sup> *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5; *American*, 3/17/1923, Second Edition, 4; *American*, 3/19/1923, Second Edition, 4. For the clothing trade in Chicago as Jewish, see Mazur, 52-53; for Western Electric, see Cohen, 52-53; for the stockyards, see Cohen, 28-29.

<sup>458</sup> *Tribune*, 3/11/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 3/14/1923, 5.

Distinctive patterns in ethnic preference for candidates were found in other regards in these polls. The *Tribune* found that Dever had 83% support among the Poles of Chicago, compared to only 12% for Lueder.<sup>459</sup> While Poles had been one of the most Democratic ethnic groups in Chicago, this was still a substantial advantage: Thompson almost carried the Polish vote in 1915, while much of that support went to the Hoyne and Fitzpatrick campaigns in 1919.<sup>460</sup> This suggested that Dever was uniting factions within the party that had split in both 1915 and 1919, putting Lueder at a disadvantage. Among German-Americans, the *Tribune* found a different story: Lueder received two-thirds of that community's support, with Dever barely outpolling Cunnea at 17% of the vote.<sup>461</sup> In certain regards, this demonstrates ethnic solidarity: Lueder had been former president of the German Club of Chicago, and the traumas of the First World War had encouraged that solidarity. At the same time, there was an assumption that German-Americans were the leading bellwether in Chicago politics, having been a major part of the coalition of the Carter Harrisons.<sup>462</sup> In these ways, ethnic political patterns were murky, seeming to point in contradictory directions.

The most notable ethnic polling deviated heavily from the norms of Chicago politics. African-Americans were regarded as being heavily Republican to the point

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<sup>459</sup> *Tribune*, 3/13/1923, 3.

<sup>460</sup> Kantowicz, 138, 142.

<sup>461</sup> *Tribune*, 3/14/1923, 5.

<sup>462</sup> For German-Americans as Carter Harrison backers, see Harrison, *Stormy Years*, 119, Green, 38.



where their vote was regarded as having made Chicago a Republican city.<sup>463</sup> In local elections, this pattern had held strong: the African-American sections of the city were among the most consistently Republican in the city, with even the worse-performing of Republican candidates receiving their support.<sup>464</sup> This tradition held in the primary elections for City Council, as Louis B. Anderson and Robert R. Jackson were reelected in the Second and Third Wards in spite of strong opposition (most notably from Urban League official T. Arnold Hill) due to their Thompson affiliation.<sup>465</sup> This fell apart in the general election: the first *Tribune* poll in the Second Ward, published March 12<sup>th</sup>, found a third of the voters planning to vote for Dever, much higher than their support for Democratic candidates in the 1922 general election just four months earlier.<sup>466</sup> Dever grew stronger in the following days, with the *Tribune* finding Dever popular in Second Ward movie theaters three days later.<sup>467</sup> This phenomenon was noted elsewhere: the *Daily News* noted that only two-thirds of African-Americans in Third Ward polls were willing to back Lueder, while the *American* claimed Dever to be leading in that ward.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> *Tribune*, 3/18/1923, 1, 6.

<sup>464</sup> For statistics on the African-American vote, see Allswang, *A House for All People*.

<sup>465</sup> For elements of this campaign, see *Defender*, 2/24/1923, 8; *Daily News*, 1/31/1923, 30; *Tribune*, 1/29/1923, 6. For after-election commentary within the African-American community, see *Defender*, 3/3/1923, 1. Unfortunately, there are virtually no surviving papers of the Chicago Urban League from before the 1960s, making the Urban League Papers at the University of Illinois Chicago of no help in interpreting this election.

<sup>466</sup> *Tribune*, 3/12/1923, 5.

<sup>467</sup> *Tribune*, 3/15/1923, 7.

<sup>468</sup> *Daily News*, 3/14/1923, 4; *American*, 3/16/1923, Second Edition, 3.

Combined, all of these points suggest African-Americans as breaking away from the Republicans in large numbers to support Dever.

Several explanations were offered to explain this political situation. The *Tribune* suggested a strong effort by Democrats to gain the support of African-American women, while Republicans generally had not been running a strong campaign, as well as noting charges of discrimination against African-Americans at Lueder's Post Office.<sup>469</sup> The African-American press, meanwhile, noted personal friendliness from Dever: the *Broad Ax* noted he had been a subscriber for sixteen years.<sup>470</sup> This was reflected in Dever's campaigning: he had, as one of his early pledges, promised to improve school conditions for the African-American community, and he had made similar pledges concerning fairness and representation to the Appomattox Club.<sup>471</sup> Another significant issue was the general resentment within the African-American community of the *Tribune*, which had been equivocal on the subject of the Klan and which had generally been regarded as unfriendly. To be seen as a *Tribune* candidate was damaging to African-American candidates (Louis Anderson had used it effectively), and this affected Lueder, whose chief backer was former *Tribune* editor Medill McCormick and whose candidacy was seen as generally being the product of the press.<sup>472</sup> Finally, there was strong evidence that no widespread political support existed for Lueder within the African-American

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<sup>469</sup> *Tribune*, 3/12/1923, 5.

<sup>470</sup> *Broad Ax*, 2/3/1923, 1.

<sup>471</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 1/26/1923, 4; *Broad Ax*, 3/10/1923, 1.

<sup>472</sup> For Louis Anderson, see *Defender*, 2/24/1923, 12. For the McCormick influence, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/16/1923, 5.

community: Barasa had outpolled him in the Second Ward, and longtime African-American political figure Oscar DePriest was charged with issuing a circular claiming that Lueder would appoint an Klan member as Chief of Police.<sup>473</sup> Overall, this lack of either grassroots or organizational support, combined by strong campaigning by Dever and weak campaigning by Lueder in the early goings, suggested that the African-American community could break with political tradition and vote for Dever, which would make it impossible for Lueder to win the general election.

One last place where the straw polls had interesting implications concerning support for the candidates came in the form of occupational polling. In general, Dever tended to have a strong lead over Lueder in polling of factory workers, with Cunnea finishing third. The clothing industry was the main exception: at Hart, Schaffner, and Marx, bastion of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers union, Cunnea had a better than two-to-one lead over Dever, with Lueder a very distant third.<sup>474</sup> Meatpacking was divided based on position: Dever had a massive lead in the shipping department at Armour, a lesser lead in the Yards, and tied Lueder in the killing department, which seems to reflect the killing floors being more heavily African-American than the rest of meatpacking.<sup>475</sup> Streetcar workers, meanwhile, favored Dever by a large margin, with Lueder barely outpolling Cunnea, suggesting both Lueder losing voters that Thompson had and that

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<sup>473</sup> For the circular, see *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5.

<sup>474</sup> *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5.

<sup>475</sup> *American*, 3/19/1923, Second Edition, 4.

municipal ownership was influencing the vote of that industry.<sup>476</sup> In contrast to this was the opinions of white-collar Loop workers, who were found to considerably favor Lueder.<sup>477</sup> These polls imply a class status in voting, in which the work one did influenced how one voted. Overall, this also suggested that voter turnout among class groups would be key, as differences in class turnout could change the result of the election.

While these polls were taking place, the Dever, Lueder, and Cunnea campaigns were faced with the issue of mobilizing the voters of Chicago. Concerns about voter apathy were expressed in connection with the February 6<sup>th</sup> and March 13<sup>th</sup> final registration days for Chicago, when barely over 900,000 were registered to vote, falling short of the 1,000,000 that had been hoped for.<sup>478</sup> Especially notable was a gender divide in registration: of the 130,000 new registrations on these days, over 28,000 more men registered than women, making up over 64% of all new registrations.<sup>479</sup> This was especially embarrassing for the Dever campaign, which had made efforts to register new voters generally and women specifically.<sup>480</sup> In February, the assumption had been that it was low due to a combination of bad weather and what was then seen as an unexciting

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<sup>476</sup> *Tribune*, 3/16/1923, 4.

<sup>477</sup> *Tribune*, 3/20/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>478</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/5/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 2/6/1923, 5; *American*, 2/5/1923, Second Edition, 6. For the desired amount, see *Journal of Commerce*, 2/6/1923, 1. For actual figures, see *Post*, 3/20/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/21/1923, 4.

<sup>479</sup> *Tribune*, 2/11/1923, 4, and *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5, give registration totals by gender, with the above calculation the product of some simple math.

<sup>480</sup> *Post*, 3/5/1923, 3; *American*, 3/13/1923, Second Edition, 8.

primary.<sup>481</sup> By March, however, it was clear that a larger problem was at stake, as residents of Chicago were finding it difficult to understand why they should participate in the coming election.<sup>482</sup> This sort of apathy would have to be handled by the campaigns of the three candidates, who would need to find some way to gain voter support.

Lueder opened his campaign in the Cort Theatre with his primary foes in attendance, focusing on the need to take the Chicago schools out of politics.<sup>483</sup> More notable are the comments made by others speaking at this rally: while Millard seems to have said nothing of note and Barasa largely wondered if his poor primary showing was a sign for judges generally, Litsinger chose to directly link the mayoral election to national politics, in an effort to mobilize voters based on national loyalties and thwart efforts by the Dever campaign to draw Republican votes. Even more notable were the remarks of Thomas D. Knight, who had chaired the Committee of 100 that played a role in candidate selection.<sup>484</sup> Knight sharply criticized Dever's record in public office, charging it with being entirely negative and lacking in any constructive achievements. In these ways, Dever's use of his record as a positive was challenged by being directly challenged, while Lueder was portrayed as being more positive in accomplishments.<sup>485</sup> This led to the

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<sup>481</sup> *Daily News*, 2/7/1923, 17.

<sup>482</sup> For this sense of apathy, see *Post*, 3/14/1923, 2.

<sup>483</sup> *Daily News*, 3/15/1923, 3; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/16/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/16/1923, 5; *Post*, 3/15/1923, 1. Unless otherwise cited, all comments in the following paragraph are taken from these sources.

<sup>484</sup> For Knight in this role, see *Daily News*, 1/4/1923, 5.

<sup>485</sup> For this interpretation, see *Post*, 3/17/1923, 1, 2.

election turning on relative turns on the merits of business versus political experience, with Knight ultimately serving as the Lueder campaign's chief direct critic of Dever.

Dever opened his general election campaign touring the city, playing several visits a night. Often, these were focused on regions of the city, with him touring the South Side one night and the Northwest Side the next.<sup>486</sup> In his speeches, he emphasized the substantial differences between himself and Lueder, that his political experience mattered, and that the Lueder campaign was trying to produce apathy in order to elect their candidate.<sup>487</sup> Some of the issues he focused on had been established earlier in the campaign: he spoke frequently on the need for municipal ownership, and on the need to campaign against vice.<sup>488</sup> He also brought up new issues, making a pledge to fight efforts to reduce the amount of water Chicago took from Lake Michigan in order to run Chicago sanitation system through the Sanitary Canal.<sup>489</sup> Dever left direct attacks on Lueder to his allies, who charged Lueder with relying on Thompson backers to be elected mayor, with making contradictory claims on Prohibition enforcement, and with being a rubber-stamp for Medill McCormick, collectively taking advantage of his lack of political experience to undermine his image of independence.<sup>490</sup> In these ways, Dever's campaign established

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<sup>486</sup> For Dever on the South Side, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/16/1923, 4. For Dever on the Northwest Side, see *Daily News*, 3/16/1923, 4.

<sup>487</sup> *Daily News*, 3/16/1923, 4. For Dever denouncing the tameness of the campaign, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/16/1923, 4.

<sup>488</sup> *Tribune*, 3/16/1923, 5.

<sup>489</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/17/1923, 4.

<sup>490</sup> *Daily News*, 3/15/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/17/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/18/1923; 7.

his political record as being a positive, and tried to have him stay in advance concerning major issues in the campaign.

The Cunnea campaign engaged in a different approach to drawing votes than the comparative experience approaches of Lueder and Dever. Cunnea had not taken a break after the primary, continuing to tour Chicago with Eugene V. Debs. Debs' addresses continued to be a major draw: even with a 25-cent cover charge, crowds were turned away, with between 4000 and 5000 people attending an Amalgamated Clothing Workers-run rally at the Ashland Auditorium (with the added attraction of music by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra), a similar-size audience at Wicker Park Hall, and even a specialized rally for Bohemian and Yugoslavian voters drawing 1000 to Sokol Hall.<sup>491</sup> In these ways, the apathy that the Dever and Lueder campaigns worried about was not present, but at the same time it was unclear how many of those wanting to hear Debs ultimately would vote for Cunnea. Cunnea's campaigning focused on workers in Chicago, charging both of his opponents with having offered no program in their interest, and pledging to reduce rates for gas, electricity, and telephone calls, as well as regulate radio broadcasting.<sup>492</sup> He also continued to campaign on more traditionally reformist notes, urging more parks and respect for civil service, and going as far as to claim the vice problem could be solved in forty-eight hours if a sincere effort was made to do so.<sup>493</sup> His claims were challenged, with some press critics noting that his utility regulation was

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<sup>491</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/15/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/17/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/19/1923, 5.

<sup>492</sup> *American*, 3/16/1923, 11; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/18/1923, Part 1, 4; *Tribune*, 3/23/1923, 5.

<sup>493</sup> *Daily News*, 3/15/1923, 1, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/19/1923, 5.

held by state authorities.<sup>494</sup> Overall, however, these stances gave the Cunnea campaign an image of being focused on a particular program to a greater degree than either of his foes, with the popularity of this platform ultimately influencing his vote.

The Lueder and Dever campaigns engaged in various approaches to reach the voters of Chicago as the campaign continued. The Lueder campaign decided to take advantage of the radio, then beginning to gain popularity as a consumer item, arranging for candidates to speak over the radio and for meetings to be held at homes with radios to reach those without them.<sup>495</sup> This turn to technology was of significance, as the rise of broadcast communications would serve to significantly alter forms of campaigning. At the same time, this tactic was slightly ahead of its time, as radio broadcasting appears to have been a minor concern in this election.<sup>496</sup> The Lueder campaign set up its own Committee of 500 to rival the Citizens' Committee backing Dever, and planned to have hundreds stumping for Lueder and dozens of home meetings on his behalf.<sup>497</sup> Lueder tried to counter the work of those backing Dever, visiting the Appomattox Club in order to make a direct appeal for African-American support.<sup>498</sup> At the same time, however, he seemed to become less willing to directly engage Dever, missing events where both were

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<sup>494</sup> *Daily News*, 3/24/1923, 6.

<sup>495</sup> *Daily News*, 3/16/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5.

<sup>496</sup> For these references, see *Daily News*, 4/2/1923, 1, 4; *Tribune*, 4/2/1923, 5. These references both indicate that Dever campaigned over the radio, but offer no clues as for the contents of his addresses.

<sup>497</sup> *Tribune*, 3/19/1923, 5; *American*, 3/19/1923, Second Edition, 4; *Post*, 3/16/1923, 2; *Post*, 3/16/1923, 11.

<sup>498</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/17/1923, 4.



intended to speak.<sup>499</sup> In these ways, the Lueder campaign attempted to go into action, but was limited by being in many regards reactive to moves already taken by Dever.

Dever, meanwhile, altered his campaign tactics by expanding the lists of speakers working for him. In the third week of March, Robert Sweitzer, Carter Harrison II, James Hamilton Lewis, and Maclay Hoyne all began to engage in campaign work for Dever.<sup>500</sup> This very fact was significant, as it meant the uniting of politicians who had long represented opposed factions in ways that had not occurred in the past. Just as significant, were the messages offered: Sweitzer portrayed Dever as the candidate best able to clean out City Hall, Carter Harrison, praised his experience and challenged the Lueder campaign's claims for equivalent experience, and Dunne praised Dever for his fighting against utilities and charged Lueder with being the candidate for forces wanting another traction franchise.<sup>501</sup> Lewis praised Dever as able to give a great administration to Chicago, while charging that Chicago's Republicans were too demoralized and factionalized to offer such a government.<sup>502</sup> Combined, this stump campaigning served to emphasize Dever's experience, and suggested ways in which this experience would be directly beneficial to the voters of Chicago.

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<sup>499</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/18/1923, Part 1, 5.

<sup>500</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/17/1923, 4; *American*, 3/19/1923, Second Edition, 1; *Post*, 3/20/1923, 2; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/22/1923, 1, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/27/1923, 5.

<sup>501</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/17/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/20/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/22/1923, 1, 5. This is as good a place as any to note that Harrison, *Growing Up with Chicago*, 319, charges that he had been involved in the campaign under false pretenses, and that he quit after two weeks when he figured this out. Schmidt questions this, and both the newspaper coverage and Harrison's tendencies for self-aggrandizing suggest this as a falsehood.

<sup>502</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/22/1923, 1, 5.

### **Whispering: Rumor Hits the Campaign Trail**

Beginning in mid-March, a series of rumors began hitting the mayoral campaign, change the tone from the relatively placid and high-minded approach that had been previously present. Immediately after the primary, claims began to be made about backers of both Dever and Lueder using various means to gain votes, including appealing to ethnic and religious antagonisms.<sup>503</sup> A circular was issued in the African-American community praising William Hale Thompson and charging Arthur Lueder with planning to appoint a member of the Ku Klux Klan as Chief of Police.<sup>504</sup> This circular was believed to have been issued by Oscar DePriest, who had drawn criticism within the African-American community for his willingness to throw his political support to anyone in order to get ahead politically.<sup>505</sup> This attack was damaging to Lueder beyond the specific charge against him: it served to emphasize that he had no real connection to the African-American community and was a reminder that the forces backing him at best had been strongly opposed to African-American favorite William Hale Thompson, and at worse were seen as grossly unfriendly to African-Americans. Dever, similarly, was faced by rumors, including ones that he had kept a son out of the First World War (which he blasted as a lie), and that he had not bothered to register to vote (which was true, but explained as due to a family emergency).<sup>506</sup> At this point, these rumors had limitations in

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<sup>503</sup> *Sullivan's Englewood Times*, 3/9/1923, 1, notes the severity of this in races at the ward level.

<sup>504</sup> *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5.

<sup>505</sup> For contemporary criticism of DePriest in this regard, see *Broad Ax*, 3/17/1923, 1, 2; *Broad Ax*, 6/9/1923, 1; *Broad Ax*, 6/23/1923, 1; *Broad Ax*, 6/30/1923, 1.

<sup>506</sup> *Post*, 3/16/1923, 2; *Tribune*, 3/18/1923, 7.

terms of overall significance, and were not regarded as deeply important to the campaign overall.

This separation of rumors from issues ended on March 20<sup>th</sup>, when it became apparent that Thomas D. Knight had met with officials of the Anti-Saloon League in secret at the Hamilton Club, and that the meeting had discussed something called “the outstanding issue” of the campaign.<sup>507</sup> When combined with Millard’s showing in the Republican primary and the presence of four Klan-backed candidates in City Council runoffs, there was a suspicion that religion was the issue in question, with the Anti-Saloon League offering to aid the Lutheran Lueder over the Catholic Dever on these grounds.<sup>508</sup> Recent Chicago political history demonstrated this as being a dangerous line: William Hale Thompson was charged with using this against Robert Sweitzer to win the 1915 election, and Carter Harrison II and Charles Merriam (both Protestants with Catholic wives) charged each other with undermining the other on religious grounds in 1911.<sup>509</sup> This resulted in a demand by Harold Ickes, one of the managers of the Dever campaign among independent and Republican voters, to know what issue was being discussed.<sup>510</sup> He was not alone with this concern, as the heavily Republican but staunchly anti-Prohibition *Tribune* was similarly interested in the contents of this conversation.<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>507</sup> *Tribune*, 3/20/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/20/1923, 5.

<sup>508</sup> Indeed, *Tribune*, 3/21/1923, 8, notes that Millard had participated in a meeting immediately previous to this one, with fairly obvious implications.

<sup>509</sup> For these issues in play, see Hoffman, 11; Harrison, *Growing Up with Chicago*, .302-304; Ickes, 139.

<sup>510</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/22/1923, 5.

<sup>511</sup> *Tribune*, 3/21/1923, 8.

Knight's response did not help matters: he claimed that the matter under discussion was the hypocrisy of the Dever campaign, which came across as him avoiding the question and managed to offend African-American Dever backers by insinuating that the underworld was responsible for Lueder losing African-American support.<sup>512</sup> In the following days, Ickes explicitly charged Knight with engaging in racial and religious issues in campaigning for Lueder, to which Knight responded by threatening a libel suit.<sup>513</sup> While the truth of the matter is probably unknowable, this very discussion guaranteed that religious matters would be a concern in the campaign.<sup>514</sup> The fighting between Knight and Ickes also served to undercut the nature of the campaign, ending the high-minded elements that had been present earlier.

As this debate began, Lueder finally released his platform for the general election.<sup>515</sup> This platform looked at city administration from a business perspective, arguing that city government could be understood as a business, with pledges to reduce taxes via cheaper street paving and maintenance and a cooperative approach to administration being tied to this understanding. Other elements of the Lueder platform followed traditional reform approaches, with Lueder pledging to fight vice, reduce smoke, follow the Chicago Plan for city improvements, and respect civil service laws.

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<sup>512</sup> *Daily News*, 3/21/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/22/1923, 4.

<sup>513</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/24/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 3/25/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>514</sup> *Tribune*, 3/20/1923, 5, for instance, regarded this as their introduction into the race.

<sup>515</sup> For Lueder's stances on the issues, see *Tribune*, 3/21/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/21/1923, 4. All claims not otherwise cited come from these sources.

Other pledges demonstrated a greater concern for women as political actors: Lueder promised to appoint women to the Civil Service Commission and the Chicago Library Board and to pay attention to matters of city service connected to homes. Notably, Lueder avoided making any clear comment on the traction issue, which was seen as exceptional given the significance of this issue in recent Chicago political history.<sup>516</sup> The platform had a mixed reception: the *Post* praised it as a revival of the Progressive municipal platform of a decade earlier, while the *Herald and Examiner* charged it with lacking substance, and Charles Merriam went as far as accusing it of being the product of outside writers.<sup>517</sup> Overall, however, this platform served to further solidify Lueder as running a traditionally reformist campaign, of the sort favored by such groups as the MVL and the Civic Federation, aimed in its appeals at the middle-class of the city.

The Lueder campaign had other difficulties emerge in the campaign. One of these related to the willingness of Arthur Lueder to speak to the same crowds as Dever: Lueder missed many occasions where they would have spoken to the same audience, even, such as with the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, breaking with prior appointments.<sup>518</sup> This was notable given the desire of Dever, Cunnea, and the *Daily News* for a debate involving Lueder, making his refusal especially visible. This became especially notable in the case of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, which under Margaret Haley had been one of the leading unions in Chicago and one that had been a thorn in the side of virtually

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<sup>516</sup> *American*, 3/31/1923, 12.

<sup>517</sup> *Post*, 3/24/1923, 6; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/24/1923, 8; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/31/1923, 2.

<sup>518</sup> For his announced presence, see *Post*, 3/9/1923, 5. For his missing it, see *Tribune*, 3/15/1923, 7.

every mayor in the previous thirty years, which had invited Dever and Lueder to attend a March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting to discuss traction matters.<sup>519</sup> This effort did not pan out: Lueder announced his refusal the day before the meeting, instead sending Homer Galpin as his representative.<sup>520</sup> This refusal becomes of greater interest when noting how Lueder and his political associates explained this action. Lueder noted that he regarded this as a trap to face an unfriendly audience.<sup>521</sup> That they were not an organization in his favor is clear from accounts of the meeting: Haley denounced Edward Brundage before the 1500 present with playing politics in his prosecutions as Illinois Attorney General.<sup>522</sup> Lueder's allies, meanwhile, charged the Teachers Federation with getting directly involved in politics to the point of trying to dictate who was elected Mayor.<sup>523</sup> Oscar A. Kropf, one of the Lueder campaign's chief speakers, was even harsher, charging Dever with planning to hand over control of the Chicago public schools to Margaret Haley if elected, and going as far as to suggest that this matter of school control was the outstanding issue of the election, noting the difference in age between the 47-year-old Lueder and the 61-year-old Dever.<sup>524</sup> This no-show turned into a bludgeon against both candidates: Lueder was

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<sup>519</sup> The best source for understanding Haley is her own autobiography, published as Robert L. Reid, editor, *Battleground: The Autobiography of Margaret Haley* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1982). The Herrick and Hogan works contain much concerning the CTF, as does Merriam, 125-129. *Herald and Examiner*, 3/18/1923, Part 1, 4.

<sup>520</sup> *Tribune*, 3/22/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/23/1923, 1, 5.

<sup>521</sup> *Post*, 3/21/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>522</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/23/1923, 1, 5.

<sup>523</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/24/1923, 5.

<sup>524</sup> *Daily News*, 3/24/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 3/25/1923, 5. For the ages of the candidates, who were born just one day apart, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/12/1923, 3; *Daily News*, 3/13/1923, 1, 3.

charged with being unable to take a direct challenge, while Dever had both his independence and his political fitness questioned.

Dever was faced with other challenges by the Lueder campaign. The Lueder Real Estate League had been organized during the primary as a means by which those in Chicago's real estate industry could work on behalf of Lueder to elect him as Mayor.<sup>525</sup> Late in the campaign, this organization went from engaging in positive work for Lueder, such as event organization, to negative attacks of Dever's record. The Lueder Real Estate League chose to blame the Democratic majority of the City Council for tax problems and the Board of Education scandals in response to Democratic charges of Republican responsibility for William Hale Thompson.<sup>526</sup> Dever's personal record was attacked, with the charge of an official in the Chicago Tenants' Protective League that Dever had severely increased rents in apartments he owned receiving publicity.<sup>527</sup> Most important of the charges made by the Lueder Real Estate League was the charge of his being a "Hearst-Dunne" candidate.<sup>528</sup> This attack tied to his strong stance for municipal ownership, which paralleled that of the Hearst newspapers in Chicago, and of Edward Dunne. By portraying Dever as a Hearst candidate, his claims of independence were under attack, as Hearst had gained a notorious reputation in Chicago and nationally for

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<sup>525</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 2/10/1923, 4.

<sup>526</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/24/1923, 5.

<sup>527</sup> *Daily News*, 3/27/1923, 4.

<sup>528</sup> *Post*, 3/23/1923, 2; *Tribune*, 3/25/1923, 1, 4; *Daily News*, 3/26/1923, 4.

his political ambitions and his mercurial relations with politicians.<sup>529</sup> The Dunne attack tied to general questions about Dever having a constructive record, as this connected to the image of Dunne both as an administrative failure and as surrounded by cranks.<sup>530</sup> In these ways, this was an attack that directly challenged the foundation of the Dever campaign, by questioning both his competence and his ability to offer independent government.

Perhaps the most notable of the negative issues to emerge during the campaign was one aimed at Lueder. Throughout the campaign, Lueder pointed to his record as Postmaster of Chicago as demonstrating the administrative abilities needed for his being an effective Mayor.<sup>531</sup> Even as Lueder's foes pointed to his lack of experience and charged him with benefiting from ethnic and factional politics, his being an able administrator had been taken for granted.<sup>532</sup> In late March, however, a large group of postal employees charged Lueder with ineffective administration of the Post Office, estimating that \$1,000,000 had been lost due to inefficiency.<sup>533</sup> Moreover, these charges emerged in a meeting called and attended by Medill McCormick, making this seem that the Lueder campaign had caused a self-inflicted wound. In the days that followed, the cause was debated: CFL vice-president and Alderman-elect Oscar Nelson charged that

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<sup>529</sup> Tellingly, *Daily News*, 3/30/1923, 1, 4, claims that Dever campaign workers considered endorsement by the Hearst newspapers a negative, rather than a positive.

<sup>530</sup> For these attacks used successfully against Dunne in 1907, see Leidenberger, 126-134 *passim*.

<sup>531</sup> For praise of his efficiency in the post, see *Daily News*, 3/12/1923, 4.

<sup>532</sup> For charges on his appointment, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/21/1923, 8. For positive assumptions in an otherwise negative critiques, see *Defender*, 3/17/1923, 12.

<sup>533</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/26/1923, 1, 5; *Daily News*, 3/26/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/27/1923, 1.



this was specifically due to the maladministration of Lueder, while Lueder and his backers claimed that these problems were the result of cuts from Washington, obtaining a telegraph from the Postmaster General explaining that the problems with the Post Office were on a national level.<sup>534</sup> However, the very emergence of these charges was enough to cause problems, as even Lueder supporters were forced to admit problems at the post office. This led to a blow to Lueder's reputation as an administrator, at best indicating conditions were not as positive as previous claimed, and at worse suggesting Lueder as being unfit at administration.<sup>535</sup>

### **Last-Minute Appeals: The Campaign Ends**

In the last weeks of the campaign, the three candidates engaged in a variety of campaign approaches. William Cunnea continued to appeal for working-class support, noting thirty years of experience working for organized labor.<sup>536</sup> He also noted a need for watchers in each precinct, warning of the chance that he might be "counted out" without their aid.<sup>537</sup> He continued to have notable Socialists speak for him: Milwaukee Mayor Daniel Hoan negatively compared conditions with those in Milwaukee, Congressman Victor Berger took the stump, and Eugene Debs kept campaigning across the city.<sup>538</sup> Cunnea offered varied pledges in the last days of the campaign, supporting an elected

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<sup>534</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/27/1923, 1, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/29/1923, 2; *Daily News*, 3/29/1923, 4.

<sup>535</sup> Notably, Harold Ickes, after the election, commented that he felt this exposure sank Lueder's chances of election. Harold Ickes to Hiram Johnson, 4/10/1923, 2, Harold Ickes Papers, Box 33, Folder 3, Library of Congress.

<sup>536</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/24/1923, 5.

<sup>537</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/24/1923, 5; *Post*, 3/30/1923, 2.

<sup>538</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/26/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/28/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 4/1/1923, 2.

Board of Education, 5-cent transit fares, evening hours for the public libraries, municipal transit ownership (including of the L lines, which he charged his opponents as neglecting), and reduced phone, gas, and electric rates.<sup>539</sup> Perhaps the most notable element of his campaign as it entered its last days was his direct attacks on Dever and Lueder. While Lueder and Dever both largely left negative campaigning to proxies, Cunnea was willing to directly attack his foes.<sup>540</sup> In the last stages of the campaign, he charged both his foes with being financed by the various utilities of Chicago (in Dever's case through George Brennan), and with being allied with the vice interests of Chicago.<sup>541</sup> He was even critical of opponents within the labor movement, claiming that labor support for Dever was largely that of union business agents, and denying that labor leaders could deliver voters as a bloc.<sup>542</sup> In all of these approaches, Cunnea offered an ideological approach that in many regards differed from the campaigns of both Lueder and Dever, but, in its attacks on utilities and vice, clearly came from the same general reform tradition, rather than in opposition to it.

William Dever, meanwhile, used clubs as a means of mobilizing the voters of Chicago. Harold Ickes was put in charge of the Independent Dever Club, with a general goal of mobilizing non-Democrats, particularly ones with ties to the Progressives, on

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<sup>539</sup> *Daily News*, 3/21/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/23/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/25/1923, Part 1, 4; *Daily News*, 3/29/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/31/1923, 2

<sup>540</sup> For this difference noted during the campaign, see *Tribune*, 3/25/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>541</sup> *Tribune*, 3/27/1923, 12; *Daily News*, 3/27/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 4/2/1923, 2.

<sup>542</sup> *Post*, 3/23/1923, 3; *Daily News*, 4/2/1923, 4

behalf of the Dever campaign.<sup>543</sup> Many of the addresses Dever spoke to were specifically organized by this group, who held noon meetings for him independent of those organized by Democratic leadership.<sup>544</sup> Numerous clubs were set up based on occupation (physicians, lawyers, businessmen) and interests (such as aviation) on behalf of Dever.<sup>545</sup> A strong effort was made to mobilize women on Dever's behalf through the Illinois Women's Democratic Club, with special appeals to women in trade unions and the professions.<sup>546</sup> The W. E. Dever League was formed to mobilize organized labor for Dever, while the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, the Teamsters, and the Building Trades Council endorsed Dever.<sup>547</sup> Finally, ethnic mobilization for Dever was apparent, including ethnic groups associated with Republicans: the Swedish-American Club backed a Democratic candidate for the first time in their history, the Scandinavian Civic League of Illinois, Danish Municipal League and On Leong Merchants' Association backed him, and virtually every ethnicity in Chicago possessed a Dever club.<sup>548</sup> In these ways, the Dever campaign used appeals to shared affinities in an effort to obtain votes.

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<sup>543</sup> *Daily News*, 3/19/1923, 4; Ickes to Johnson, 4/10/1923, 1, Harold L. Ickes Papers, Box 33, Folder 3, Library of Congress.

<sup>544</sup> For a reference to this plan, see *Daily News*, 3/22/1923, 4, while general coverage of this election demonstrates this as being in practice.

<sup>545</sup> *Daily News*, 3/17/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/19/1923, 4.

<sup>546</sup> *Post*, 3/3/1923, 3; *Post*, 3/13/1923, 2; *Tribune*, 3/19/1923, 5.

<sup>547</sup> *Daily News*, 3/22/1923, 4; *Post*, 3/23/1923, 2; *Daily News*, 3/30/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/31/1923, 2.

<sup>548</sup> *American*, 3/16/1923, Second Edition, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/26/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/27/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/27/1923, 12.

Perhaps most notable among these efforts at group mobilization were the efforts made to obtain African-American support for Dever. The Ex-Service Men's Dever for Mayor League set up a Colored Division under the leadership of Earl Dickerson, starting what would become a notable career in Chicago African-American politics, to mobilize veterans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wards.<sup>549</sup> Similar efforts were made to mobilize black women through the Independent Colored Women's Dever for Mayor Club, which claimed stronger support for Dever than for any prior Democratic candidate.<sup>550</sup> Dever backing by disgruntled Thompson supporters was also obtained: Oscar DePriest was charged with performing dirty tricks for Dever, and Bishop Archibald Carey of the African Methodist Episcopal Church engaged in active campaigning for Dever.<sup>551</sup> The African-American press of Chicago had a distinctive view on the election: the *Broad Ax*, which despised DePriest and Carey, portrayed this election as being one where African-Americans should mobilize against the *Tribune* and in tribute to William Hale Thompson, while the *Defender*, while equivocal in terms of support, expected a Dever victory due to Lueder's lack of any real record and the divided status of Chicago's Republicans.<sup>552</sup> This campaigning was not unchallenged: one observer, remembering the use of racist rhetoric

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<sup>549</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/27/1923, 5; *American*, 4/2/1923, 14. Unfortunately, the Earl Dickerson Papers at the Chicago History Museum contains very little concerning the 1923 election, while Robert J. Blakely with Marcus Shepard, *Earl B. Dickerson: A Voice for Freedom and Equality* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 47-49, offers only passing information on the subject.

<sup>550</sup> *Daily News*, 3/27/1923, 4; *Broad Ax*, 3/31/1923, 2.

<sup>551</sup> *Daily News*, 3/16/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 4/5/1923, 4.

<sup>552</sup> For the *Broad Ax* as anti-Carey and DePriest, see *Broad Ax*, 4/14/1923, 1. *Broad Ax*, 3/31/1923, 2; *Defender*, 3/17/1923, 12.

by Democrats as recently as 1920, questioned their sincerity, while Carey and DePriest were challenged to a debate by African-American clergymen backing Lueder.<sup>553</sup>

Nevertheless, a clear shift in the African-American vote was apparent: a poll in the last days of the campaign showed 49% of those in the heavily African-American 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward planning to vote for Dever, while only 26% planned to vote for Lueder.<sup>554</sup> In these respects, the strong mobilization for Dever among African-Americans had a visible impact, as what had been one of the most solidly Republican votes in the city was now up for grabs.

In the last days of the campaign, Dever spoke nightly to audiences across Chicago, negating the use of his age as an issue by noting that he was more active than Lueder.<sup>555</sup> He also reached out to a working-class audience, speaking at the Union Stock Yards and the Chicago railyards, and arguing that the working class should be most interested in reform because they were affected most by the failures of government to provide basic services.<sup>556</sup> Some of his appeals involved noting that his foes had failed to find anything objectionable to his record, comparing this to a Lueder who at best had no ideas and at worst was incompetent at administration.<sup>557</sup> Dever also continued campaigning on issues, pledging simultaneously to suppress vice while not trying to

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<sup>553</sup> *Tribune*, 3/25/1923, 5; *Post*, 3/30/1923, 10.

<sup>554</sup> *American*, 3/31/1923, 3, 4.

<sup>555</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/26/1923, 5.

<sup>556</sup> *Daily News*, 3/24/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/31/1923, 4.

<sup>557</sup> *Daily News*, 3/24/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/26/1923, 4.

impose blue laws, to improve efficiency through better appointments, and to not build a political machine.<sup>558</sup> His main focus, however, remained municipal ownership and operation of the streetcar system of Chicago, arguing that his opposition to the settlement ordinances of 1907 was justified by streetcar operations since then, and denying that he'd either confiscate the streetcar lines or pay for any excessive, or "watered", value.<sup>559</sup> On this subject, his campaign was most distinctive, contrasting with the continued vagueness of Lueder on the subject.<sup>560</sup> Overall, Dever offered a message strongly backing reform in Chicago, but a reform that incorporated working-class concerns in its program.

Arthur Lueder used a variety of campaign tactics in response to the Dever campaign. Lueder brought out major figures in the party to campaign: Charles Deneen and Edward Brundage both focused on national politics in arguing for a Lueder vote.<sup>561</sup> Medill McCormick's arguments for Lueder, meanwhile, ranged in nature: he praised him as an experience businessman who entered politics only when drafted and used the rhetoric of business heavily, while dismissing Dever's City Council record as "talk and taxes" and expressing skepticism about the desirability of municipal ownership of streetcars as they grew obsolete.<sup>562</sup> This gave McCormick an image as being most able to articulate why to vote for Lueder: when Harold Ickes found himself unable to organize a

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<sup>558</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/22/1923, 5; *Journal of Commerce*, 3/24/1923, 4.

<sup>559</sup> *Daily News*, 3/21/1923, 4; *Journal of Commerce*, 3/24/1923, 4.

<sup>560</sup> For this vagueness, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/26/1923, 8.

<sup>561</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/20/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 3/30/1923, 5.

<sup>562</sup> The most detailed commentary offered by McCormick on Lueder is in a speech located in the Hanna-McCormick Family Papers, Box 110, Folder 10, Library of Congress. *Herald and Examiner*, 3/30/1923, 2.

Dever-Lueder debate, he tried to debate McCormick himself.<sup>563</sup> The Lueder campaign made a strong effort to gain the support of women, with ward and precinct organizations formed throughout the city and backing by the Women's Roosevelt Republican League.<sup>564</sup> Professional women, insurance officials, coal dealers, and fans of baseball were organized in groups for Lueder, while the Lueder campaign used an endorsement by an organizer of the Chicago Tenants' Protective League in order to gain working-class support.<sup>565</sup> Ethnic voters were similarly mobilized: the German-American Citizens Association and the Hungarian Societies of Chicago both endorsed Lueder, while his campaign argued that his experience in business would obtain Greek support.<sup>566</sup> Notably, the Lueder campaign made no effort to gain an independent vote, while Lueder backers charged Ickes, Merriam, and Robins as profiting from their political position, being Republicans largely for social reasons, and, in Ickes' case, living as close to Milwaukee as he did Chicago and as working in the interests of his law partner.<sup>567</sup> In his speeches, Lueder noted his business experience as a reason why the electorate should support him, making his relative lack of political experience a virtue.<sup>568</sup> He remained uncomfortable

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<sup>563</sup> For the challenge, see *Daily News*, 3/22/1923, 4. For McCormick's response, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/27/1923, 5. Unfortunately, both the Ickes and McCormick papers appear to have been culled before donation, and no private correspondence between the two on the matter seems to exist.

<sup>564</sup> *Daily News*, 3/12/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/28/1923, 4.

<sup>565</sup> *Daily News*, 3/22/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/22/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/30/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>566</sup> *Tribune*, 3/18/1923, 7; *Daily News*, 3/31/1923, 4; *Tribune*, 4/1/1923, 4.

<sup>567</sup> *Post*, 3/20/1923, 2; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/20/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/26/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 4/2/1923, 4.

<sup>568</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/22/1923, 5. For him using this lack of political experience in his advertising, see *The Sentinel*, 3/30/1923, 24.

about being considered a reformer, expressing skepticism about his ability to solve all problems facing Chicago in a streak of political realism.<sup>569</sup> He discussed some matters related to transportation, such as the need for elevated lines that avoided the Loop and for a subway system, but largely ignored the matter of municipal ownership.<sup>570</sup> Instead, Lueder focused on the maladministration of the public schools of Chicago by the Board of Education, proposing its reorganization and criticizing Dever for lacking any plan on the subject.<sup>571</sup> On other matters, Lueder supported the municipal Progressive platform of a decade earlier, backing honesty in government, an increase in municipal parks, campaigns against vice, better housing, and ending police corruption.<sup>572</sup> In all of these regards, Lueder closed his campaign by appealing to middle and upper-class voters, and made appeals that backed traditional concepts of reform while being skeptical over any proposals that would have been more sweeping in nature.

### **An Apathetic Electorate?**

As the candidates wound down their campaigns, there was a sense that, even with the turn towards negative campaign, the electorate of Chicago was not as excited with this election as they had with past elections. Large attendance at political rallies was noted, but no corresponding energy, with no brawling between supporters.<sup>573</sup> The Dever,

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<sup>569</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/22/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/26/1923, 4.

<sup>570</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/19/1923, 5; *Broad Ax*, 3/24/1923, 2.

<sup>571</sup> *Tribune*, 3/29/1923, 6.

<sup>572</sup> *Post*, 3/24/1923, 4.

<sup>573</sup> *Daily News*, 3/30/1923, 1, 4.



Lueder, and Cunnea campaigns all interpreted this as favorable to their candidates, feeling that a lack of excitement would aid them.<sup>574</sup> However, various indicators pointed to a Dever victory. James O’Leary, long prominent as a bookmaker in the stockyards, demonstrated this in his election odds: on March 27<sup>th</sup>, he had odds of 1 to 4 for Dever, 3.5 to 1 for Lueder, and 25 to 1 on Cunnea, and by April 2<sup>nd</sup> had moved these to 1 to 7 for Dever, 6 to 1 for Lueder, and 40 to 1 for Cunnea, noting that almost all betting was on the margin of the Dever victory.<sup>575</sup> The relative margins of victory suggested by the Dever and Lueder campaigns also hinted at this: Dever backers suggested that victory by as much as 200,000 votes was possible, while the Lueder campaign estimated victory by no more than 75,000 votes, showing significant differences in their level of optimism.<sup>576</sup> The last polls in this election similarly confirmed this: the *American* continued to note a strong Dever lead in the plants and on the lakefront, estimating a final vote of 55.39% for Dever, 37.59% for Lueder, and 7.02% for Cunnea, resulting in a victory for Dever by around 130,000 votes.<sup>577</sup> Even more notable were the calculations of Oscar Hewitt in his commentary on the *Tribune*’s polling: as late as March 29<sup>th</sup>, Dever’s lead was only by 40,300 votes, but the next days showed a massive swing to Dever even among white-collar workers, ultimately estimating Dever as winning by 62,000 to 92,000 votes, in the

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<sup>574</sup> For these projections, see *Daily News*, 4/2/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>575</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/27/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 3/30/1923, 1, 4; *Post*, 4/2/1923, 1.

<sup>576</sup> For a demonstration of this, see *Daily News*, 3/31/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>577</sup> *American*, 3/29/1923, Second Edition, 3; *American*, 3/30/1923, Second Edition, 4; *American*, 4/2/1923, Second Edition, 1, 2.

second-largest margin in Chicago history.<sup>578</sup> Importantly, the *Tribune* offered a ethnic calculation of the vote: Dever was seen as winning with the Polish, Italian, Bohemian, Russian, Irish, and African-American votes, while Lueder was expected to carry the votes of German, Scandinavian, English, and what were then known as “American” voters. In all of these regards, the placidity of the election was seen as favoring Dever, who ultimately benefited from his message of reform appealing to a large set of ethnic voters in Chicago than Lueder’s messages had.

This sense of a pending Dever victory also influenced how the daily press of Chicago covered the election.<sup>579</sup> The *Herald and Examiner* and the *American*, both Hearst newspapers, were heavily pro-Thompson before he left the race and heavily pro-Dever afterwards, engaging in frequent front-page editorializing on his behalf. The *Journal*, most consistently Democratic newspaper in Chicago, also strongly supported for Dever, while the *Post* endorsed Lueder as a sane and progressive candidate while criticizing Dever’s backers.<sup>580</sup> Most notable, however, was the response of the *Daily News* and the *Tribune*. Both of these newspapers were considered to be normally Republican, with the *Tribune* being usually conservative and the *Daily News* favoring reform, and both were regarded as being important in giving the independent committees

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<sup>578</sup> *Tribune*, 3/29/1923, 1; *Tribune*, 3/30/1923, 5; *Tribune*, 3/31/1923, 1, 6; *Tribune*, 4/1/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>579</sup> These comments, when not otherwise cited, are based on a general summary of the contents of these newspapers in question in the first months of 1923. For some contemporary commentary on these newspapers, see Merriam, 161-164.

<sup>580</sup> *Post*, 3/24/1923, 6; *Post*, 3/29/1923, 8.

that suggested Dever and Lueder as candidates significance.<sup>581</sup> This tradition broke down just before the election: the *Daily News*, while feeling that both Dever and Lueder would make good mayors, preferred Dever on the basis of experience and his City Council record, focusing instead on backing the Municipal Voters League slate for the City Council.<sup>582</sup> The *Tribune* declined to endorse anyone, feeling that Dever and Lueder each had particular experience making it meaningless to endorse one over the other.<sup>583</sup> On the one hand, these stances guaranteed nothing, as neither the *Daily News* nor the *Tribune* had backed a winning candidate for Mayor since 1907.<sup>584</sup> However, the Hearst newspapers found it symbolically important that a candidate seen as hand-picked by Medill McCormick could not get the support of the newspaper edited by his brother.<sup>585</sup> The tone of these editorials, however, further reflects the relative placidity of this election, as both of these endorsements (and, for that matter, that of the *Post*) suggest a race seen as one between two respectable candidates, further suggesting limitations to the excitement in the race.

The seemingly guaranteed Dever landslide, however, was one challenged in several regards. One of these involved campaign finance: the Hearst press charged the Lueder campaign with being secretly funded by utility interests to stop municipal ownership, while the Lueder Real Estate League charged Dever with spending \$500,000

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<sup>581</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/30/1923, 8.

<sup>582</sup> *Daily News*, 3/31/1923, 1, 5.

<sup>583</sup> *Tribune*, 4/1/1923, 8.

<sup>584</sup> *American*, 4/3/1923, Second Edition, 24.

<sup>585</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/30/1923, 8; *American*, 4/3/1923, Second Edition, 24.

on his campaign, including large amounts of money from Hearst and the Democratic National Committee.<sup>586</sup> Both Dever and Lueder had problems dealing with former Thompson backers, who were seen as embarrassing to other supporters.<sup>587</sup> The Cunnea vote also complicated predictions: the *Tribune* and *American* had differing calculations as to the strength of the Cunnea vote, and this was seen as able to swing the election if large enough.<sup>588</sup> Most important was what was known either as the “whispering campaign” or the “religious issue”.<sup>589</sup> The Ku Klux Klan had demonstrated its strength in the strong vote for Arthur Millard in the Republican primary, and four of the runoffs for City Council had candidates tied to the Klan through membership, sympathies, or political deal-making.<sup>590</sup> While Lueder, either through his German heritage or charges of Klan allegiances, was the target of some rumors, most of these were aimed at Dever, who if elected would be only the third Catholic mayor in Chicago history.<sup>591</sup> Much of this campaigning was apparently done via the mails, including faking a Dever endorsement in a Catholic publication urging Catholic voter turnout.<sup>592</sup> Dever was forced to address these claims in his campaigning, noting that his sons were educated in public schools in

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<sup>586</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/24/1923, 1, 5; *Tribune*, 3/31/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 4/2/1923, 4.

<sup>587</sup> *Post*, 3/26/1923, 10; *Daily News*, 4/2/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>588</sup> *Journal of Commerce*, 4/3/1923, 1.

<sup>589</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/31/1923, 1, 2; *Tribune*, 4/1/1923, 1, 2; *Chicago Citizen*, 4/6/1923, 4.

<sup>590</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 4/3/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 4/4/1923, 5.

<sup>591</sup> For references involving Lueder as a target, see *Tribune*, 3/25/1923, 1, 4; *Tribune*, 4/1/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>592</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 4/3/1923, 5; *The New World*, 4/20/1923, 4.

response to one set of rumors.<sup>593</sup> The forces responsible for this were debated: Raymond Robins blamed the Klan, while the Hearst press charged the Lueder campaign with direct responsibility.<sup>594</sup> This remained an important issue as the campaign finished, as it meant the change that religious bigotry could ultimately decide the race for mayor.

As election day approached, the conduct of the election became a major concern. In 1922, Edmund Jarecki had been elected Cook County Judge, which held responsibility over Chicago elections, in large part in response to abuses of electoral procedures under Thompson ally Frank Righeimer.<sup>595</sup> While Jarecki performed well in the primary election, the general election was a significant test given the political stakes present.<sup>596</sup> In the days preceding the election, Jarecki and the Board of Election Commissioners planned for the coming election: Health Commissioner Herman Bundesen was asked to aid efforts to prevent the votes of the dead from being cast, Jarecki issued a reminder of the prison sentence attached to repeat voting, and, in collaboration with States' Attorney Robert Crowe, opened an investigation into plans to commit fraud, especially in such wards as the 27<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> in the core of the city, with both parties charging each other with plans to manipulate the vote.<sup>597</sup> In spite of these investigations, there were concerns remaining about fraud: Cunnea appealed for Jarecki's aid against it, while the *Daily News*

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<sup>593</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/30/1923, 2.

<sup>594</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 4/1/1923, Part 1, 1, 2; *Tribune*, 4/3/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>595</sup> For Jarecki's background, see Kantowicz, 196-198. The Edmund Jarecki Papers are held by the University of Illinois Chicago.

<sup>596</sup> For praise of his conduct of the primary, see *Broad Ax*, 3/10/1923, 3.

<sup>597</sup> *Tribune*, 3/27/1923, 12; *Daily News*, 3/28/1923, 3; *Tribune*, 3/30/1923, 4.

recommended going to the polls early in order to avoid becoming a victim of vote fraud and all three parties and various civic organizations sent watchers to monitor the conduct of the vote.<sup>598</sup> Special police were even deployed, in order to prevent violence at the polls.<sup>599</sup> In these ways, the seemingly placidity of the election was challenged, as these fears belied the expectation that not much of excitement would take place.

### **Chaos and Coalition: Election Day in Chicago**

These expectations of violence and chaos on election day were not without merit. In the 14<sup>th</sup> Ward, a near-riot with strong racial overtones took place after whites assaulted a black precinct captain.<sup>600</sup> A couple of kidnappings took place, several people were caught trying to engage in repeat voting, and there were rumors about ballot boxes being stuffed before the polls opened.<sup>601</sup> Moreover, this fraud had some impact: the result of the City Council race in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward were changed when massive fraud by a couple of precinct boards was discovered, resulting in vanishing poll workers and a string of indictments.<sup>602</sup> There was a clear spatial element to this event, with kidnappings in the 27<sup>th</sup>, repeat voters in the 42<sup>nd</sup>, and stuffed ballot boxes in the 4<sup>th</sup>, while outlying areas seem to largely have had an uneventful day. In spite of this, this was considered one of the quietest election days in Chicago history by both Jarecki, who was praised for a job

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<sup>598</sup> *Post*, 3/30/1923, 2; *Daily News*, 4/2/1923, 1, 4; *Daily News*, 4/3/1923, 1.

<sup>599</sup> *American*, 4/3/1923, 1, 4.

<sup>600</sup> *Daily News*, 4/3/1923, 1; *Herald and Examiner*, 4/4/1923, 4.

<sup>601</sup> In addition to the previous citations, see *Post*, 4/3/1923, 1; *Tribune*, 4/4/1923, 6.

<sup>602</sup> *Daily News*, 4/7/1923, 3; *American*, 4/7/1923, Second Edition, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 4/8/1923, Part 1, 5.

well done, and Medill McCormick.<sup>603</sup> Overall, this serves to demonstrate the fervor around elections in Chicago, as events that in other cities would have been considered serious were mild by local standards.

William E. Dever won the election in a landslide, receiving the second-largest plurality in Chicago history and 54% of the total vote.<sup>604</sup> Examined ward by ward, Dever's success came as the direct result of being able to unite Catholic, Jewish, and African-American votes, especially in the core of the city. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wards, then the core of Chicago's African-American community, Dever had a particular triumph, carrying the 2nd by better than a 2 to 1 margin and becoming a rare Democratic candidate carrying these wards.<sup>605</sup> This success was focused on the top of the ticket, as the Republican candidates for City Clerk and City Treasurer had the usual Republican performance in these wards, and demonstrates the inability of Arthur Lueder to appeal to African-American voters: his image as being a candidate backed by forces hostile to the African-American community, when combined with the strong grassroots efforts for Dever and the lack of political backing within the community, doomed his campaign.<sup>606</sup> The Dever campaign's push for votes in Hyde Park was mixed in success: in the 4th, which included both African-Americans and a substantial upper-class Jewish population

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<sup>603</sup> *Tribune*, 4/4/1923, 6.

<sup>604</sup> As with the primary election, I have not obtained the official results for the general election. Schmidt did, but there are clear errors in either his transcription or their publication. The various newspapers on 4/4/1923 published results, and these results (which come from the official police count) have served as my main source for the following pages, unless otherwise cited.

<sup>605</sup> For comments on this being unusual, see *Herald and Examiner*, 4/4/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>606</sup> For post-election commentary by the African-American press explaining this in these terms, see *Broad Ax*, 4/7/1923, 1; *Broad Ax*, 4/7/1923, 2; *Defender*, 4/7/1923, 1.

in Kenwood, Lueder won very narrowly due to African-American crossover to Dever, but managed to the upper-class Protestant 5th and 6<sup>th</sup> by substantial margins in spite of the strong campaign of independents for Dever.<sup>607</sup> In the rest of the South Side, a class split was present: Dever narrowly carried the 7th, which combined the upper-class South Shore community with industrial South Chicago, and the 10th, which contained many of Chicago's steel mills and a large Slavic population, while Lueder carried the 8th and 9th, both wards where Millard had been strong in the Republican primary, resulting in the charge that Lueder carried these on religious grounds.<sup>608</sup> In these ways, a pattern was set: Dever had limited success in spite of major campaign efforts among middle and upper-class Protestants, but swept the ethnic working-class of Chicago.

Elsewhere in Chicago, the failure of Lueder to gain support from working-class ethnic voters became increasing severe. On the Southwest Side, Lueder was only able to carry the 17th in Englewood bordering Hyde Park, and the 19th in Beverly on the southwestern-most part of the city, both populated by well-to-do Protestants, while only receiving as much as 40% of the vote in the normally Republican neighborhoods of Chicago Lawn (16<sup>th</sup>) and Ashland (18<sup>th</sup>) and losing by as much as an 8 to 1 margin in such working-class Catholic areas as Bridgeport (11<sup>th</sup>) and Back of the Yards (13<sup>th</sup>).<sup>609</sup> In all of these cases, Lueder's performance reflects a general inability of the Republican

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<sup>607</sup> Indeed, his status as carrying the 4<sup>th</sup> would only be determined days later, as the reporting immediately after the election credited Dever as carrying the ward. (*Tribune*, 4/8/1923, 3) All commentary on class and populations in the wards is rooted in the same sources cited earlier concerning the results of the Republican primary.

<sup>608</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 4/4/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>609</sup> For Republican strength in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18th under different circumstances, see *Tribune*, 11/6/1924, 2.



ticket to crossover to working-class Catholic voters, as his running mates also lost by large margins. This was even more visible in the heavily Democratic West Side: his performance was poor even by normal Republican standards, as he failed to carry a single ward, only obtained more than 40% of the vote in the 28<sup>th</sup>, and lost badly in such wards associated with his supporters as the 21<sup>st</sup>, home to Charles V. Barrett, the 27<sup>th</sup>, home to Homer K. Galpin (who was in some circles regarded as being among the last Republicans strongly backing Lueder on election day), and the 29<sup>th</sup>, home to Robert E. Crowe.<sup>610</sup> That his crossover difficulties were not limited to Catholics was demonstrated in the 24<sup>th</sup>, containing heavily Jewish Lawndale, where Dever won by a 4 to 1 margin. Overall, these wards were the ones in which Dever made his majority, as he received massive support from the working-class ethnic voters of these wards.

There were three North Sides, in terms of class and ethnic composition, resulting in three different voting patterns. The 31<sup>st</sup> through 34<sup>th</sup> Wards along the Chicago River contained the areas Dever had represented on the City Council, and were working-class and heavily Polish by 1923.<sup>611</sup> Dever's performance in this part of the city resembled that on the West Side or the working-class sections of the Southwest Side, as he received a 2 to 1 margin in each of these wards. The Northwest Side, largely populated by middle-class Protestant homeowners, was much more favorable for Lueder: he lost only the 38<sup>th</sup>, which resembled the wards just south of it in its large Polish population, and the 39<sup>th</sup>, containing the Belmont areas of the city, and in neither case was his defeat as severe as it

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<sup>610</sup> For Barrett, Galpin, and Crowe in these wards, see *Tribune*, 4/14/1926, 1, 6.

<sup>611</sup> For Dever's association with these areas, see *Daily News*, 3/8/1923, 4; *American*, 3/28/1923, Second Edition, 4.

was on the West Side. In the rest of the Northwest Side, two factors seem to have aided Lueder: his German heritage and fraternal associations seems to have gained him support, especially in the heavily German 35th and 36th Wards, while Klan sympathies especially aided in the 37<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup>, both wards where the Klan was a major issue in the City Council races, and where he had his best citywide performances.<sup>612</sup> The Lakefront and Ravenswood portions of the city were probably the most consistently Republican area in the years leading up to 1923. Once again, ethnic factors played a role: Lueder lost the 42<sup>nd</sup> (divided between upper-class areas along the lake and working-class Italians in the west) by a 2 to 1 margin and the 43<sup>rd</sup> (which had a similar west-east split) and 45<sup>th</sup> by narrower margins, but carried the rest of this area, with a particularly strong showing in the heavily German 47<sup>th</sup>.<sup>613</sup> Once again, limitations to the Dever appeals for independent Republicans were present: while Lueder's vote was lower than the Republican average, particularly in Dever's home ward of the 49<sup>th</sup>, this was not enough to carry any of these wards. Overall, the North Side epitomizes the nature of the ethnic and class divisions in 1923 Chicago politics, as Dever did best among working-class ethnic voters and worse among upper-class Protestant voters.

William Cunnea's performance demonstrates how ethnic politics proved stronger than class politics in 1923 Chicago. While he did not perform as well as the *Tribune* and *American* polls suggested, he managed to double the Socialist vote of 1919, receiving

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<sup>612</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 4/4/1923, 1, 2; *Daily News*, 4/4/1923, 1, 3. For the 37<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> as having Lueder's best performances, see *Tribune*, 4/4/1923, 1, 2. For the Klan as an issue in these wards, see *Herald and Examiner*, 4/3/1923, 5.

<sup>613</sup> For a sociological study of this area of the city, see Harvey Warren Zorbaugh, *Gold Coast and the Slum: A Sociological Study of Chicago's Near North Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929).

over 5% of the vote.<sup>614</sup> Cunnea did not have consistent support among working-class voters: African-Americans, for example, gave him virtually no support, and he had mixed support in the most industrial wards of the city, receiving close to 10% among the Pullman wards in the 9<sup>th</sup> but only 6% in the 10<sup>th</sup> and less than 4% in the 7<sup>th</sup>, home of Chicago's steel mills. Even in areas in close proximity, the Cunnea vote was affected by ethnic preferences: he received close to 9% in the heavily-Bohemian 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Wards but only 5% among the working-class Jews in the neighboring 24<sup>th</sup> Ward in spite of strong support from the heavily Jewish Amalgamated Clothing Workers union.<sup>615</sup> Ultimately, Cunnea's largest consistent base of support came from German voters, with his best percentages of the vote coming in the 34<sup>th</sup> (16%), 35<sup>th</sup> (13%), and 36<sup>th</sup> (11%), all wards with large German populations. Cunnea also did better than his citywide showing throughout the Northwest Side and in the German neighborhoods of the 45<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Wards on the North Side. In certain respects, this parallels where Socialists had historically received electoral support in Chicago: Socialists were elected to the Illinois House in 1912 and 1914 from these sections of the city.<sup>616</sup> However, it does reflect a failure of the Cunnea campaign: in spite of efforts to mobilize voters on class issues, those related to ethnicity proved most important to voters even when considering a candidate offering class politics, explaining how he had underperformed relative to polling.

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<sup>614</sup> *Daily Drivers Journal*, 4/4/1923, 3.

<sup>615</sup> For this backing, see *Herald and Examiner*, 3/17/1923, 4; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/24/1923, 5.

<sup>616</sup> For these results, see *Tribune*, 11/7/1912, 3; *Tribune*, 11/5/1914, 4.

The status of the 1923 election as being an ethnic vote is made further apparent in calculations of citywide voting divisions. In his study of ethnicity in Chicago politics in the first third of the century, John Allswang estimated that Dever received 82% of the Lithuanian vote, 80% of the Italian vote, 76% of the Bohemian and Polish votes, 57% of the Jewish vote, 53% of the African-American vote, and 52% of the Yugoslav vote. In contrast, Lueder managed to receive 55% of the German, 57% of the “Native American”, and 58% of the Swedish vote. These precise numbers have been challenged, on the grounds that Allswang’s methodology was not precise enough to keep other voters out of his tabulations.<sup>617</sup> However, other calculations of votes for specific ethnicities, if anything, have suggested even more notable ethnic polarization: Edward Kantowicz estimated 83% of the Polish vote for Dever, while Edward Mazur noted the unpopularity of Lueder among Eastern European Jews.<sup>618</sup> There was also a clear contrast between ethnic divisions for Dever and those for previous Democratic candidates: Carter Harrison II had carried the Swedish and German votes on his way to victory in 1911, and Dever actually lost ground somewhat among Germans compared to Robert Sweitzer’s performance in 1919.<sup>619</sup> Looking at these results in the aggregate, it is apparent that Dever’s success came by being able to vastly improve Democratic performance among

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<sup>617</sup> For one of these critiques, see Kristi Andersen, *The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 117.

<sup>618</sup> Kantowicz, 145; Mazur, 272-274.

<sup>619</sup> This material is taken from Allswang, *A House for All People*, and is noted with the caveat that his methodology might be even more suspect for earlier elections. However, various other scholars (Hoffman, 15, 27; Finegold, 59, 61; Mazur, 157, 242, 252-253; Kantowicz, 138, 142) point to these basic points being accurate, making it seem safe to use the general implication of Allswang, if not necessarily his precise numbers.

African-Americans, Italians, Poles, and Eastern European Jews compared to Sweitzer's performance in both 1915 and 1919. In contrast, his much-vaunted efforts to appeal to independent voters through the auspices of Ickes, Merriam, and Robins was more mixed: the voters who had backed Maclay Hoyne over two organization candidates in 1919 appear to have split their votes when faced with two reform candidates in 1923, resulting in the two-party vote staying the same, but their backing, while not electing Dever, still boosted his margin of victory and, by forcing Lueder to concentrate on keeping middle-class voter support, enable Dever to secure ethnic support.<sup>620</sup> Overall, these calculations citywide serve to confirm the ward evidence involving ethnic divisions deciding the 1923 election.

There were other races decided in the 1923 general election, of relevance for understanding Chicago political broadly. In the case of the other two citywide offices, City Clerk and City Treasurer, the results were largely followed the coattails of the mayoral election: while there were differences in voting (most notably the African-American vote), these did not ultimately result in substantial overall differences citywide.<sup>621</sup> The twenty run-off elections held for City Council, however, tell considerably different stories. One of these was a continued Democratic landslide: twelve of these races went to Democrats, including eleven of the sixteen races where a Democratic and Republican candidate were facing each other, resulting ultimately in

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<sup>620</sup> This comment is based on Allswang's calculation for the Lueder/Dever split equaling that for Thompson/Sweitzer in 1919. As he was not including Hoyne in these calculations, it would seem that reasonable to assume that a Hoyne swing in one direction or another would have had a more visible impact.

<sup>621</sup> *Daily News*, 4/4/1923, 5, for example, demonstrates that the only wards the Republican candidates carried that Lueder lost were the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

thirty-seven Democrats being elected to the new City Council, in contrast to thirty-two wards carried by Dever.<sup>622</sup> The Municipal Voters' League, long after its peak and with the Hearst press loudly in contempt, still held some real strength: thirteen of the twenty candidates preferred or endorsed by the MVL won, including seven cases where a Democratic candidate was elected in a ward Lueder carried with MVL support.<sup>623</sup> At the same time, limitations to MVL strength were apparent: they backed the losing candidate in all three races between Republicans and in five of eight races on the South and Southwest Sides, pointing to the MVL being strongest in outlying areas of the city in cases of close two-party competition.<sup>624</sup>

Other points become notable in examining the City Council results. In the 8<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, and 40<sup>th</sup> Wards, the Ku Klux Klan was an issue: Klan members Hjalmer Ekstromer and Sophus E. Richards had made the run-off in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup>, John P. Garner had been a notorious Klan defender in the 37<sup>th</sup>, and Charles Reuss was charged with having the Klan's backing in the 39<sup>th</sup>.<sup>625</sup> In each of these elections, the candidate associated with the Klan lost, including three cases where this elected a Democratic candidate in a ward carried by Lueder.<sup>626</sup> This suggests that the February primary was the

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<sup>622</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 4/4/1923, 1, 2; *Daily News*, 4/4/1923, 5.

<sup>623</sup> For the MVL endorsements, see *Daily News*, 3/23/1923, 4; *Daily News*, 3/26/1923, 7. MVL-endorsed or preferred candidates won in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup>, and lost in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, and 47<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>624</sup> Of these run-offs, the 17<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, and 47<sup>th</sup> were between two Republicans, and the 32<sup>nd</sup> between two Democrats, with all others being between a Republican and Democrat.

<sup>625</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 3/30/1923, 2; *Herald and Examiner*, 4/3/1923, 5; *Daily News*, 4/4/1923, 5.

<sup>626</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, 4/4/1923, 1, 2, claims that the Garner loss came in spite of his having 2000 members of the Klan campaigning for him on election day.

high-water mark for the Klan as a political force in Chicago: in the months to come, the Klan rapidly collapsed in connection with the exposure of member identities.<sup>627</sup> Similarly notable was the fate of politicians loyal to William Hale Thompson: five of the candidates in the run-offs (including Garner) were regarded as staunch Thompson loyalists on the City Council, while a sixth was serving as Harbor Master.<sup>628</sup> All six of these candidates lost, while all four incumbents in run-offs seen as anti-Thompson managed to win reelection.<sup>629</sup> When combined with the results in February, the City Council had largely been cleared of staunch Thompson backers, with the aldermen from the African-American 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wards, demonstrating the continued loyalty of African-Americans to Thompson, being the most notable exceptions.<sup>630</sup> In the aggregate, these results also suggest different responses to Thompsonism as an issue based on ethnicity: in the heavily Polish and Italian 31<sup>st</sup> Ward, pro-Thompson Alderman Thomas Devereux lost by only a narrow margin in spite of the Dever landslide, while peers of his were defeated in outlying wards with Protestant residents even as Lueder carried them. Overall, the results of the City Council elections demonstrate the continued importance of reform in terms of this election, and that it had not been regarded as simply a citywide issue.

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<sup>627</sup> For this post-election collapse, see Jackson, 112-126 *passim*.

<sup>628</sup> Pro-Thompson incumbents were Scott M. Hogan (16<sup>th</sup>), Benjamin S. Wilson (19<sup>th</sup>), Thomas P. Devereaux (31<sup>st</sup>), and Edward R. Armitage (41<sup>st</sup>), with Harbor Master James J. McComb running in the 35<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>629</sup> Winning anti-Thompson incumbents were Charles Scribner Eaton (5<sup>th</sup>), Joseph Higgins Smith (32<sup>nd</sup>), Frank J. Link (48<sup>th</sup>), and Eli A. Frankenthaler (49<sup>th</sup>).

<sup>630</sup> Indeed, *Daily News*, 4/4/1923, 5, identified Louis B. Anderson (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Robert R. Jackson (3<sup>rd</sup>) as being two of only three survivors.

In this discussion, there is one issue that complicates interpreting this election. This study has focused on the voters who participated in the 1923 election. However, many residents of Chicago did not: in their study of the subject of voter participation, Charles Merriam and Harold Gosnell noted 700,000 who were eligible to vote and did not, almost as many as who did, and engaged in substantial interviews with those that did not to understand why.<sup>631</sup> There was a distinctive gendered division to voting: 64% of all men voted, but only 36% of all women.<sup>632</sup> Ethnicity also affected turnout: German, Italian, Polish, and Jewish women had lower turnouts than average, while Russian Jewish, Bohemian, Italian, and Polish men participated above the average, suggesting that part of the Dever landslide was the product of obtaining this difference in turnout.<sup>633</sup> Non-voters were more common among those over forty, and tended to be newcomers rather than long-term residents.<sup>634</sup> Notably, many of the reasons why potential voters did not vote related directly to elements of this election. Many Republicans were disgruntled by the upheaval present in the party and responded by not voting, especially African-Americans who had been loyal to Thompson and did not trust Lueder.<sup>635</sup> Italian voters who had backed Bernard Barasa refused to vote when he lost in the primary, and some

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<sup>631</sup> Charles Edward Merriam and Harold Foote Gosnell, *Non-Voting: Causes and Methods of Control* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 5-6. In addition to this book, materials related to this study are located in the Harold Gosnell Papers, Joseph Reigenstein Library, University of Chicago.

<sup>632</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 7.

<sup>633</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 25-26.

<sup>634</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 29-32.

<sup>635</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 135, 138-140.



who had failed to obtain jobs for political work responded by not participating.<sup>636</sup> The perspective that Dever was going to win in a landslide discouraged many from participated, further aided by Democratic precinct captains who found it advantageous to not encourage voter turnout.<sup>637</sup> Cunnea's underperformance in the vote compared to the polls can be found in the disgruntlement of many Socialists, who responded to negative experiences over the previous years by refusing to participate.<sup>638</sup> There are hints of racial suppression, with white Democrats working to keep African-American Republicans from voting and African-Americans being afraid to vote out of fear that white election officials would change their vote.<sup>639</sup> Some found Chicago politics confusing, while others did not trust the Chicago press, of significance in a race where both major candidates were regarded as being influenced by newspapers.<sup>640</sup> Finally, the racial and religious issues that had emerged late in the campaign seem to have had an impact in discouraging participation, rather than switching voter support.<sup>641</sup> When aggregated, all of these indicate a complication in analyzing this election. It is clear that reform was of broad importance to those that did participate in the election: Dever, Lueder, and Cunnea all offered different varieties of reform, with voter response to the excesses of William Hale Thompson present on the citywide level and in the wards. However, the high levels of

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<sup>636</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 131-132, 141.

<sup>637</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 146, 203-204.

<sup>638</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 147, 152-153.

<sup>639</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 107-108, 120.

<sup>640</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 191-192, 193-194.

<sup>641</sup> Merriam and Gosnell, 173-174, 206-207.

non-participation indicate the limitations of this, as for many this message was not enough to merit their participation in the political process. This also indicates another issue in considering electoral politics generally, as this sort of non-participation is a constant issue, but one largely not as well documented as by Merriam and Gosnell.

### **The Fall of William Dever**

The sweeping success that reform had in the 1923 election did not last: just four years later, William Dever lost an even greater landslide to William Hale Thompson, who had been regarded as being on the political scrap heap. In understanding this shift in public opinion, there has been an assumption that it was a negative response to reform, either with the public tiring of reform or foes of Dever within the Democratic Party betraying him in the general election.<sup>642</sup> The latter is not particularly feasible, as the political organizations of the late 1920s lacked the needed strength, while the former understanding is technically true but missing a key detail. Looking at Dever's activities as mayor in comparison to his campaign stances in 1923, it becomes clear that much of what he did in office did not correspond to what he had implicitly or explicitly claimed in 1923. Dever was not betrayed or rejected for supporting reform; rather, what happened was that Dever in office delivered a far different reform program than the Dever who ran for office had supported. In this way, they rejected Dever's stances as being too similar to

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<sup>642</sup> For claims of betrayal, see Dobyns, 72-73; Dianne Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 45; Gottfried, 152; for Chicago voters tiring of reform, see Thurner, Ch. 8 *passim*; Bukowski, 179-187 *passim*; Simpson, 72-73; Kantowicz, 45-48. Schmidt, 167-170, dismissed the suggestion that it related to fixing, and leans towards a failure to appeal on ethnic grounds.

the reform program they rejected when voting against Lueder, rather than having changed their minds on reform.

The issue that most affected Dever was one that neither he nor Lueder emphasized much in 1923: while Dever made anti-vice and pro-civic morality pledges in his campaign for mayor, he said little directly on Prohibition, and was unclear as to what degree he would enforce prohibition laws.<sup>643</sup> In office, he fulfilled his campaign for an anti-vice crusade, shifting from such forms of commercialized vice as prostitution and gambling into an anti-liquor campaign.<sup>644</sup> This campaign further shifted from distributors and manufacturers to private possession, with Dever's Liquor Squad compiling substantial files monitoring consumption in private homes.<sup>645</sup> While resulting in substantial praise for Dever nationally, this alienated the residents of Chicago, who considered these activities intrusive and in violation of their personal liberty.<sup>646</sup> This also went against popular opinion: no areas in the city consistently backed Prohibition, and the working-class Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans who elected Dever in 1923 were even more opposed than Chicagoans overall.<sup>647</sup> Moreover, by 1926 it was clear Dever's campaign had failed: residents of Chicago had no problem getting liquor, and the chief

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<sup>643</sup> For Dever claiming opposition to blue laws, see *Herald and Examiner*, 1/23/1923, 1, 3; *Tribune*, 2/2/1923, 5; *Herald and Examiner*, 3/22/1923, 5.

<sup>644</sup> For an early sign that he would enforce Prohibition, see *Post*, 4/18/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>645</sup> Materials concerning the Liquor Squad are in the William Dever Papers at the Chicago History Museum, and it is clear from these papers that the Liquor Squad was engaged both in this form of monitoring, and that it involved private consumption.

<sup>646</sup> For critiques in the press, see *New Majority*, 9/8/1923, 4; *Chicago Citizen*, 9/28/1923, 5; *Tolerance*, 12/7/1924, 2. For praise, see Schmidt, 89.

<sup>647</sup> Gosnell, *Machine Politics*, 144-149.

effects of the Dever campaign was to make bootleggers move to the near suburbs of the city and engage in more violent activity in order to maintain their position.<sup>648</sup> As a result, Dever was associated with a policy that failed in its intended goals and alienated most of his original backers. By 1926, Dever had acknowledged this, arguing that Prohibition was a failure and that the existence of a liquor question had made good government impossible by subsuming all other issues.<sup>649</sup> By this point, however, he had already lost considerable support due to his conduct on the subject. As a result, Prohibition became the issue that most strongly symbolized the failure of Dever and of reform in Chicago.

Another issue where Dever's stance shifted between being a candidate and being mayor was the administration of Chicago's public schools. Dever strongly sought the backing of Chicago's schoolteachers to the point where Lueder felt that he could not get a fair hearing from the Chicago Teachers Federation.<sup>650</sup> Dever had some accomplishments, most notably using pre-signed letters to remove virtually the whole old Board of Education.<sup>651</sup> However, his decisions in terms of administration caused problems: William McAndrew, appointed Superintendent by Dever's Board of Education, focused heavily on school efficiency, believing in the establishment of a clear educational hierarchy, and costing Dever the support of the Chicago Teachers Federation by

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<sup>648</sup> Nelli, 217-218; Schmidt, 106, 132-139 *passim*; Peterson, 135-136; Bukowski, 158-162.

<sup>649</sup> Schmidt, 135-136, 138.

<sup>650</sup> *Tribune*, 3/17/1923, 5; *Post*, 3/21/1923, 1, 2.

<sup>651</sup> *American*, 5/18/1923, Second Edition, 1, 2; *Post*, 5/18/1923, 1.

abolishing the teacher councils that were in the school system.<sup>652</sup> He also attempted to introduce intelligence testing, junior high schools, and a shift approach to schooling (known as the platoon system) into Chicago schools, in order to get a more efficient administration of public schools.<sup>653</sup> While resulting in support from upper-class reformers, the working-class of Chicago saw this as introducing class stratification in the schools, with a shift from educating working-class students to training them for industry.<sup>654</sup> As with Prohibition, this was an issue where Dever's strongest supporters in 1923 were in greatest opposition, while Dever's hands-off approach to school administration came across as his endorsement of these actions. In this way, school policy ended up especially damaging, as his actions in office were ones that were not far removed from those backed by the Lueder supporters most antagonistic to the Chicago Teachers Federation.

Another difficult point dealt with the waters of Lake Michigan, who use was heavily contested during the 1920s. Dever pledged to fight for continued control of Lake Michigan water, implicitly backing the continuation of a flat rate for water usage in Chicago.<sup>655</sup> This was ultimately thwarted by the War Department, which used its control of Lake Michigan's water to end unlimited use, forcing the installation of water meters in

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<sup>652</sup> For accounts of McAndrew, see Bukowski, 152-156; Pinderhughes, 185; Schmidt, 104-105; Herrick, 143-144; Hogan, 187-188. For the teacher councils, see *New Majority*, 5/3/1924, 4; Hogan, 220-221; Herrick, 150.

<sup>653</sup> For general accounts of these issues, see Pinderhughes, 192-195; Herrick, Ch.8 *passim*; Hogan, 185-190.

<sup>654</sup> Herrick, 158-160; Hogan, 219-220. For a good account directly from Margaret Haley, see Reid, Ch. 9 *passim*.

<sup>655</sup> *Daily News*, 3/17/1923, 5.

homes and businesses in Chicago.<sup>656</sup> In addition to being an about-face on the issue, this stance hurt Dever in other regards: metering water was regarded as causing health hazards by discouraging the use of water and as costlier to implement than any new revenue generation. Moreover, this was especially unpopular with working-class Chicagoans who were faced with devices that resembled industrial time clocks, which they rejected on symbolic grounds.<sup>657</sup> As a result, Dever was stuck implementing a policy that no one in Chicago particularly approved of, and which served to alienate his base further.

The most important change in Dever's stance between his candidacy and office concerned municipal ownership of traction lines. Dever had made this his key issue in 1923, and he had an image as pro-municipal ownership since his fighting the Settlement Ordinances with Dunne. Moreover, with the expiration of existing streetcar franchises in 1927, this would seem the perfect time to resolve the matter. Dever, however, was faced with the issue of how to finance such a purchase: the city had not saved up enough money to buy outright, and debt limits made it impossible to borrow the needed funds. In late 1924, Dever came up with a solution in which, in exchange for municipal ownership, streetcars fares would rise and banks would share operation with the city for a forty-year period.<sup>658</sup> These terms were vastly unpopular: Thompson and Dunne joined in the campaign against them, and, when placed for a vote in 1925, both outlying areas and the

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<sup>656</sup> Thurner, 276-277; Mazur, 275; Lewis Ethan Ellis, *A History of the Chicago Delegation in Congress, 1843-1925* (n.p.: Springfield?, 1931), 70-71.

<sup>657</sup> For this point being raised, see Bukowski, 184.

<sup>658</sup> For this plan, see Schmidt, 119-120.

core voted against these proposals.<sup>659</sup> Ultimately, public ownership would not come into being until the 1940s, and would come about only by creating a metropolitan district after the private traction companies went bankrupt. This meant that Dever both failed to deliver on the issue he had focused on the most in 1923 and came across as betraying his original principles, further alienating his original supporters.

Paralleling his shifting stances on the issues were shifting relationships with the working-class Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans who had backed him in 1923. On the one hand, Dever attempted to use patronage powers to appease these groups by giving them recognition in appointments to public office.<sup>660</sup> However, he also engaged in actions that seemed designed to alienate these groups. The Chicago police aided federal deportation raids, particularly affecting the Mexican and Italian communities of Chicago and increasing the image of Dever's police department as unfriendly to working-class Chicagoans.<sup>661</sup> Dever tended to blame ethnic communities on the West Side generally and Italians specifically with problems in Prohibition enforcement, openly baiting the part of the city that most strongly supported him in 1923 and an ethnic group that had been among the most supportive. In these ways, Dever offended the constituents that had backed him in 1923, while at the same time increasingly appealed to the upper-class

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<sup>659</sup> Schmidt, 123; Gosnell, *Machine Politics*, 142-143; Morton, 123. Schmidt, 127-129, chooses to interpret this as being a political mixture of Republicans embarrassing Dever and Democrats objecting to his stance on Prohibition. However, he offers no real evidence for this claim, and it seems to have more to do with a desire to imagine Dever in the best possible light than based on the facts.

<sup>660</sup> Schmidt, 102.

<sup>661</sup> Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 76; Immigrants' Protective League Records, University of Illinois Chicago.

Protestants that had opposed him. Most notable of these turns was that towards the African-American community: having won their support in 1923 by being respectful to their political interests, he had respected them in office, granting appointments beyond what they had received in prior Democratic administrations.<sup>662</sup> When 1927 came around, Dever abandoned this rapprochement when faced with the issue of maintaining support among working-class whites.<sup>663</sup> To try to keep this following, the Dever campaign engaged in race baiting, with George Brennan calling Chicago “a white man’s town” in an effort to hold both working-class and upper-class white support.<sup>664</sup> This campaign cost Dever his African-American support: less than 10% of voters in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> wards backed him in 1927, and other wards with large African-American populations similarly had massive declines in support.<sup>665</sup> Moreover, this campaign was ineffective at gaining him white support, especially among working-class whites. In doing this, Dever demonstrated that he would break his own political coalition if it seemed expedient to do so, undermining his image as someone who could build ethnic coalitions.

### **The Ethnics Strike Back: 1927**

The political consequences of these actions were reflected in the 1927 election results: twenty-nine of Chicago’s fifty wards swung against Dever by at least 10% of the

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<sup>662</sup> For contemporary press coverage of this, see *Broad Ax*, 5/12/1923, 1.

<sup>663</sup> For the planning involved in this, see the William Dever Papers, Chicago History Museum.

<sup>664</sup> For Brennan’s remarks, see Hoffman, 37-38; Thurner, 261. For general acknowledgement of race-baiting as a Dever campaign tactic in 1927, see Reed, 160; Bukowski, 180-182; Allswang, *Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters*, 102; Nelli, 228-229; Guglielmo, 98-99; Kantowicz, 148-149.

<sup>665</sup> All commentary on the vote totals in 1927 are based on *Tribune*, 4/6/1927, 1, which has the advantage over Schmidt of including third-party votes.



vote.<sup>666</sup> John Allswang estimated that citywide Dever went from receiving 53% to 7% of the African-American vote, 80% to 42% of the Italian vote, 76% to 54% of the Polish vote, and 76% to 59% of the Bohemian vote between 1923 and 1927.<sup>667</sup> Results in individual wards suggest some accuracy to Allswang's estimates: in the heavily African-American 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, he lost close to 63% of the vote; in the Polish/Italian 31<sup>st</sup>, he lost 41%; in the Polish 33<sup>rd</sup>, 33%; in the Italian 28<sup>th</sup>, 22%. While some ethnic wards (like the Italian and African-American 1<sup>st</sup> and the Polish 38<sup>th</sup>) held better for Dever, there was a consistent tendency for the working-class ethnic wards of the West Side, South Side, and North Side to swing the most against Dever. Moreover, this decline was specifically focused against Dever: outside the Black Belt, only four wards in which Dever had a substantial decline in 1927 elected Republicans to the City Council, while two wards simultaneously rejected Dever and incumbent Republicans.<sup>668</sup> Finally, the broadness of this eliminates it being a product of knifing by party foes, as this took place in many areas where such foes had limited influence. Overall, Dever's actions in office led to his rejection by working-class ethnic voters, as demonstrated by the ward-level results.

In addition to losing working-class ethnic support, Dever failed in his efforts to gain the support of middle-class and upper-class Protestants. Dever in 1927 continued to run the campaign for independent and Republican voters that he ran in 1923, making

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<sup>666</sup> The wards in question were the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 42<sup>nd</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, and 45<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>667</sup> Allswang, *Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters*, 105; Allswang, *A House for All People*.

<sup>668</sup> Electing Republicans were the 26<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, and 45<sup>th</sup>, while incumbent Republicans lost in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

positive appeals to his record and negative ones towards that of Thompson.<sup>669</sup> However, this had a limited impact: Allswang estimates that Dever's support among "Native Americans" (that is, non-ethnic Protestants) only grew from 43% to 55%, his support among Swedes and Germans dropped from 42% and 45% to 38% and 37%, and his total Jewish vote fell from 57% to 39%, as any gains among higher-income German Jews were negated by his losing Eastern European Jewish support.<sup>670</sup> Dever gained in only twelve of the fifty wards of Chicago, concentrated among the lakefront and northwestern and southeastern fringes of the city that backed Lueder in 1923, and his largest gain of almost 13% in the 49<sup>th</sup> was smaller than the swing against him in twenty-three wards.<sup>671</sup> In these ways, the gains that Dever did make were nowhere near sufficient to replace the vote he lost, and served chiefly to symbolize how he ended up appeal to past Lueder voters more than his 1923 constituents.

Looking at the rest of the campaign, how Dever failed in 1927 become even clearer. Anti-Thompson Republicans lacked a clear candidate of their own, being left to run Edward R. Litsinger in 1927 by default.<sup>672</sup> Once again, Litsinger ran a chiefly negative campaign, replacing the anti-Lueder message he had in 1923 with an anti-Thompson message even in the face of recent election results that suggested that

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<sup>669</sup> For examples of the 1927 Dever campaign, see Schmidt, 158-159; Thurner, 277-278; Flanagan, *Seeing with Their Hearts*, 156; Hoffman, 40.

<sup>670</sup> Mazur, 282-283, confirms this division among Eastern Europe and German Jews, but his lack of statistics for 1923 limits the ability to made clear comparisons.

<sup>671</sup> Wards that swung to Dever in 1927 were the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup>. All twelve of these wards were carried by Lueder in 1923, and, even with these swings, Thompson still outpolled Dever in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>672</sup> Bukowski, 182-183; Schmidt, 154; Hoffman, 32.

Thompson's following had recovered from four years earlier.<sup>673</sup> Ultimately, Thompson won renomination by close to two-thirds of the vote, carrying even such previous reform bastions as Hyde Park.<sup>674</sup> Moreover, the anti-Thompson Republicans made up with him after the primary, with even Charles Deneen, seen as the leading anti-Thompson figure by 1927, campaigning for him.<sup>675</sup> Further being of no aid to Dever was the one Republican faction that was anti-Thompson in 1927: Fred Lundin had broken his relations with Thompson after being indicted in 1923, and from his position as Chicago patronage director for Governor Len Small ran John Dill Robertson, a longtime figure under Thompson, as an independent candidate.<sup>676</sup> In certain regards, Robertson's campaign resembled Dever's in 1923, backing municipal ownership and criticizing Thompson's record, while denouncing Dever for the crime problem that emerged in his administration.<sup>677</sup> Ultimately, Robertson's campaign was not enough to defeat Dever, as the 50,000 votes he won was less than half Thompson's plurality. However, Robertson's performance complicated things for Dever: Robertson fared poorly in most wards that swung away from Dever, but received over 5% of the vote in nine of the twelve wards

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<sup>673</sup> Hoffman, 32-33; Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926, passim*; Bukowski, 169; Hoffman, 31-32; O'Reilly, 41.

<sup>674</sup> Hoffman, 34.

<sup>675</sup> Schmidt, 162; Hoffman, 40; Thurner, 266-267.

<sup>676</sup> For Lundin's post-1923 career, see Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 21-22; Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 180-181; Bukowski, 164; Zink, 289-290; Schmidt, 151, 152. For the Robertson campaign, see Bukowski, 182-183; Schmidt, 161-162; Peterson, 136; O'Reilly, 80-81.

<sup>677</sup> Hoffman, 42-43.

where Dever increased his vote between 1923 and 1927.<sup>678</sup> This demonstrated a limitation of Dever's campaigning against Thompson, as many voters who could not stomach Thompson also could not support Dever. It also demonstrated a larger problem with Dever's plans, as Chicago's Republicans ended up being far more united in 1927 than his plans were anticipating.

Thompson proved to be very effective at using the problems of the Dever administration in the most damaging ways possible. Dever's school issues are a case in point: rather than directly discuss the disputes between teachers and McAndrew or the class elements of McAndrew's school plans, he focused on textbook content, charging McAndrew with using textbooks with a British bias.<sup>679</sup> In using this tactic, he used "America First" appeals that had aided him since the 1910s, while at the same time appealing to ethnic nationalism by focusing on ethnic groups, such as the Irish, Germans, and Poles, who either had latent anti-British feelings or whom felt left out of the textbook.<sup>680</sup> Even more notable was Thompson's use of symbolism: by using this line of attack, Thompson managed to tap into sentiments about school administration being rotten without having to take a clear stance on substantial matters, against a target in McAndrew who through his elitist reputation and his lack of clear ties to Chicago was a

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<sup>678</sup> These wards were the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>679</sup> For the textbook attacks, see Hoffman, 38-39; Schmidt, 154-155; Herrick, 167; Merriam, 86, 290-291.

<sup>680</sup> For Thompson's use of America First, see Bukowski, 195; Forthal, 53; Allswang, *Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters*, 102-103; Kantowicz, 146-147; Karl, 96-97; Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926, passim*. For this ethnic element, see Hoffman, 44-45; Thurner, 262-263.

tempting target for such an attack.<sup>681</sup> As a result, Thompson gained support from the Chicago Teachers Federation and from ethnic voters while at the same time avoided alienating middle-class homeowners, thereby limiting Dever's room to maneuver on this issue.

This use of Dever's failings against him was one used by Thompson in various regards. By taking a strong stance against water meters, Thompson took the popular side of the issue while leaving Dever to argue an unpopular position.<sup>682</sup> In traction matters, Thompson managed to gain support by straphangers by fighting for a five-cent fair and vaguely supporting municipal ownership, while at the same time was able to maintain the support of Samuel Insull, who had opposed Dever's municipal ownership plans and is believed to have been one of Thompson's chief financial backers.<sup>683</sup> In this way, Thompson kept to past political practices, as he had never been a particularly ideological candidate and was long willing to change stances on issues for political advantage.<sup>684</sup> This style also had the advantage of him gaining the support of alienated former Dever backers, while at the same time managing to largely keep those who voted Republican in 1923 loyal to the ticket, further limiting Dever's ability to recover the support he lost in office.

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<sup>681</sup> For commentators noting the symbolic elements of these attacks, see Hoffman, 38-39; Kantowicz, 146-147; Merriam, 86-87, 175-176; Taylor, 76.

<sup>682</sup> Thurner, 276-277.

<sup>683</sup> For Thompson's vagueness on traction, see Hoffman, 40-41. For Insull, see Bukowski, 167; Merriam, 198-201. For a charge of his lasting dominance over Thompson, see Paul Y Anderson telegram to Harold L. Ickes, 8/1/1930, Harold L. Ickes Papers, Box 29, Folder 1, Library of Congress.

<sup>684</sup> Bukowski's work on Thompson centers around this premises, and Merriam, 189-190, also notes this.

The epitome of Thompson taking advantage of Dever's mistakes involved his handling of Prohibition and the Dever campaign's race baiting. Thompson took an explicitly anti-Prohibition stance, matching the general stance of the Chicago electorate, and especially focusing on criticism of Dever's search and seizure policy.<sup>685</sup> Thompson further argued that he would shift the police to work against hoodlums, pointing to the ways that crime had increased in Chicago in spite of Dever's enforcement of Prohibition.<sup>686</sup> Ultimately, Dever was trapped: defending his enforcement of Prohibition would cost him further support from opponents of Prohibition, while criticism of it would cost him the support he had gained through law enforcement.<sup>687</sup> Similarly notable was Thompson's reaction to race baiting, as past and prior Chicago politics demonstrates that this issue could have cost him the election.<sup>688</sup> Thompson strongly denounced police raids that had arrested hundreds of African-Americans on dubious vice-related grounds, charging that a police force willing to harass African-Americans would target other ethnic groups next and referring to this as "Cossack" behavior.<sup>689</sup> This approach ended up being very effective among certain white ethnic groups: Italians, who were similarly baited by the Dever campaign, gave Thompson a swing second only to African-

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<sup>685</sup> Schmidt, 155; Allswang, *Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters*, 103; Merriam, 266, 289; Guglielmo, 99-100.

<sup>686</sup> Guglielmo, 104.

<sup>687</sup> Hoffman, 38.

<sup>688</sup> For the deployment of race in 1983, see Pinderhughes, 2-5.

<sup>689</sup> Guglielmo, 99-100; Bukowski, 186.

Americans.<sup>690</sup> This also connected well to opposition to Prohibition, which served as a demonstration of the use of police powers that Thompson was warning could be turned on ethnic Chicago. As a result, working-class whites largely seem not to have been moved by the Dever campaign's race baiting, while a combination of economic and spatial distance seems to have limited its appeal among middle and upper-class whites to the Hyde Park area.<sup>691</sup> Overall, these issues combined to be a way in which Thompson managed to gain support from those Dever had abandoned in office, while resisting efforts to use animosities to prevent this swing.

Thompson's ability to gain support was paralleled by Dever's inability to find any ways to gain votes. After the failure of race baiting, the Dever campaign seems to have had no other way in which to regain working-class white support. His efforts to gain middle-class and upper-class Protestant support, meanwhile, suffered from several problems. His campaign for this support was reliant on 1923 supporters such as Charles Merriam, Harold Ickes, Graham Taylor, and Raymond Robins, who as a group had been unable to swing areas like Hyde Park in 1923 and who generally had either been deteriorating in their political popularity (such as Merriam and Taylor) or who had never really had it (such as Ickes and Robins).<sup>692</sup> Dever's reform backers were not even able to

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<sup>690</sup> For the swing, see Allswang, *A House for All People*; for Italian-baiting by Dever, see Guglielmo, 105.

<sup>691</sup> Kantowicz, 149, argues that this failed among Poles due to a lack of proximity to the Black Belt; for Hyde Park as opposed to African-American settlement, see Robin F. Bachin, *Building The South Side: Urban Space and Civic Culture in Chicago, 1890-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 250-254; Tuttle, Ch.5 *passim*; Philpott, 154-155, 166-167, 178-180, 215-216.

<sup>692</sup> For Merriam's inability to appeal to ethnic voters in 1911, see Finegold, 160-162. For his declining political support in 1919, see Bukowski, 78-79; Hoffman, 21; Karl, 97. Both Ickes's personal papers at the Library of Congress and his autobiography give the impression of him backing a string of losers. For Robins, see Morton, 86-87; McCarthy, 180. For Taylor, see Philpott, 85-88.

build a coherent organization in 1927, splitting their energies among multiple committees.<sup>693</sup> Moreover, upper-class support for Dever seems to have helped alienate the working-class even more, as some of these supporters (such as Landis Award-backing A.A. Sprague) were seen as opposed to their interests.<sup>694</sup> Overall, Dever tried to appeal to an electorate that had been moving out of the city under the basis of a party split that never took place and with leaders who were not as politically able as they assumed, resulting in its failure.

In spite of these issues, Dever actually improved his vote total between 1923 and 1927, going from 390,412 to 432,678 votes. However, the vote of his opponents grew even more: while Lueder had received 285,094 and Cunnea 41,186, Thompson had received 515,716 and Robertson 51,347. In some regards, this related to demographic change in Chicago: the city grew from 2,701,705 to 3,376,438 residents during the 1920s, while naturalization and children becoming adults meant an increased electorate in ethnic Chicago.<sup>695</sup> Just as important was the sense that the 1927 election meant more: the 1923 election was seen by many as a placid race between two men who agreed on most issues, while 1927 served as a direct comparison between past service by Thompson and the current administration of Dever. This led to substantial increases in turnout throughout the city, as even wards where migration and naturalization were not substantial were

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<sup>693</sup> For the splitting of independent Dever backers, see Schmidt, 157-158.

<sup>694</sup> For Sprague and the Landis Award, see Bukowski, 150-152.

<sup>695</sup> The Andersen work contains much about the changes in ethnic political participation in Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s, and, while largely focused on federal elections, still is of great use in understanding these practices.



excited by the turmoil of the campaign.<sup>696</sup> Moreover, this was the start of a general trend, following a national trend towards new voters in urban areas: Edward Kelly would win more votes in a one-sided race in 1935 than all candidates combined in 1923.<sup>697</sup> Ultimately, this increase in voter turnout is key in understanding the realignment of Chicago politics, as this meant a completely new voter base compared to that of prior decades.

### **The Realignment of Chicago Politics**

In the years following 1923, factions in Chicago evolved in several ways. In 1924, Deneen and the remnants of the Thompson and Lundin forces agreed not to fight one another while facing off against the Brundage/McCormick and Barrett/Crowe factions.<sup>698</sup> This arrangement largely failed on the local level, but succeeded very well statewide: Edward Brundage and Medill McCormick were denied renomination, in the latter's case by Charles Deneen.<sup>699</sup> This ended the Brundage/McCormick faction as major players in Chicago Republican politics: Medill McCormick commit suicide in February of 1925, while Brundage lost access to state and federal patronage and reverted to being a figure solely in a few North Side wards.<sup>700</sup> The Barrett/Crowe faction, which controlled most

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<sup>696</sup> In this way, a contrast is found with Andersen, 113, who found federal turnout between 1924 and 1928 highest in ethnic wards, minor in African-American wards, and an actual decline in wards associated with the native born.

<sup>697</sup> Roger Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War: Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984), 39. For the national impact, see Andersen, 31.

<sup>698</sup> Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 19-22.

<sup>699</sup> Ickes, 239; Schmidt, 151.

<sup>700</sup> For the collapse of Brundage, see Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 21-22, 27-28; Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 5-6; Dobyys, 78-80; Merriam, 95; Schmidt, 49.

local offices, quickly rose to becoming the leading Republican faction: in the 1926 primary, a coalition of this faction with Thompson and his personal followers and Brundage's remaining organization defeated the combination of Deneen and Lundin, in a race focusing heavily on American involvement in the World Court.<sup>701</sup> The general election, as in 1922, was a split election, but one where enough important races were one by Republicans to aid the Barrett/Crowe organization's standing.<sup>702</sup> 1927 continued the coalition between Barrett/Crowe and Thompson, and, in the failure of Lundin to beat Thompson, ended his status both as controlling state patronage and as a major player among Chicago Republicans.<sup>703</sup> This success also recreated the Republican binary of 1922: the Deneen faction ended up the de facto anti-Thompson faction, once again creating a climate where opinions on Thompson were the chief ones dividing the party.

Chicago's Democrats experiences a different form of factional reordering during this period. The coalition between Brennan, Harrison, and Dunne in 1923 quickly fell apart, as Harrison and Dunne felt Brennan had excessive influence over the Dever administration in patronage matters.<sup>704</sup> This led to primary challenges backed by Harrison and Dunne in 1924 and 1926, which in both cases led to sweeping victories by Brennan, including Brennan's own nomination to the Senate in 1926.<sup>705</sup> These back-to-back

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<sup>701</sup> Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, covers this election in considerable detail.

<sup>702</sup> *Tribune*, 11/4/1926, 2.

<sup>703</sup> For the decline of Lundin, see Zink, 289-290.

<sup>704</sup> Schmidt, 91-92; Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 33-34; Thurner, 168-169.

<sup>705</sup> Morton, 123-124; Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 54, 161-162; Schmidt, 143.

defeats ended Harrison and Dunne as having any claims for Democratic leadership in Chicago, resulting in the Brennan organization finally securing its status as dominant citywide. However, this organization still had substantial weaknesses, most notably in terms of it being excessively dominated by Irish politicians at the expense of other ethnic groups in Chicago.<sup>706</sup> This had substantial consequences in 1927, as much about Dever's failure to appeal to ethnic voters connects to an organization that had never been much concerned with their incorporation. However, it was still in considerably better position than the Republicans were in terms of a citywide organization, as the Republicans were still organized around a group of leaders with personal followings.

1928 ultimately became the year in which the fortune of both parties in Chicago diverged. Republicans were faced with the "Pineapple Primary," featuring two murders and several bombings, as the Deneen faction fought the Barrett/Crowe, Thompson, and Brundage coalition.<sup>707</sup> In the primary, Deneen forces defeated the slate of Len Small statewide and denied Robert Crowe renomination as States Attorney, while the Barrett/Crowe and Thompson candidates that one nomination lost countywide in the general election.<sup>708</sup> However, their foes had swept virtually every race for ward committee positions, leaving the party apparatus in the hands of pro-Thompson forces.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>706</sup> For Brennan as excessively Irish in candidate slating, see Bukowski, 179; Allswang, *A House for All People*, 152-154.

<sup>707</sup> For accounts of this primary, see Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 165; Gosnell, *Machine Politics*, 37-38; Simpson, 74; Herrick, 171; John Homer Lyle, *The Dry and Lawless Years* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 185-186.

<sup>708</sup> Bukowski, 203-204; Hoffman, 46 ; *Tribune*, 11/8/1928, 4.

<sup>709</sup> *Tribune*, 4/12/1928, 6.

This, however, was a hollow victory: between the loss of state patronage and electoral defeat, there was no longer one pro-Thompson faction, as Barrett and Crowe split into their own factions, Thompson largely withdrew from party affairs, and the forces that were present resembled the coalition around William Lorimer in the 1890s more than the Brennan organization.<sup>710</sup> Among Democrats, 1928 had a different impact: George Brennan died in mid-1928, resulting in fighting for party leadership ultimately won by Cook County Commission President Anton Cermak, who outmaneuvered an Irish faction around Hyde Park political figure Michael Igoe.<sup>711</sup> Under Cermak's leadership, Chicago Democrats expanded ethnically beyond being a predominantly Irish party, demonstrating the possibilities of new ethnic mobilization in 1928 by nearly carrying the city for Al Smith.<sup>712</sup> As a result, the two parties were in wildly different positions as 1928 ended: Republicans were in the same position of factions fighting each other that had been present since the 1890s, while Democrats had formed a citywide organization that had no clear opponents and was making efforts to organize across ethnic lines.

1930 demonstrated this political transition in several regards. The Republican primary once again had Deneen fighting pro-Thompson forces for party control, but with

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<sup>710</sup> Bukowski, 204.

<sup>711</sup> Thurner, 312; Bukowski, 234; Allswang, *A House for All People*, 106; Gottfried, Ch. 10 *passim*. The Gottfried work generally has some issues, such as some rather dated usage of psychobiography, but remains the key work on Cermak, and one using sources no longer available.

<sup>712</sup> For Cermak as forming a new party ethnically, see Bukowski, 233; Gottfried, 172-174. For the 1928 general election, see Thurner, 318-319, 323, 328-329, 333, 338-339.

a variety of other factions, independents, and business slates present in the race.<sup>713</sup> The primary demonstrated the weakness of both sides: Deneen lost renomination to the Thompson-backed Ruth Hanna McCormick, ending his access to federal patronage and damaging his political status further, while the pro-Thompson slate had some more success but was regarded as a collection of personal candidates rather than a unified organization.<sup>714</sup> This was ultimately negated by the results of the general election: Democrats swept all races for county office, with few Republicans even close to being elected.<sup>715</sup> In some cases, this related to factional disputes: McCormick, who had been abandoned by Thompson, opposed by Deneen supporters, had an image of using corrupt means to obtain the nomination, and offended both sides on Prohibition, lost nearly every ward of the city.<sup>716</sup> Most important, however, was that this was the worse Republican showing in sixteen years, and a poor showing caused by voter desertion rather than party splitting. Overall, this led to virtually all patronage in Cook County ending up in Democratic hands, giving them the patronage resources to match their organization.

The combination of continued Republican factionalism in the face of Democratic unity climaxed in 1931. By then, virtually every Republican faction had turned against Thompson, as the combination of his antics in office, the Depression, hints of a

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<sup>713</sup> Gottfried, 195. The pro-Thompson forces were led by Municipal Court Bailiff Bernard W. Snow, County Treasurer George F. Harding, and Board of Review member Charles V. Barrett. For some of the complicated slates, see *Tribune*, 4/6/1930, 1, 8.

<sup>714</sup> Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, 193-194; Bukowski, 229; Dobyms, 88-89.

<sup>715</sup> Gottfried, 197; *Tribune*, 11/6/1930, 2.

<sup>716</sup> Bukowski, 229-230; Allswang, *A House for All People*, 149-150; Hoffman, 46-47; Dobyms, 100-101.

deteriorated mental state, and concerns over the city's image deteriorated his appeal.<sup>717</sup> His former allies, Brundage, John Dill Robertson, and the *Tribune* threw their support to John Homer Lyle, a former pro-Thompson alderman who had gained a reputation on the Municipal Court as a campaigner against crime.<sup>718</sup> Deneen and the *Daily News*, however, refused to back Lyle, instead supporting longtime anti-Thompson alderman Arthur F. Albert.<sup>719</sup> Thompson ran on his personal popularity: while organizations still backed him on the ward level, his last major backer, Homer K. Galpin, spent the campaign out of state avoiding process servers.<sup>720</sup> The combination of split opposition, ward-level support, and a strong personal campaign renominated Thompson, albeit with less than a majority.<sup>721</sup> Cermak, meanwhile, chose to run himself for Mayor, gaining support from many who had opposed Thompson in the Republican primary.<sup>722</sup> Thompson, in desperation, went as far as to openly ethnically-bait Cermak, losing support among the ethnic voters who backed him in 1915 and 1927.<sup>723</sup> Cermak carried 45 wards, with Thompson only holding onto support from African-American and Italian voters.<sup>724</sup>

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<sup>717</sup> Gottfried, 203, 204-205; Bukowski, Ch. 11 *passim*.

<sup>718</sup> Hoffman, 47, 49; Bukowski, 231-232; Gottfried, 203; Gosnell, *Machine Politics*, 165; Dobyns, 105. Lyle's autobiography is of limited use in understanding either the 1931 election or his political career generally, given his focus on crime during Prohibition.

<sup>719</sup> Bukowski, 232; Gottfried, 203; Hoffman, 47.

<sup>720</sup> Lyle, 261-262.

<sup>721</sup> Hoffman, 51.

<sup>722</sup> Allswang, *A House for All People*, 177; Gottfried, 209.

<sup>723</sup> Bukowski, 232; Kantowicz, 152; Gottfried, 205-206; Guglielmo, 108.

<sup>724</sup> Gottfried, 235-236; Hoffman, 57-58.

Moreover, these results were specifically anti-Thompson: Republicans elected a City Treasurer and a Municipal Court Judge as well as a significant minority on the City Council.<sup>725</sup> These results damaged both the pro and anti-Thompson forces: out of office, Thompson was destroyed as a force among Republicans, Deneen both gained an image as a rule or ruin politician and demonstrated limitations to the size of his following, and the feelings around William Hale Thompson that had influenced party divisions since 1915 were made irrelevant.<sup>726</sup> Cermak, meanwhile, gained control over virtually all city and county patronage, entering the position to form a citywide political machine. In this regard, the ability of Democrats to unify ahead of Republicans had a direct impact, as their success in 1931 was the direct product of this different state of organization.

The years following 1931 further resulted in the restructuring of the major parties. The old Republican factional leaders passed from the scene: Charles V. Barrett suffered a fatal heart attack, Robert Crowe focused on judicial patronage, Edward Brundage shot himself, William Hale Thompson went to the political fringe, Fred Lundin retired to Beverly Hills, and Charles Deneen and his followers were increasingly marginalized.<sup>727</sup> Combined with the loss of virtual all patronage between 1928 and 1932, this led to an end for the factions in the Republican Party. Instead, the party grew united around concepts of it being in opposition to dominant Democrats on all levels of government: Crowe and

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<sup>725</sup> *Tribune*, 4/8/1931, 3, 5.

<sup>726</sup> Bukowski, 253; Dobyms, 104.

<sup>727</sup> *Tribune*, 1/1/1932, 1, 18; *Tribune*, 1/20/1958, 14; *Tribune*, 1/21/1934, 1, 4; Bukowski, 253; Lund in Anderson and Blanck, 303-304. The last *Tribune* references to an independent Deneen slate date to 1942, after which no references are present. The fact that it is unclear when they dissolved, meanwhile, is telling in another regard, in suggesting a loss of significance.

Lundin themselves pointed in this direction in their efforts to organize the party against the New Deal in 1935.<sup>728</sup> Among Chicago's Democrats, a different restructuring took place, as Cermak used his dominance over patronage to begin forming a hierarchical organization that could enforce party discipline.<sup>729</sup> Cermak never got to see this organization fully in place: there were patronage limitations due to Depression job cuts, and he was shot and killed in Miami while appealing to Franklin Roosevelt on federal patronage matters, resulting in his replacement as mayor by Edward J. Kelly and party leader by Patrick J. Nash.<sup>730</sup> Under their leadership, they continued Cermak's efforts to incorporate ethnic groups into the Democratic Party, most notably realigning African-Americans.<sup>731</sup> By 1935, they succeeded in full party consolidation, with Harrison and Dunne sidelined into federal appointive positions.<sup>732</sup> While lacking complete hegemony (Henry Horner won renomination as Governor in 1936 against their opposition, and they did not fully control ward leadership), they had managed to reorganize affairs so that there was no faction in a clear position to claim any sort of rivalry.<sup>733</sup> In these ways, both

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<sup>728</sup> For Crowe and Lundin organizing, see *Tribune*, 4/13/1935, 8.

<sup>729</sup> Gottfried, Chs. 12 and 13 *passim*.

<sup>730</sup> Gottfried, 259-261, 304, 317; Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 113, 116; Gosnell, *Machine Politics*, 14-17; Peterson, 162-164; Wendt and Kogan, 352-354. Biles generally offers a strong account of the Kelly-Nash organization, especially relating to Kelly as Mayor.

<sup>731</sup> Biles, Ch. 5 *passim*; William J. Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Ch. 3 *passim*.

<sup>732</sup> Erie, 126; Harrison, *Growing Up with Chicago*, 350; Morton, 125-128.

<sup>733</sup> Gosnell, *Machine Politics*, 23-24; Mazur, Ch. 9 *passim*; Biles, 65-66, 67-68; Kantowicz, 201-205; Grimshaw, 70-71.



parties had completely reorganized, with the Democrats forming a machine, while the Republican gained more unity in opposition than they ever had in government.

Other forces in Chicago politics similarly had altered relations in the following years. The Socialists found 1923 to be their high water mark in local support: they would never again be elected to local office, and rapidly declined in vote total during the 1920s. This reflected a general collapse of third parties in Chicago: a situation like that of 1919, when third-party candidates won over a quarter of the vote, would never repeat itself. The Communists, for instance, were highly active in organizing, especially among African-Americans, but never had an electoral impact.<sup>734</sup> This also appeared on the ward level: independents and third-party candidates fared better running for the City Council when it was a partisan body than they ever did when it was non-partisan.<sup>735</sup> The Chicago Federation of Labor saw an even greater obliteration of their political goals. In 1924, the CFL gave up on the Farmer-Labor Party, instead following the American Federation of Labor approach of backing friends in office regardless of party.<sup>736</sup> This change became relevant that same year: Robert LaFollette gained substantial support in Chicago with CFL and Socialist backing, but his supporters were unable to use this as a way to elect party members to the state legislature, unlike the Socialists in 1904 and the Socialists and

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<sup>734</sup> For the Communists among African-Americans, see Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, Ch. 15 *passim*.

<sup>735</sup> Tingley, for example, notes the presence of a large number of third-party aldermen during the late 1890s and early 1900s.

<sup>736</sup> *New Majority*, 5/24/1924, 1, 2; Dolnick, 21-22; Perlstein, 79.

Progressives in 1912 and 1914.<sup>737</sup> Even the ability of the CFL to mobilize as a united political force was called into question: the decision of many CFL leaders to back Dever for reelection in 1927 received resistance: several of Dever's appointments to office, such as Commissioner of Public Works A.A. Sprague, were seen as anti-labor, and his school policy had thoroughly alienated the CFL generally and the Chicago Teachers Federation specifically, resulting in the Chicago Teachers Federation and other individual locals mobilizing as a Wage Earners League in support of William Hale Thompson.<sup>738</sup>

Organized labor still had strength in 1920s Chicago: they fought back against labor injunctions, won the battle over the Landis Act, and established such institutions as the Amalgamated Bank and the WCFL radio station.<sup>739</sup> However, it was apparent that both organized labor and the left by the end of the 1920s were no longer the forces they had been in past decades, and were not in a position to engage in independent political operations against the major parties.

Reform forces in Chicago may have been in the most difficult position due to the factional and political realignments of the period. The Dever administration gave substantial appointments to such noted reformers as settlement worker Mary McDowell, with Charles Merriam only refusing an appointment due to University of Chicago

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<sup>737</sup> Perlstein, 92-94. Notably, the ethnic element to Socialist support played a role in the LaFollette vote, as he did best in the German neighborhoods of the North Side, and finished third in the working-class neighborhoods of the Southwest and West Sides (Perlstein, 93 and n2).

<sup>738</sup> Dolnick, 29-33; Bukowski, 152-153, 185; Schmidt, 166-167.

<sup>739</sup> Newton-Matza, Chs. 4 and 5 *passim*; Cohen, 36-38; 209-210.

commitments.<sup>740</sup> However, the reformers of Chicago turned out to be heavily divided when forced to think of issues other than Thompson, as demonstrated by splits between the reformers on the Dever traction proposals.<sup>741</sup> Even greater as a concern was reformers being able to mobilize politically: instead of forming a reform faction among Democrat, Dever gave most of his patronage to George Brennan, whose popularity among reformers was low enough that most of them voted third-party when faced with a choice between Brennan and the Insull-backed Frank L. Smith in the 1926 Senate race.<sup>742</sup> The Republicans were similarly unappealing: the Barrett/Crowe faction was never seen as friendly, Medill McCormick had burned most of his bridges with his former Progressive allies by 1924, and even the Deneen faction, who was closest in cultural terms to most Chicago reformers, was unappealing due to Deneen's tendencies for political equivocation.<sup>743</sup> Even important reform organizations outside the party system fell apart, with the MVL having lost any powers in influencing the City Council by the late 1920s.<sup>744</sup> In all of these regards, Chicago reformers found themselves weak, fractured, and without any clear political allies.

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<sup>740</sup> Schmidt, 76; Davis, 233; Philpott., 248; Reid, 206.

<sup>741</sup> Morton, 123; Schmidt, 125.

<sup>742</sup> For Brennan control over Dever patronage, see Dobyns, 54-55; Thurner, 132; Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 33-34. For support of a third-party candidate, see Woody, *The Case of Frank L. Smith*, Ch. 6 *passim*.

<sup>743</sup> For McCormick as alienating the Progressives, see Ickes, 239. For Deneen, see Ickes to Robert M. LaFollette Jr., 3/7/1930, Harold L. Ickes Papers, Box 35, Folder 27, Library of Congress; Woody, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, 132-133.

<sup>744</sup> Bukowski, 110.

The decline of reform as a political force in Chicago can be best demonstrated by differences in slating candidates between 1923 and 1931. The idea of forming a united front against Thompson had died in 1931, as demonstrated by the Deneen faction running its own candidate due to the lack of party unity. This was even more epitomized by the leading anti-Thompson candidate: John Homer Lyle had been criticized in his 1923 reelection bid for the City Council for his closeness to Thompson, and even his record against gangsters on the Municipal Court had been erratic enough that the Bar Association refused to endorse his reelection bid in 1930.<sup>745</sup> When combined with the fact that Lyle's chief backers had been as recently as the previous year close Thompson allies, this left contemporary observers noting the negation of reform forces among Chicago Republicans, something only further demonstrated by the distant third-place showing of longtime Thompson foe Arthur F. Albert.<sup>746</sup> This negation was made even greater through the example of Chicago's Democrats. In 1923, George Brennan had chosen to run a judge who had not been involved in recent politics; in 1931, Anton Cermak chose to run himself.<sup>747</sup> This was not due to the lack of potential reform candidates: between members of the Chicago bench, figures in the Dever administration, and ones from private business, there were potential reform candidates, and Cermak's own actions in statewide races shows that he was not averse to running candidates with a

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<sup>745</sup> *Tribune*, 1/5/1923, 5; Hoffman, 48-49.

<sup>746</sup> For a sense of this as the case from a contemporary observer, see Dobyns, 105.

<sup>747</sup> Gottfried, 199-200; Dobyns, 177.

reform image.<sup>748</sup> What was instead key were changes in the political dynamic between 1923 and 1931. Cermak had unified the party to the point where there was no need to appease other factions, while the 1923 and 1927 results suggested a limitation to appealing to reformers: if Thompson won the nomination, any other candidate would gain support if 1927 indicated anything, while 1923 suggests that the reform vote could not be unified if Thompson was not renominated, creating a climate where Cermak sympathized with reformers while campaigning without actually running a reform candidate.<sup>749</sup> Instead, gaining support from the ethnic voters that Dever lost in 1927 were key, as they increasingly participated in politics while middle and upper-class Protestants continued to move to the suburbs.<sup>750</sup> Cermak had been the most important Democrat in county office throughout the 1920s, appealed as a Bohemian to the ethnic groups that were gaining in political clout, and as longtime United Societies secretary had been the leading wet in Chicago politics.<sup>751</sup> Moreover, this set of political calculations worked: most of the ethnic voters who swung from Dever in 1927 swung to Cermak in 1931, while virtually all Chicago reformers and reform groups backed Cermak in order to stop Thompson.<sup>752</sup> Overall, 1931 demonstrated how Chicago reformers were politically

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<sup>748</sup> Dobyns, 103-104; Gottfried, 200-202, 293; Hoffman, 53.

<sup>749</sup> For Cermak as being friendly to reformers, see Gottfried, 215-216, 218-220.

<sup>750</sup> For the suburbanization of the middle-class, see Bukowski, 122-123; Gottfried, 354-355; Merriam, 124.

<sup>751</sup> Indeed, Schmidt, 148, notes that Cermak was a possible candidate in 1927 had Dever not run for a second term. For Cermak and the United Societies, see Flanagan, *Charter Reform in Chicago*, 151 (though she warns about reducing the United Societies to just Cermak); Gottfried, 54; Dobyns, 37.

<sup>752</sup> For the swing of ethnic voters, see Allswang, *A House for All People*.

negated, as the needs for majority building no longer had it make sense for either party to focus on them in their appeals.

### **Birth of a Machine: The Significance of William Dever**

On the surface, it would seem that the 1923 election in Chicago did not matter in terms of the broader political climate of Chicago: reform did not last, and neither did most of the actions taken by Dever in office. While an understanding perspective if looking narrowly at Dever, it is clear that when considering Chicago politics in a broader context, Dever's election reflected larger changes to Chicago on a social as well as a political level. Most important in terms of Dever's election was the realignment of Chicago politics in terms of ethnicity. While ethnicity had been important in Chicago politics since the 1870s, this had largely involved older immigrant groups: Carter Harrison I had built his support among Germans, Scandinavians, and Irish voters, and even as late as 1911, Carter Harrison II was elected by carrying the German and Swedish vote and crossing over to native-born Protestants. A new ethnic dynamic was demonstrated by the vote for Dever: he failed to carry the German or Scandinavian vote and, in spite of strong efforts, did not substantial cross over to native-born Protestants. Instead, he had mobilized working-class new immigrant voters to a degree that had never existed before, forming a coalition of Catholic, Jews, and African-Americans that had not quite existed in the past. This reflected a change in the ethnic composition of the city, as these groups would increasingly form the majority and as older groups began leaving the city. In these ways, Dever pointed to how ethnic Chicago was gaining in terms of political relevance. This realignment's significance is especially well demonstrated in the

period between 1939 and 1955, when Chicago was closest than at any point since 1931 to having a full two-party system.<sup>753</sup> In this period, Republicans had their greatest success among upper-income Lakefront voters, homeowners on the Northwest, Southwest, and South Sides, and in wards with large German and Scandinavian populations. While enough for substantial minority support, it was never enough to elect a mayor, due to the failure to win support either from the working-class ethnics of the West and Near North Sides or from African-Americans. The core Republican support was essentially that Lueder received in 1923, even in terms of spatial location. In these ways, a new ethnic order in politics was apparent, and one that in various regards has remained to the present day. Moreover, this ethnic trajectory has a national interest, as the coalition Dever built was similar to ones organized across the nation in the 1930s, forming the New Deal urban coalition.

Just as important was the effect that Dever's election had was its impact on faction-building in Chicago. George Brennan's organization, while leading, did not have dominance in 1923, and one of the chief reasons Dever became the Democratic candidate was that he could unite the party. In office, Dever left his lower-level patronage to Brennan, who used it to take full control of the party apparatus and finally end the careers of Carter Harrison II and Edward Dunne as factional leaders.<sup>754</sup> This dominance was apparent by 1927: in spite of all his political troubles and the turn against him by party

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<sup>753</sup> This commentary is based on a systematic consideration of election results, as published in the *Tribune*, for the elections following 1931.

<sup>754</sup> For Dever ignoring patronage in high-level appointments, see Schmidt, 75-77. The Thurner work covers this political evolution, and Woody's work on the 1926 Chicago primary demonstrates what a low point Dunne and Harrison were politically by then.

rank and file, Dever was unopposed for renomination. This lasted after Dever's defeat and Brennan's death: the internal fight to replace Brennan as party leader did not result in new factions. In many ways, Dever's administration offered pointers for later machine organization, even down to focusing on lower-level city jobs rather than the most important administrative posts. In these ways, Dever was in the unlikely position of being a reform candidate whose election served as a model for the political goals of a machine. This also points to a place for future research, in suggesting that similar coalitions could have aided in party organization, in contrast to approaches that assume organizations created the coalitions.

Finally, Dever's experiences in office are of relevance for understanding the failure of reform in Chicago. The general assumption that Chicago was "not ready for reform" clearly is inaccurate, given the successes that political reformers had for decades in Chicago. Instead, the failure of reform can be best understood as a failure in terms of what the audience was promised versus what it received, and in terms of shifts in audience. Dever had promised to deliver municipal ownership, ran as a friend of the Chicago Teachers Federation, and had suggested that he opposed blue laws. In office, Dever offered a traction solution that fell short of what was promised, supported a school superintendent who offended the Chicago Teachers Federation and working-class Chicago generally, and made Prohibition enforcement the defining issue of his administration. In these ways, he was far different from the reform that had been elected in 1923. This only became more visible in terms of changing audience: Dever openly threw away support from African-Americans and Italians and offended working-class



Catholics and Jews in various regards, and instead focused on gaining the support from upper-class and middle-class Protestants he had not received in 1923. When the electorate turned against Dever, it was not out of hating reform generally or by the dictate of ward leaders, but because Dever had not been the reformer that was promised. Similarly, reform did not come back because it was dead, but because political circumstances were such that appealing to reform did not matter in the ways that it had in the past. In these ways, Dever is key to understanding changes in the dynamic around urban reform in the 1930s and following decades. Reformers that could appeal to ethnic voters, and who could deal with matters of concern to these voters, would be elected and, in places like New York and Philadelphia, thrive. Those like Dever, who alienated their prior backers and appealed to audiences that no longer existed, would be politically doomed.

### **Chapter 3: Klan Emergent: The Rise of Modern Detroit**

In 1924 Detroit, the Ku Klux Klan emerged as a major political force, possibly only missing electing its candidate for mayor on a questionable count of write-in votes. Detroit was by far the city where the Ku Klux Klan had the greatest political impact. In order to understand this, it is necessary to consider the transformation of Detroit in the decades previous to 1924. In this year, Detroit grew rapidly with an expanding automotive industry, resulting in massive changes in ethnicity and social structure. The city also changed significantly politically, as the Detroit Citizens League realigned Detroit politics by fusing the city's business elite with Protestant churchgoers in order to create a centralized city government. This resulted in the emergence of an ethos of political Protestantism in Detroit, in which many voters enter politics with a specifically Protestant ambition and goals. By the early 1920s, this ethos was challenged: the Detroit Citizens League had chosen to focus on business interests rather than those of churchgoers, and working-class Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans had managed to organize a credible force against the Citizens League. However, this ethos still had strength, as, faced with two Catholic candidates for mayor and a working-class Protestant sense of political neglect, it was strong enough to make the Detroit Klan emergent as a force in local politics, threatening to overturn the present political order, and leading many to wonder what was happening to Detroit as a city.

#### **The Economic Transformation of Detroit**

Detroit underwent massive economic, social, cultural, and political transformations in the forty years leading to 1924. As late as the 1880s, Detroit was still

recovering from the rise of Chicago as the important hub between east and west starting in the 1830s, ending its status as a major commercial center.<sup>755</sup> It was at that point a second-tier city among those on the Great Lakes, being roughly equal with Milwaukee and behind Chicago, Cleveland, and Buffalo.<sup>756</sup> Detroit was settled by residents of English, Germanic, and Irish descent, and had yet to receive a substantial amount of the new immigration.<sup>757</sup> Many industries, such as stoves, pharmaceuticals, and railroad car shops, operated in Detroit, but none had local economic supremacy, and, while some of these businesses were significant, none drew large numbers of residents to the area.<sup>758</sup> Detroit was thriving and the key city in Michigan, but was not a city with a particularly large profile on either the national or the international scene.

In the 1890s, this began to change, with the beginning of Detroit's automotive industry. Numerous individuals began to establish automotive plants in Detroit, usually either in the fringes of the city or outside city limits.<sup>759</sup> In this period of the Detroit

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<sup>755</sup> Melvin G. Holli, "The Impact of Automobile Manufacturing Upon Detroit", *Detroit in Perspective* 2:3 (Spring 1976), 177.

<sup>756</sup> Holli, "Impact", 177.

<sup>757</sup> Philip P. Mason, *Tracy W. McGregor: Humanitarian, Philanthropist, and Detroit Civic Leader* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 113.

<sup>758</sup> Frank B. Woodward and Arthur M. Woodward, *All Our Yesterdays: A Brief History of Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), 268-269; Martin Marger, *The Force of Ethnicity: A Study of Urban Elites* (Detroit: University Studies and Weekend College, Wayne State University, 1974), 20; Otilie M. Leland and Minnie Dubbs Millbrook, *Master of Precision: Henry M. Leland* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966), 52.

<sup>759</sup> For the rise of the automotive industry, see Thomas James Ticknor, "Motor City: The Impact of the Automobile Industry Upon Detroit, 1900-1975" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978), Ch. 3; Charles K. Hyde, *The Dodge Brothers* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), Ch. 1; Woodward and Woodward, Ch. 11; Donald Finlay Davis, *Conspicuous Production: Automobiles and Elites in Detroit, 1899-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), Ch. 2.

automotive industry, many of these companies were established by the old Detroit elite, and served as a demonstration of diversification in industrial practices.<sup>760</sup> Often, the old elite made cars that were aimed at audiences like themselves, engaging in relatively limited production runs.<sup>761</sup> Other firms, however, were set up by outsiders who often had limited ties to Detroit.<sup>762</sup> These manufacturers tended to be more concerned with making cars for a mass audience, and began to develop means to mass-produce automobiles.<sup>763</sup> This led to a contest between the two groups to dominate auto making in Detroit, which ended with the latter group firmly in control and the old elite either selling out, folding, or going into decline.<sup>764</sup> While this contest was going on, Detroit began to establish itself as the automotive production center of the United States, and, by the late 1900s, the automobile was by far the most important of Detroit's industries.

As the automotive industry began to gain significance, the population of Detroit began to change with it. During the 1900s, Detroit, always a growing city, began to fully boom, going from the thirteenth-largest city in the United States in the 1900 census to the ninth-largest in 1910.<sup>765</sup> While still behind both Chicago and Cleveland, Detroit finally established itself as being of greater significance than Milwaukee, and was starting to edge out Buffalo. New populations began to establish themselves in Detroit: while Poles,

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<sup>760</sup> Davis, 46, 47, 49, 53, 55, 58.

<sup>761</sup> Davis, Introduction and Ch. 1 *passim*.

<sup>762</sup> The Dodge Brothers, for instance, were scorned by the Detroit elite (Hyde, 115), and Henry Leland had only moved into Detroit in 1890, when he was approaching fifty (Leland and Millbrook, 51-52).

<sup>763</sup> Davis, 22-23.

<sup>764</sup> This point is the major theme of the Davis work, and is demonstrated at various points.

<sup>765</sup> Holli, "Impact", 178-179.

who had started arriving in the 1880s, were largest, but there were also growing populations of Italian, Hungarian, and Slavic ancestry in the city, resulting in Detroit increasingly being a polyglot city.<sup>766</sup> This migration, however, also began to cause certain changes in terms of the spatial presence of populations within Detroit. While ethnic communities had existed in nineteenth-century Detroit, they had tended to be cross-class communities in which members of ethnic groups of a range of class statuses tended to live together.<sup>767</sup> Starting in the 1900s, these communities began breaking down, with members of different economic classes moving into different neighborhoods, leaving behind ethnic community more explicitly working-class than in the past. A clear spatial separation also began to develop, with working class communities forming on the east side along the Detroit River while the west side, with some exceptions (most notably the industrial areas along Michigan Avenue) tended to be home to the middle-class of Detroit, with a population that was disproportionately Protestant and native-born.<sup>768</sup> In these ways, ethnic transitions came about with a growing sense of class stratification.

Perhaps the most essential of the transformations that occurred during the turn of the century, however, was the transformation that began to emerge in terms of labor

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<sup>766</sup> For a monograph studying the Polish migration, see Sister Mary Remigia Napierska, *The Polish Immigrant in Detroit to 1914* (Chicago: Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, 1946). Materials gathered concerning many of these groups from the early 1930s can be found in the Lois Rankin Papers, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>767</sup> For a general survey of these changing class conditions in ethnic Detroit, see Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), which also serves as the most exhaustive survey of social life in Detroit during this period.

<sup>768</sup> Detroit City Plan Commission, *The People of Detroit* (Detroit: 1946), 31-35; Robert Sinclair and Bryan Thompson, *Metropolitan Detroit: An Anatomy of Social Change* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing, 1977), 7, 10.

relations. In general, Detroit labor had never been as strongly organized as it was in other cities in the region: the brief flurry around the Knights of Labor in the mid-1880s had not amounted to much, and manufacturing had been attracted to Detroit due to the belief that labor was less militant than in places like Chicago.<sup>769</sup> In the 1900s, the desire to permanently institutionalize unorganized labor emerged among many Detroit industrialists, resulting in the formation of the Employers Association of Detroit.<sup>770</sup> The Employers Association was designed to form a united front against industrial organization in Detroit, most notably organizing the labor market so that the Employers Association controlled most industrial hiring.<sup>771</sup> All this was designed to establish the “American Plan”, in which Detroit would become an open-shop city.<sup>772</sup> These efforts were considerably successfully: by the late 1900s, the Employers Association had established a dominant role in Detroit labor relations.<sup>773</sup> There were limitations to this power: the Employers Association largely stood apart from labor disputes in white-collar and service industries, and numerous strikes took place in Detroit industrial plants, some

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<sup>769</sup> Woodward and Woodward, 322-324; Malcolm W. Bingay, *Detroit is My Own Home Town* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946), 16; Leland and Millbrook, 51-52; Richard Oestricher, “Changing Patterns of Class Relations in Detroit, 1880-1900”, *Detroit in Perspective* 3:3 (Spring 1979), 145-165; “Detroit Labor, 1890-1910”, copy in George B. Heliker Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>770</sup> Robert A. Rockaway, *The Jews of Detroit: From the Beginning, 1672-1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986), 69; Raymond R. Fragnoli, *The Transformation of Reform: Progressivism in Detroit- And After, 1912-1933* (New York: Garland, 1982), 22; David Allen Levine, *Internal Combustion: The Races in Detroit, 1915-1926* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 28.

<sup>771</sup> Levine, 28; Hyde, 54; “Detroit Labor, 1890-1910”, copy in George B. Heliker Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Benson Ford Research Center, 33.

<sup>772</sup> For an example of the sort of ways in which this was promoted, see The Citizens’ Committee on Industrial Relations, “Do You Care”, (c.1926), copy in Nevins and Hill Research Notes, Box 31, Folder 10, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>773</sup> Levine, 28; Oestricher, 161; Holli, “Impact”, 184; Marger, 27.

of them successful.<sup>774</sup> However, the Employers Association was very successful in terms of establishing the automotive industry as open shop: until the rise of the CIO and the UAW in the 1930s, Detroit automotive workers largely were not part of organized labor, with only the Communist-affiliated Auto Workers Union making any attempt to organize during the mid-1920s.<sup>775</sup> This also resulted in organized labor in Detroit being apart from industrial labor more generally: the members of the Detroit Federation of Labor tended to be skilled workers who were either native-born or from northern Europe, setting them apart from the unskilled eastern and southern Europeans who made up the bulk of the industrial labor pool.<sup>776</sup> This left Detroit organized labor a marginal group, without the social, economic, or political power their peers possessed in Chicago.

In addition to these economic and social transformations, Detroit began to transform politically. In the 1890s, Detroit went from being a Democratic-leaning but politically marginal city to a Republican stronghold.<sup>777</sup> While this in part connected to national political realignment towards Republicans in urban areas during the 1890s, much of this was the direct result of the activities of Hazen Pingree, who served as mayor from

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<sup>774</sup> List of Strikes in Detroit, 1912-1922, Frank Hill Research Papers, Box 6, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>775</sup> For a monograph considering these conditions as they existed among autoworkers in the mid-1920s, see Robert W. Dunn, *Labor and Automobiles* (New York: International Publishers, 1929).

<sup>776</sup> Arthur Edward DeMatteo, "Urban Reform, Politics, and the Working Class: Detroit, Toledo, and Cleveland, 1890-1912" (PhD dissertation, University of Akron, 1999), 282.

<sup>777</sup> Hyde, 146; Fragnoli, 10.

1890 to 1897 and as Governor of Michigan from 1897 to 1901.<sup>778</sup> Pingree had worked to incorporate Germans and Poles who had been neglected by a predominantly Irish Democratic party, and built a strong personal following through his campaigns for social reform in Detroit, including municipally-owned street lighting and the use of public gardens to try to combat the depression of the 1890s.<sup>779</sup> Pingree also left a legacy of Detroit as being a city where reformist concerns held continued significance, with a fight against the streetcar companies of Detroit becoming the focal point of Detroit politics for a quarter of a century after Pingree left office.<sup>780</sup> There were limitations to the transformations caused by Pingree: no major changes in the Detroit political structure came due to his actions. However, his administration had served to alter the politics of Detroit, resulting in it having political transformations to match the changes in other fields.

These transformations only increased in significance during the 1910s. The automotive industry by 1914 had established itself as being by far the largest industry in Detroit, employing almost as many people as every other industry in Detroit combined.<sup>781</sup> As the automotive industry grew, its general structure in Detroit started to take shape.

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<sup>778</sup> The most detailed study of Pingree, and a work that has had substantial influence of the study of urban politics generally, is Melvin G. Holli, *Reform in Detroit: Hazen S. Pingree and Urban Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

<sup>779</sup> In addition to the Holli work, DeMatteo, Ch. 2 *passim*, offers much to demonstrate Pingree as reshaping Detroit politically, and Mason, 114-115, offers a short summary.

<sup>780</sup> DeMatteo, 230-231; Henry Pratt, *Churches and Urban Government in Detroit and New York, 1895-1994* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 3; Bingay, 204.

<sup>781</sup> Ticknor, 122; Holli, "Impact", 180; Sidney Glazer, *Detroit: A Study of Urban Development* (New York: Bookman Associations, 1965), 94.



The automotive industry began to engage in consolidation, with smaller firms either being absorbed by larger ones or folding due to an inability to compete with the larger firms.<sup>782</sup> During this decade, the traditional Detroit elite largely left the automotive industry: while a handful of elite-founded companies would last into the 1930s and beyond, the automotive industry was one clearly established as marketing to a mass audience.<sup>783</sup> The Detroit automotive industry continued to be solidly for the open-shop, putting down efforts by the Industrial Workers of the World to organize Studebaker in 1913.<sup>784</sup> It also remained an industry that largely operated on the fringes of the Detroit metropolitan area, moving outward when looking for larger facilities.<sup>785</sup> Henry Ford, who by the middle of the decade was clearly the most notorious figure in the industry, demonstrated this when he left the city to establish his plant in the neighboring community of Highland Park.<sup>786</sup> Overall, this establishment of the automotive industry as chief among Detroit industries was of importance, as it grew to such a size that actions within it would shape social relations throughout Detroit.

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<sup>782</sup> Marger, 39; George Galster, *Driving Detroit: The Quest for Respect in Motown* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 76; Dunn, 51.

<sup>783</sup> Davis, Ch. 3 *passim*.

<sup>784</sup> Hyde, 54-55; Donald F. Davis, "Studebaker Stumbles into Detroit", *Detroit in Perspective* 4:1 (Fall 1979), 29.

<sup>785</sup> Ted Perlmutter, *Comparing Fordist Cities: The Logic of Urban Crisis and Urban Response in Turin, 1950-1975, and Detroit, 1915-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University, 1991?), 8-9.

<sup>786</sup> Mason, 172; Jeremy W. Kilar, "From Forest & Field to Factory: Michigan Workers and the Labor Movement", in Richard J. Hathaway, *Michigan: Visions of Our Past* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1989), 248.

The boom of the automotive industry had an impact on the population of Detroit: during the 1910s, the population of Detroit doubled, making it the fourth-largest city in the 1920 census with a population of nearly a million.<sup>787</sup> While populations continued to migrate into Detroit from eastern and southern Europe, the outbreak of the First World War began to reduce the significance of this area for immigration.<sup>788</sup> Other areas picked up this slack, including places, such as outstate Michigan and Ontario, which had long produced migrants into Detroit.<sup>789</sup> New countries, such as Mexico and the Ottoman Empire, began to produce immigrant populations during this time period.<sup>790</sup> Most notable, however, were migrations from the south: starting in the late 1910s, African-Americans and whites from the Appalachians began to enter Detroit in large numbers.<sup>791</sup> The migration of African-Americans began a significant transformation in racial relationships: the relatively small African-American population that had been present prior to the Great Migration had been fairly scattered, with segregation being relatively minimal in Detroit compared to other city.<sup>792</sup> The Great Migration ended this, as African-Americans started to be segregated within Detroit, most notably to the east side

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<sup>787</sup> Holli, "Impact", 179.

<sup>788</sup> Norman Kenneth Miles, "Home at Last: Urbanization of Black Migrants in Detroit, 1916-1929" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978), 1-2.

<sup>789</sup> Marger, 21.

<sup>790</sup> Galster, 102-104.

<sup>791</sup> George Edmund Haynes, *Negro Newcomers in Detroit* (New York: Arno Press, 1969 reprint of 1918 original); Galster, 107, Marger, 21-22.

<sup>792</sup> For a study of the pre-Great Migration African-American community, see David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973).

neighborhood of Paradise Valley that had previously been the center for Detroit's Jewish population.<sup>793</sup> This migration had an industrial impact: John Dancy, beginning a long tenure as director of the Detroit Urban League, tried to establish African-Americans in the Detroit industrial workforce, forming close ties with the Employers Association by claiming African-American labor to be docile.<sup>794</sup> However, this was limited in its success: many firms refused to hire African-Americans, and even those that did (Henry Ford being the most notable example) tended to engage in internal segregation, placing African-Americans in the worst jobs.<sup>795</sup> In these ways, racial tensions began to clearly establish themselves in Detroit.

This influx caused further changes to the spatial organization of Detroit. Unlike many other cities, Detroit did not build large high-rises or tenements to house the influx of new residents, instead engaging in the massive construction of single-family homes.<sup>796</sup> This construction required building to extend further and further away from the core of Detroit, as the space to build homes close to the downtown area declined with population growth.<sup>797</sup> In response to this further migration out, the city of Detroit began to follow

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<sup>793</sup> Victoria W. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African-American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 36, 38, 39-40, 60; Miles, 132-133; Sinclair and Thompson, 30; Thomas Ralph Solomon, "Participation of Negroes in Detroit Elections" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1939), 12-13.

<sup>794</sup> Wolcott, Ch. 2 *passim*; Levine, Chs. 3 and 4 *passim* (with 81 noting the anti-union goals); Beth Tompkins Bates, *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2012), Ch. 1 *passim*. For Dancy's own account of his career, see John C. Dancy, *Sand Against the Wind: The Memoirs of John C. Dancy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966).

<sup>795</sup> Bates, 61-66; Levine, 91-94; Miles, Ch. 3 *passim*.

<sup>796</sup> Ticknor, 159; Levine, 41-42; Rockaway, 60.

<sup>797</sup> Levine, 41.

settlers: after largely having not expanded in territory since the early 1890s, Detroit had an annexation boom beginning in 1915 that led to Detroit nearly doubling in size by 1918.<sup>798</sup> This annexation, however, had complications: as Detroit grew, it became harder and harder to deliver such services as water mains, streets, sidewalks, and fire and police throughout the city, making these issues grow in political significance.<sup>799</sup> Similarly, this increased tensions concerning the control of transit in Detroit, as commutes grew longer and the Detroit United Railway found it harder to extend services to new sections of the city.<sup>800</sup> In these ways, spatial change to Detroit made administration of Detroit more fraught in political consequences.

In addition to the general outward spread, ethnic populations began to undergo notable spatial changes. Some places remained closely tied to ethnic groups: Corktown was Irish, Delray was Hungarian, and the independent community of Hamtramck was Polish.<sup>801</sup> However, it was becoming clear during this time that ethnic groups were beginning to migrate at a rapid pace within Detroit, changing location within the city in the space of a few years.<sup>802</sup> Moreover, these transitions were not ones based on long-term

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<sup>798</sup> Ticknor, 197; Reynolds Farley, Sheldon Danziger, and Harry J. Holzer, *Detroit Divided* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000), 27; Woodford and Woodford, 277.

<sup>799</sup> Perlmutter, 5-6; Mason, 101; Fragnoli, 9.

<sup>800</sup> Jayne Morris-Crowther, *The Political Activities of Detroit Clubwomen in the 1920s: A Challenge and A Promise* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 117-119; Farley et al, 25.

<sup>801</sup> Woodford and Woodford, 250; *The People of Detroit*, 32; Hyde, 111.

<sup>802</sup> The reports in the Lois Rankin Papers contain several accounts of this, concerning Armenians (Box 1, Folder 7, Detroit Public Library), Croatians (Box 1, Folder 8, Detroit Public Library), Finns (Box 1, Folder 10, Detroit Public Library), Yugoslavians (Box 2, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library), and Russians and Ukrainians (Box 4, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library).

trends, as some of these ethnic neighborhoods had only existed for a few years before vanishing.<sup>803</sup> Rather than consolidate in one place, ethnic groups in Detroit tended to scatter throughout the city.<sup>804</sup> Often, this migration would connect itself with the boulevards that radiated out of the core of Detroit. Germans and Italians, for example, radiated northeast down Gratiot Avenue, while Jews roughly followed Woodward Avenue northwest, and Poles followed basically every boulevard in the city.<sup>805</sup> This further meant that ethnicity in Detroit would develop along class lines, as no affinities for place could emerge in these circumstances. It also meant that ethnicity in Detroit would develop not homogenous small spaces, but in bands where ethnic groups lived in close proximity.<sup>806</sup>

### **The Political Restructuring of Detroit**

Perhaps the most extensive changes that came to Detroit during the 1910s involved the administration of city government. Detroit had long operated under a weak-mayor system, in which the mayor shared power with two separate legislative bodies: the Board of Estimates, which had veto power over all city expenditures, and the Common

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<sup>803</sup> The Russians, for instance, largely only arrived in 1912 and 1913, and had already relocated heavily by 1931. Lois Rankin Papers, Box 4, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library, Part III, 1-2.

<sup>804</sup> Virtually every ethnic group noted in the Lois Rankin Papers, for instance, is identified as living in multiple localities within Detroit.

<sup>805</sup> Sinclair and Thompson, 10.

<sup>806</sup> This point is also demonstrated in the Lois Rankin Papers, as many of her descriptions are of populations along streets, rather than in clear neighborhoods.

Council, which considered legislation and which approved of all city appointments.<sup>807</sup>

Both of these boards had a large number of members, electing two members from each of the city's wards into the 1910s.<sup>808</sup> Much of the administration of city departments was through multi-member commissions whose terms were spread so that it usually took several years before all members of a commission could be replaced.<sup>809</sup> This form of administration, in general terms, resembled that of many other American cities during that time, which similarly had large councils, weak mayors, and a diffusion of authority within municipal government.<sup>810</sup> However, this system was generally being challenged throughout the United States, and in Detroit became increasingly an issue as the city rapidly grew.<sup>811</sup> This was not helped by the fact that, as the city grew, the number of wards grew with it, resulting in larger and larger legislative bodies.<sup>812</sup> In general, this was a method of city government that in administrative terms was demonstrating weaknesses entering the 1910s.

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<sup>807</sup> For some idea of these structures of city government, see Lent Dayton Upson and Robert David Fleischer, *The Growth of a City Government* (Detroit: Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, 1942), 16.

<sup>808</sup> Fragnoli, 9.

<sup>809</sup> Press release, 1/8/1912, Detroit Municipal League, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>810</sup> For a general overview of the structure of municipal government in the United States during this period, see Jon C. Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City: Problem, Promise, and Reality* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

<sup>811</sup> Fragnoli, 8-9.

<sup>812</sup> Fragnoli, 9, indicates the existence of 18 wards in 1912, a number that grew to 21 by the time charter reform was enacted in 1918.

The nature of Detroit politics in the twenty years after Hazen Pingree only served to further demonstrate the structural problems of city government. In the period between 1904 and 1912, Detroit replaced its mayor in five straight elections, as the continued inability to resolve issues concerning streetcar service and operation kept defeating incumbents.<sup>813</sup> This resulted in a vacuum in terms of administrative leadership, as no one lasted long enough to be able to try to shape government from the top. Ward-level politics was in an even worse state: the precincts of Detroit had their elections run by elected boards that often used their control of election machinery to influence the election of officials.<sup>814</sup> The Common Council of this era became notorious as the home for what was called in retrospective the “Voteswappers’ League”, with members cutting deals with one another across party lines for their personal benefits.<sup>815</sup> This was advantageous to various interests: utilities used this as a way to get favorable treatment on franchises, and, most notoriously, the Royal Ark lobby of retail liquor dealers used this to fight for the non-enforcement of liquor laws.<sup>816</sup> Ultimately, this system created a climate where the continuance of the status quo held precedence over all else, even as a changing city made these concerns irrelevant. Overall, this furthered the idea of Detroit government as being unresponsive and as needing structural changes in order to function in a workable form.

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<sup>813</sup> DeMatteo, Ch. 5 *passim*; Glazer, 88; Bingay, 204; Davis, 60.

<sup>814</sup> Fragnoli, 11-15.

<sup>815</sup> Pratt, 14.

<sup>816</sup> Morris-Crowther, 20; Pratt, 14; Glazer, 88; Levine, 33.

The most important of the groups that emerged in the early twentieth century to try to restructure Detroit local government was the Detroit Citizens League, originally formed as an anti-vice organization in 1912 by Henry Leland, founder of Cadillac and a leading figure in the Employers Association.<sup>817</sup> It was originally an organization of Protestant laymen, with its founding Executive Secretary, Pliny W. Marsh, taken from the Anti-Saloon League, and an Executive Board whose membership was decided on sectarian lines.<sup>818</sup> Its goals in mobilizing the churchgoers in Detroit led to it having difficulty appealing to non-Protestants: such reform-interested figures as Rabbi Leo M. Franklin noted their reluctance to aid the organization due to its religious undertones, while league leadership often was far more willing to appeal to Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians than to the Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Jews of the city.<sup>819</sup> It also showed a Protestant political vision in terms of how they conceptualized reforming local politics, with the saloon, rather than either corrupt politicians or utilities as in other civic organizations, being their chief foe.<sup>820</sup> In these ways, it differed from such parallel reform organizations as the Citizens Union of New York City and the Municipal Voters League of Chicago by having a specifically Protestant vision of civic reform.

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<sup>817</sup> Fragnoli, 19; John C. Lodge in collaboration with M.M. Quaife, *I Remember Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1949), 84; Leland and Millbrook, 156; Bates, 34; Articles of Association for the Detroit Citizens League, Maurice Sugar Collection, Box 4, Folder 4, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

<sup>818</sup> Mason, 117-118; Leland and Millbrook, 158; List of Executive Board members, 1912, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>819</sup> Leo M. Franklin to Henry M. Leland, 5/27/1912, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library; Meetings of William P. Lovett, 1916-1918, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>820</sup> *The Civic Searchlight*, 1913, Charles W. Burton Papers, Box 8, Folder 16, Detroit Public Library, states the battle in this way, and notes the need to mobilize churchgoers against it.



Within six years of its founding, the Citizens League could claim that most of what it had wanted done had been enacted. The precinct election boards of Detroit, one of its first targets, had been abolished by the Scott-Flowers Honest Elections Law of 1915, which placed the administration of Detroit elections in the hands of a City Election Commission comprised of citywide officials.<sup>821</sup> Prohibition was enacted in Michigan in a statewide referendum in 1916, with strong opposition from working-class Catholics on the east side, but with Protestants in downtown areas, on the west side, and in the far east side of the city in support.<sup>822</sup> This negated the Royal Ark as a force in Detroit politics, as Prohibition ended its reason to be.<sup>823</sup> The Board of Estimates similarly had been abolished in 1916, resulting in budgets being set by mayors.<sup>824</sup> Most notable among the Citizens League's accomplishments was the passage of charter reform in 1917, after previous failed attempts.<sup>825</sup> Here, the Citizens League had tinkered with its message, continuing to campaign along moralistic terms to churchgoers, but trying to appeal to business-oriented voters on the groups of modernization and to working-class voters by arguing that it would enable better cooperation.<sup>826</sup> Faced with weak opposition from

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<sup>821</sup> Fragnoli, 96-97, 103-104, 107, 110.

<sup>822</sup> Vote on Prohibition, Detroit, 11/7/1916, Civic Searchlight Papers, Additional Papers, Box 19, Folder 8, Detroit Public Library; Fragnoli, 115.

<sup>823</sup> DeMatteo, 291.

<sup>824</sup> Glazer, 89; Fragnoli, 106-107.

<sup>825</sup> DeMatteo, Ch. 5 *passim*; Levine, 135-136; Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004), 103 (though not all of Boyle's claims should be trusted on this matter).

<sup>826</sup> Pratt, 23; Fragnoli, Ch. 4 *passim*. This chapter by Fragnoli was in substance also published as Raymond Fragnoli, "Progressive Coalitions and Municipal Reform: Charter Revision in Detroit, 1912-1918", *Detroit in Perspective* 4:3 (Spring 1980), 119-141.

elected officials and the Detroit Federation of Labor, which regarded this as a tool for elite domination, the vote for a charter revision commission carried all but one ward in Detroit.<sup>827</sup> However, ethnic divisions were still present: heavily native-born and Protestant portions of the city gave over 80% of their votes for the measure, while areas with large foreign-born and Catholic populations barely passed the measure and opposed the creation of a small city council.<sup>828</sup> In these regards, limitations to the appeal for charter revision become apparent, as a clear sectarian polarization concerning reform was present.

When placed before the voters, the charter created by the commission passed overwhelmingly: no groups contested it, and no ward in the city gave less than 70% of their vote to it.<sup>829</sup> This charter substantially changed Detroit municipal politics in several regards. By making elections non-partisan and in off-years, political parties lost a direct role in Detroit politics, with state and federal politics being divorced from local ones.<sup>830</sup> A strong-mayor system was established: the mayor could make appointments without the approval of the Common Council, and the commissions that ran many Detroit city departments were replaced by single department heads that served at the pleasure of the

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<sup>827</sup> Fragnoli, 142-147.

<sup>828</sup> Fragnoli, 144-146.

<sup>829</sup> Fragnoli, 166-168.

<sup>830</sup> JoEllen McNergney Vinyard, *Right in Michigan's Grassroots: From the KKK to the Michigan Militia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 110; *Detroit's Government: A Short Story of the Services Rendered During the Year 1921, to the People of Detroit by their City Government* (Detroit: 1922), 5-6.

mayor.<sup>831</sup> Most sweeping were the changes made to the Common Council, which went from being forty-two members elected two to a ward and with only half the membership up for a vote at any time to being nine members elected citywide simultaneously.<sup>832</sup> In making this change, neighborhoods lost a role in the administration of government, as candidates with a citywide appeal, rather than ones with strong local appeal, were favored under this system.<sup>833</sup> This also increased the power of the Detroit Citizens League, as its ability to mobilize a citywide following gave it increased power in terms of electing candidates to office.<sup>834</sup> Overall, these changes followed trends in city government during this time towards nonpartisanship, stronger mayors, smaller councils, and a lesser role for neighborhoods in local government.

In the election that followed in 1918, the Detroit Citizens League had mixed success in using the restructured city government to elect their favorites to office. In the mayoral election, their candidate, Corporation Counsel and longtime Citizens League official Divie Duffield, finished third in the primary behind both Police Commissioner and former Ford general manager James Couzens, who had gained a strong personal following through his fight against the Detroit United Railway, and Recorder's Court

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<sup>831</sup> Upson and Fleischer, 18.

<sup>832</sup> Fragnoli, 126.

<sup>833</sup> Pratt, 57; Napolksa, 58; Fragnoli, 169-170. For a later study of the election of members to the Common Council, see Maurice Ramsey, *Name Candidates in Detroit Elections* (Detroit: Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, 1941).

<sup>834</sup> Marger, 59-60; Jack D. Elenbaas, "The Excesses of Reform: The Day the Detroit Mayor Arrested the City Council", in Wilma Wood Henrickson, *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 274; Morris-Crowther, 25.

Judge William Connolly, de facto leader of what was left of Detroit's Democrats.<sup>835</sup> The Citizens League largely stayed out of the runoff, regarding Couzens, who won, as lacking the knowledge needed for the office or the willingness to work with others needed to serve well.<sup>836</sup> For the Common Council, however, the Citizens League had far greater success: six of its seven endorsed candidates won, and all elected candidates received some degree of support from the organization.<sup>837</sup> This new Common Council was a body with a membership that largely was connected to business (though two of those elected had labor backgrounds), and was a heavily Protestant body, with only two Catholic members.<sup>838</sup> It was also a body whose members had experience at administration, as most of those elected had been active in municipal politics prior to the new charter.<sup>839</sup> Overall, these results suggest strengths and weaknesses to the Citizens League: when faced with rival candidates with strong citywide backing, they had difficulties winning elections, but their abilities to mobilize the churchgoers of Detroit, including by circulating literature to churches, gave them considerable strength in races with a more disorganized field.

In the half-decade following 1918, the Detroit Citizens League was the most powerful force in Detroit local politics. However, it began to have difficulties balancing two constituencies that were of chief importance: the Protestant churchgoers who made

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<sup>835</sup> DeMatteo, 363-368; Davis, 164-166; Fragnoli, 173-179.

<sup>836</sup> Leland and Millbrook, 164; Fragnoli, 179-180.

<sup>837</sup> Fragnoli, 176-177, 181-182; Voter's Guide, 11/5/1918, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Subject Files, Box 15, Folder 5, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>838</sup> For the religious element, see Fragnoli, 182. For the backgrounds of those elected, see Fragnoli, 176-177.

<sup>839</sup> Pratt, 24. *Civic Searchlight*, August 1918, 4-7, contains detailed information on the backgrounds of all candidates for the Common Council.

up the rank-and-file of those who voted for Citizens League candidates, and the business elite who offered the bulk of the Citizens League's funds. Sometimes, these groups' demands could be balanced: in the campaign to reorganize the Detroit court system in 1919 and 1920, for example, the Citizens League appealed to businessmen on structural grounds, churchgoers in explicitly religious terms, and both by bringing up fears of the old Detroit political leadership.<sup>840</sup> However, this approach required business and religious interests to share common grounds in their views on the issues, which was complicated by the differences between churchgoers' concerns over morality and business concerns over efficiency. The internal organization of the Citizens League did not help matters, as rank-and-file members had no real say in day-to-day operations, which were dominated by a self-perpetuating Executive Board.<sup>841</sup> Moreover, the original leadership was vanishing: Henry Leland was aging and mired in the collapse of Lincoln Motors, while Pliny Marsh resigned when appointed to the Recorder's Court.<sup>842</sup> In these respects, limitations to the Citizens League were increasingly apparent, as its external strength hid internal disorganization.

The greatest weakness of the Detroit Citizens League, however, concerned limitations in terms of the organization crossing over to other religious and ethnic groups.

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<sup>840</sup> For these different approaches in action, see Detroit Citizens League Papers, Subject Files, Box 1, Folder 2 (structural and political appeals) and Folder 6 (religious appeals), Detroit Public Library.

<sup>841</sup> Fragnoli, 25-26, 30-31, 34, 185-186. Fragnoli also notes that enrolled membership in the Detroit Citizens League was always far smaller than those who followed the Citizens League's advice in voting.

<sup>842</sup> For details involving Leland's difficulties, see the latter chapters of Leland and Millbrook, as well as the materials in Frank Hill Research Papers, Box 20, Folder 10, Benson Ford Research Center, and Nevins and Hill Research Notes, Box 33, Folder 40, Benson Ford Research Center. For these difficulties as connected to the Detroit Citizens League, see Fragnoli, 254-255, 286-287. For Pliny Marsh's judicial appointment, see Fragnoli, 213-214.

William P. Lovett's appointment as Executive Secretary to replace Marsh demonstrated continued affinities to political Protestantism: Lovett had been a Baptist minister and publicity director for the Michigan Prohibition campaign before affiliating with the Citizens League.<sup>843</sup> This also demonstrated who the Citizens League could not crossover to: Lovett had no use for organized labor, seems not to have been particularly fond of Poles, and generally had difficulties connecting to those with substantial differences in worldview from him.<sup>844</sup> While the Citizens League was not an anti-Catholic organization and claimed to be opposed to religious intolerance, it was unable to connect with Catholics, largely choosing to ignore them rather than build connections.<sup>845</sup> The reluctance of working-class Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans to support charter reform in 1918 was hardened in the following years, as elective office in Detroit was dominated by upper-class Protestants.<sup>846</sup> Moreover, they had substantial differences with the Citizens League on cultural issues: in a city where bootlegging became larger than all legitimate industries other than the automotive industry by the late 1920s, the Citizens League continued to staunchly back Prohibition.<sup>847</sup> The Citizens League also had

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<sup>843</sup> Fragnoli, 118-120; Leland and Millbrook, 165; Pratt, 23.

<sup>844</sup> For Lovett on labor, see William P. Lovett to Members, 5/18/1926, Detroit Civic League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 3, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library. For Lovett on Poles, see William P. Lovett to Malcolm W. Bingay, 4/17/1933, Detroit Citizens League, Additional Papers, Box 4, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library. The problems he had with those opposed to his views are evident reading any substantial amount of his surviving correspondence.

<sup>845</sup> For an admission of this inability to connect with Catholics, see William P. Lovett memo in response to Methodist Union Committee, 9/26/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 2, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library, 3, 9.

<sup>846</sup> Marger, 58-61; Morris-Crowther, 25.

<sup>847</sup> For the Citizens League as pro-Prohibition, see Lovett to P.W.A. Fitzsimmons, 2/26/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 11, Folder 12, Detroit Public Library. For estimates as to the

difficulties finding issues to appeal to working-class voters on: they were not interested in social reform, instead largely focusing on efficiency and continued campaigns against political organizations.<sup>848</sup> Finally, the Citizens League's indifference to James Couzens further hurt it, as Couzens grew highly popular with working-class Detroiters, particularly when he obtained municipal ownership of the Detroit streetcar system in 1922.<sup>849</sup> Overall, the Citizens League had damaged itself significantly by failing to build a larger elective audience, leaving them open to political challenge.

### **Reorganization and its Discontents: The Early 1920s in Detroit**

This rising discontent with the Citizens League came to the fore in 1923. The mayoral elections of that year were rather placid: Couzens had resigned as Mayor when appointed to the United States Senate in December of 1922, and former Congressman Frank Doremus was elected in a landslide in the special election to replace him and had no significant challenges in the general election later that year.<sup>850</sup> Other races, however, became ones where the Citizens League became a contentious political issue. Most important was the race for Recorder's Court, the criminal court for Detroit, where the Citizens League was in trouble in two separate regards. Their preferred slate of

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importance of bootlegging, see Fragnoli, 325; Jack Hyland, *Evangelism's First Modern Media Star: The Life of Reverend Bill Stidger* (New York: Cooper Square Books, 2002), 158; *New York Times*, 5/3/1928, transcription in Nevins and Hill Research Notes, Box 3, Folder 1, Benson Ford Research Center, while Wolcott, 103, notes that 5,000 were employed in getting liquor from Canada into Detroit as early as 1923.

<sup>848</sup> Fragnoli, 387, notes the lack of interest in social conditions.

<sup>849</sup> Fragnoli, 73-74, noted that Leland and Marsh were opposed to municipal ownership, while Davis, 169, notes that Detroit was third only to San Francisco and Seattle among major cities in getting municipal ownership of the streetcar system.

<sup>850</sup> Davis, 183-184; *Labor News*, 4/6/1923, 1, 2; *The Detroitier*, 11/12/1923, 12. Throughout this chapter and Chapter 4, all citations to publications can be assumed to be to Detroit publications unless otherwise noted.

incumbent judges, the “Big Four”, had images as being excessively harsh in the administration of justice, manipulating court administration, and as sometimes having dubious qualifications for the bench, while the Citizens League itself was gaining an image as being an organization that was trying to dictate who was elected to office in Detroit, rather than fairly appraising candidates based on merit.<sup>851</sup> In the election that followed, the Citizens League and its backers (most notably the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*) charged that gangsters would dominate the courts if the Big Four were to lose, often making appeals in ways that seemed to pander to ethnic and racial prejudices.<sup>852</sup> This line of campaigning backfired, as two of the Big Four, including Pliny Marsh, were defeated, ending any sense of bloc control of the judiciary.<sup>853</sup> The results also demonstrated the League’s electoral weakness: they did well among west side Protestants, but were strongly opposed in both the working-class east side and in outlying areas of the city.<sup>854</sup> The results for Common Council later that year showed similar breaks in the strength of the Citizens League. In an election where the massive growth in city expenditures and city debt under Couzens became issues, substantial turnover occurred in Common Council membership, including the election of three candidates

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<sup>851</sup> J. Woodford Howard, *Mr. Justice Murphy: A Political Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 23-24; Fragnoli, 258-260; 262-263, 268-269; Morris-Crowther, 95-98.

<sup>852</sup> Fragnoli, 271-273; Bates, 84-85, 87.

<sup>853</sup> Morris-Crowther, 98; Bates, 87; Fragnoli, 273-275. For an alternative interpretation, see Pliny Marsh interview, 1954, Tracy W. McGregor Collection, Box 2, Folder 11, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, 29.

<sup>854</sup> Fragnoli, 273-275.



supported by the Detroit Federation of Labor.<sup>855</sup> These results confirmed that it was possible to build coalitions that could unseat the Detroit Citizens League, serving as a warning for elections to come.

While these evolutions occurred to the Detroit political scene, further changes took place in other elements of Detroit life. The automotive industry in Detroit continued the pattern of consolidation that had been taking place during the 1910s: while the “Big Three” of General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler would not be institutionalized until the end of the decade, the automotive industry was by 1924 clearly one where a handful of large companies were dominant.<sup>856</sup> The traditional elite of Detroit were virtually shut out of the automotive industry, with the larger company, General Motors, run by outside capital and a managerial elite with marginal connections to the city of Detroit.<sup>857</sup> Ford Motors remained the largest automotive company with local ownership, but Henry Ford, who ran the company in practice if not by name, had never connected with the elite of Detroit: even when backing the open shop, he had refused to join the Employers Association, and most of the traditional elite backed Truman Newberry against him when he ran for the Senate in 1918.<sup>858</sup> There were continued efforts to bring other industries into Detroit,

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<sup>855</sup> For the debt, see Fragnoli, 295. For the success of labor candidates, see *Labor News*, 11/9/1923, 1.

<sup>856</sup> Dunn, 49-51; Ticknor, 112; Hyde, 204.

<sup>857</sup> Davis, 149-150, 152-153, 155-158. Henry Greenleaf Pearson, *Son of New England: James Jackson Storrow, 1864-1926* (Boston: T. Todd, 1932), Ch. 7 *passim*, offers considerable detail around this.

<sup>858</sup> Davis, 127-128, 139-140, 177-180, 209-210. David L. Lewis, “History of Negro Employment in Detroit Area Plants of Ford Motor Company 1914-1941” (1954), copy in Research Papers (Accession 423), Benson Ford Research Center, 12, notes his unwillingness to work with the Employers Association.

with a particularly notable focus on the civil aviation industry.<sup>859</sup> However, the automotive industry had consolidated as the largest industry by far in Detroit in terms of employment and revenues.<sup>860</sup> By this point, problems with this domination by one industry were also apparent: by the mid-1920s, both the cyclical nature of automotive employment, with months-long downturns spiking unemployment, and the sensitivity of the automotive industry to economic downturns were common knowledge.<sup>861</sup> While Detroit was still booming in actual and relative terms, limitations to the automotive industry became apparent, further encouraging the push for industrial diversification.

Detroit continued to gain rapidly in terms of total population, with roughly a quarter of a million people being added to the city's population in the first half of the 1920s.<sup>862</sup> Many of these migrants continued to come from abroad: while immigrant restrictions beginning in 1921 cut the influx of eastern and southern Europeans, places like Canada, which had no quota, and the United Kingdom, which had a large quota, continued to produce substantial migrant populations.<sup>863</sup> Internal migration grew in importance, with Appalachian whites and African-Americans continuing to make the South the chief source of internal migrants. The population of African-Americans in

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<sup>859</sup> For a contemporary listing of other industries, see *The Detroyter*, 2/2/1925, 13, 15, 51.

<sup>860</sup> *The Detroyter*, 1/28/1924, 15, 38, for example, estimates that half of all industrial employees in Detroit working in the automotive industry, while E.G. Pipp, *Henry Ford: Both Sides of Him* (Detroit: Pipp's Magazine, 1926), 76, estimated that Ford alone employed enough people to support a city of 500,000.

<sup>861</sup> Galster, 247; Holli, "Impact", 185-186; Dunn, Ch. 7 *passim*; Farley et al, 22.

<sup>862</sup> *The Detroyter*, 9/28/1925, 10.

<sup>863</sup> For a consideration of migrants from the United Kingdom, see Steve Babson, "Pointing The Way: The Role of British and Irish Skilled Tradesmen in the Rise of the UAW", *Detroit in Perspective 7:1* (Spring 1983), 75-96.

Detroit grew from less than 6,000 to 40,000 during the 1910s, with an additional 40,000 arriving during the first half of the 1920s.<sup>864</sup> This population increase was faced with a growing housing problem, as construction during the late 1910s had not kept up with population growth.<sup>865</sup> This was especially an issue for African-Americans, as their chief zone of settlement grew severely overcrowded and other neighborhoods resisted their moving in.<sup>866</sup> Other limitations were present for African-Americans: in spite of John Dancy's efforts, there were still difficulties in finding industrial work for African-Americans, especially African-American women.<sup>867</sup> In these respects, it was clear that the economic motivation for migration had limitations, as jobs were not particularly easy to find.

Migration inside Detroit similarly was visible during the 1920s. By the start of the decade, the cross-class ethnic neighborhoods of the nineteenth century had completely ceased to be, with ethnicity being more closely tied to class status than it had been in the past. By this point, it was clear that ethnicity in Detroit would also be demonstrated as bands of populations often sharing space with other ethnicities, rather than the discrete neighborhoods found in other cities.<sup>868</sup> The rise in mass ownership of automobiles began to have a spatial impact, as the automobile enabled neighborhoods to break from their

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<sup>864</sup> Katzman, 207; Levine, 3; Phyllis Vine, *One Man's Castle: Clarence Darrow in Defense of the American Dream* (New York: Amistad, 2004), 58.

<sup>865</sup> Howard, 26; Miles, 136; Ticknor, 174; Bates, 32-33; Solomon, 4, 13-14.

<sup>866</sup> Vine, 59-61, 66; Miles, 139-142, 145, 147; Levine, 128-131; Dancy, 56-58.

<sup>867</sup> Miles, Ch. 2 *passim*; Bates, 62, 65-66; Wolcott, 41, 74, 79, 172-173.

<sup>868</sup> The previously-cited Lois Rankin Papers at the Detroit Public Library demonstrate this quite clearly.

traditional locations around the radial boulevards of the city. The population ended up moving outward from both the core of the city and from close proximity from radial boulevards as a result.<sup>869</sup> This migration was not one based solely on matters of class: while the Detroit well-to-do migrated out of the core of the city, often to the eastern fringes, the working-class were also on the move.<sup>870</sup> Often, this migration was in pursuit of jobs: Henry Ford continued his outward movement from Detroit by building the new Rouge plant in Dearborn, the Dodge Brothers had made Hamtramck a booming city by putting their plant there, and the New Center several miles north of downtown Detroit emerged as a major commercial center during this time.<sup>871</sup> Overall, Detroit in the early 1920s was more and more decentralized, with low overall density and no area truly having status as the city center.

This heavy migration within Detroit made several administrative issues relating to expansion of importance. After a lull of several years following 1918, another expansion wave hit Detroit in 1921, which in five years would lead Detroit to annex land equaling 75% of its 1921 size and almost 150% of its 1915 size, chiefly to the northwest and northwest of the core of the city.<sup>872</sup> This expansion resulted in several problems, chief among them being the ability to provide services to these new sections of the city. The areas annexed had largely not had substantial populations until shortly before annexation,

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<sup>869</sup> Dunn, 12-13; Ticknor, 201-203; Galster, 48-49; Boyle, 14-15.

<sup>870</sup> Holli, "Impact", 183; Perlmutter, 8-9; *The People of Detroit*, 8; Ticknor, 185, 189-190.

<sup>871</sup> Vinyard, 104; Ticknor, 186-187; Hyde, 111; Farley et al, 25; Dunn, 19; Glazer, 82.

<sup>872</sup> *The People of Detroit*, 5; Farley et al, 27; Woodford and Woodford, 27.

making it necessary to provide both infrastructure such as streets, sewers, and parks, and police and fire services to these areas.<sup>873</sup> These expenses were becoming a substantial drain on the city: city expenditures and debt had increased rapidly following 1915, and, while some of this reflected population growth and inflation, much of it was directly the result of spending money providing services to outlying sections of Detroit.<sup>874</sup> Further complicating matters was the subject of political pull: many of those who were engaged in development in Detroit during this time, such as Milton and Robert Oakman, were also figures in the Detroit political scene, and their influence tended to serve as a force both for continued annexations and for continued expenditures in outlying areas.<sup>875</sup> This led to a serious administrative question, as Detroit began to have to face the question of whether or not it would continue to following population movements by annexing land, or whether it would admit to limitations in city resources and put a stop to this annexation wave.

Perhaps the largest issue created by the increasingly diffuse population of Detroit was the question of transportation. By the mid-1920s, it was clear that existing transportation facilities were insufficient, particularly in the core of the city. Various solutions to these problems were tried: parking garages were constructed as a way to free up street space, busses were introduced to Detroit, and attempts were made to operate limited stop multi-car express streetcars on radial boulevards as a predecessor to modern

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<sup>873</sup> Perlmutter, 5-6; DeMatteo, 374; Mason, 101.

<sup>874</sup> Fragnoli, 295.

<sup>875</sup> Lodge, 116-117n1; Hyde, 127.

light rail.<sup>876</sup> However, two items in particular emerged as favorites for solving major transportation issues. One of these was the creation of super-highways for traffic, in this period largely by widening and improving the radial boulevards of Detroit rather than by building new separate access roads.<sup>877</sup> Often, these efforts to obtain street widening and improvements were tied to local businesses who dominated the improvement associations that in this time were emerging for every major radial boulevard in the city.<sup>878</sup> However, these improvements could be controversial, particularly in cases when improvements were in conflict with other players in the Detroit political scene. The widening of Woodward Avenue, most important of the radial boulevards, was a case in point: street widening there was controversial due to the influence of several churches, who fought to prevent street widening that would have forced them to move or to be torn down.<sup>879</sup> Overall, disputes over street widening demonstrate how the automotive industry had further spatial impacts on Detroit, as the landscape of the city changed to reflect the importance of the automobile in terms of transportation.

The other major proposed solution to the transportation issue in Detroit was to construct rapid transit lines in the city. By the early 1920s, a wide-ranging number of people in Detroit, including many of importance in the automotive industry, had come to the conclusion that, because of limitations with both streetcars and with road

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<sup>876</sup> *The Detroit*, 11/19/1923, 3, 4, 20; Mark S. Foster, *From Streetcar to Superhighway: American City Planners and Urban Transportation, 1900-1940* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 84-85.

<sup>877</sup> *The Detroit*, 4/21/1924, 14; *The Detroit*, 3/23/1925, 7, 8, 19.

<sup>878</sup> For a set of records that demonstrate this, see the Woodward Avenue Improvement Association Records (Accession 813), Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>879</sup> *News*, 9/14/1925, 1, 2, 36; *Free Press*, 10/1/1925, 13; *Free Press*, 10/6/1925, 12.

transportation, some form of heavy rail transportation was necessary for Detroit. A Rapid Transit Commission was set up in order to determine the best way in which to set up this transportation.<sup>880</sup> While there was wide general support for rapid transit, however, many of the details were contentious. What was to be built was a major issue: subways were expensive, but large sections of the population opposed the construction of elevated lines in their neighborhoods.<sup>881</sup> Financing these lines was a question, with debate as to whether these lines would be funded through streetcar fares, by residents of the areas served by these lines, by the city as a whole, or by a combination of these sources.<sup>882</sup> Finally, where lines would be built and in what priority was at issue: while the radial boulevards were largely seen as having first priority, there were questions both as to which of these boulevards would get them, what order they would be built (although Woodward Avenue seems to have been widely regarded as first), and whether any other lines, such as proposed crosstown lines on Grand Boulevard that would miss the core of the city but which would link employment centers, would be built.<sup>883</sup> The spread outward of the population had managed to cause two difficulties in overall planning: the very fact of this spread had made rapid transit seem more essential, but conflicting geographic demands made planning much more complicated.

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<sup>880</sup> The Rapid Transit Commission Records are held at the Detroit Public Library.

<sup>881</sup> For the use of this politically, see Notes on Charles Bowles political rally, 9/24/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>882</sup> For some financing objections, see Francis Palms to John W. Chandler, 9/8/1924, Rapid Transit Commission Records, Box 1, Folder 10, Detroit Public Library. Davis, 171-172.

<sup>883</sup> For one set of lines under consideration, see Map of lines relative to industrial plants, 1926, Rapid Transit Commission Records, Box 17, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

As 1924 began, it was apparent that the automotive industry had massively reshaped Detroit, transforming it in thirty years from a second-tier city in the Great Lakes region to being one of the nation's leading industrial centers. The automotive industry had reshaped the city in other ways: the city had grown in size as well as in population, and had become a heavily polyglot city as a result of the flow of migrants into the city. Social relations had changed: the population had become heavily mobile and ended the old ethnic neighborhoods, while the firm establishment of the open shop in Detroit had similarly shaped labor relations. The political structures that had been in place in the 1890s were similarly gone, replaced by a new system that had centralized power in the hands of the mayor, eliminated political parties, and which reduced the importance of neighborhoods in local politics. This led by 1924 to a restructuring of local politics based on class, ethnic, spatial, and religious fractures, in which middle-class and upper-class Protestants of the west side fought working-class Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans on the east side for political power. These restructurings were both faces with challenges: there was a growing sense by 1924 that both constant annexations and a predominant focus on the automotive industry were limiting to Detroit, while the political supremacy of the Detroit Citizens League was under challenge by those who the organization had ignored. Overall, this led to a sense of contestation in the air, in which the transitions that had taken place in recent years would be fought over. 1924, then, seemed to be a time in which these transitions could be judged, and during which the issues raised by them would be up for debate.



## 1924: The Political Fault Lines Emerge

After the 1923 general election, Frank Doremus was never able to return to work as mayor, and, after considerable hospital stays, resigned as mayor on June 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>884</sup> The chief immediate beneficiary of this was Common Council President Joseph A. Martin, who became acting mayor during Doremus' illness and mayor when he resigned.<sup>885</sup> Martin symbolized the rising managerial class that was emerging in Detroit during the early twentieth century, rising to become the Central States Accountant for Studebaker at twenty-eight.<sup>886</sup> In 1918, he turned to municipal government, where his work as the first Commissioner of Supplies and Purchases demonstrated the sort of efficiency and centralization that the Detroit Citizens League had set as a goal with charter reform.<sup>887</sup> This also began a longtime close working connection between himself and James Couzens, which led both to Martin gaining an image as a Couzens acolyte and to his appointment as Commissioner of Public Works in 1920.<sup>888</sup> In this post, Martin gained a strong reputation as an administrator, particularly in connection with the extension of streets and sewers into outlying sections of Detroit. Martin's success as an administrator quickly led to his becoming a political figure: in August of 1923, Martin resigned to run

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<sup>884</sup> For Doremus' health issues, see *The Detroit*, 1/7/1924, 12; *Free Press*, 6/11/1924, 1, 7; *Free Press*, 7/13/1924, 1, 4; Joseph A. Martin to James Couzens, 5/23/1924, James Couzens Papers, Box 27, Folder 6, Library of Congress; A.K. Gage to W.A. Mara memo, 3/31/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 2, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>885</sup> For details of Martin's background, see Joseph A. Martin form, 8/21/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 21, Folder 5, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>886</sup> *Free Press*, 9/4/1924, 1, 3; *News*, 9/7/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>887</sup> *Free Press*, 5/12/1920, 6.

<sup>888</sup> *Free Press*, 5/11/1920, 1.

for Common Council, focusing on the need for economy in government and charging the schools and other city departments with being wasteful.<sup>889</sup> In this race, Martin topped the polls, automatically becoming Common Council President as a result.<sup>890</sup> In certain regards, Martin's success was somewhat contradictory to other results: labor candidates had had a breakthrough, while Martin had not had a strong record with labor as an administrator. However, their success mutually connects to the climate of that election, in which four of nine Council incumbents lost their seats.<sup>891</sup> In winning this race, Martin had also furthered himself as a leading political figure within Detroit, by demonstrating electoral popularity to parallel his administrative image. In these ways, he was in a position to become a new favorite for the Detroit Citizens League, who at that point had a vacuum in terms of obvious candidates for mayor. Overall, Martin symbolized the transition of the managerial class from business to politics, making him an exemplar for the structural changes caused by the Citizens League in the 1910s.

Martin had not really served as President of the Common Council, as he more or less immediately had to engage in the administration of Detroit due to Doremus' illness.<sup>892</sup> As an administrator, questions were raised concerning his activities: there were charges that he was ignoring Doremus' wishes, including by Doremus' wife.<sup>893</sup> His handling of Prohibition also got him into trouble, as he engaged in a dispute with the

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<sup>889</sup> Fragnoli, 295-296.

<sup>890</sup> Fragnoli, 296.

<sup>891</sup> Fragnoli, 296.

<sup>892</sup> *News*, 9/5/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>893</sup> *News*, 9/7/1924, 1, 2; *News*, 11/3/1924, 2.

Reverend William Stidger, prominent minister of St. Mark's Methodist, concerning the activities of Police Commissioner Frank Croul shortly after assuming office.<sup>894</sup> He also had problems with organized labor due to his argument that he could not recognize labor unions under the city charter, resulting in substantial disputes with streetcar unions involving their recognition by the Department of Street Railways.<sup>895</sup> He also maintained concerns with budgeting, working with the Detroit Board of Commerce on this subject and arguing for a full-time budget bureau.<sup>896</sup> In the less than two months that he actually served as mayor (he resigned on August 2<sup>nd</sup> in order to run for the office), he managed to get in a fight with both the Common Council and with various city employees concerning the gas rate for Detroit.<sup>897</sup> Martin argued that the price of gas was being increased while the quality of the gas was deteriorating, and both urged the voters of Detroit to vote against maintaining gas of this quality and fired city employees who he charged with being favorable to the Detroit City Gas Company. In this stance, he was demonstrating the Couzens influence towards the administration of utilities by the city, as Martin ultimately argued for a need for municipal ownership of the City Gas Company.<sup>898</sup> Martin established himself as a politician whose focus on efficiency and lack of political

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<sup>894</sup> Hyland, 161-168.

<sup>895</sup> *Free Press*, 10/11/1924, 1, 3. For some sense as to what labor thought of him, see *Labor News*, 5/30/1924, 4.

<sup>896</sup> *The Detroitier*, 1/21/1924, 5, 17; *Free Press*, 8/26/1924, 1, 4.

<sup>897</sup> For his resignation, see *News*, 8/2/1924, 1. Materials concerning his fight over the gas rate can be found with frequency in the *Free Press* from June into August of 1924.

<sup>898</sup> *Free Press*, 10/31/1924, 14.

ties made him favorable to the Detroit Citizens League, but whose inability to get along with others was politically damaging.

The main challenge to Martin came from a candidate tied both to the politicians swept away by the charter reform of the 1910s and the ethnic groups the Detroit Citizens League had politically neglected. John W. Smith came from a working-class background on the east side, becoming a pipefitter and plumbers union official after teenaged service in the Spanish-American War.<sup>899</sup> In the 1900s, Smith gained a reputation as an organizer for Republicans on the east side of Detroit, and was credited with swinging two wards for the Republicans through his efforts.<sup>900</sup> This led to patronage rewards, with Smith becoming first a deputy United States Marshal and then Deputy State Labor Commissioner with responsibility for labor matters in Detroit.<sup>901</sup> Smith turned in the 1910s to local politics through a close association with real estate developers and politicians Robert and Milton Oakman, serving as chief deputy to Milton Oakman during his terms as Wayne County Sheriff and Wayne County Clerk.<sup>902</sup> From these positions, Smith continued to build personal political strength, becoming a factional leader on the east side and leading the Roosevelt campaign in Detroit in 1912.<sup>903</sup> When Oakman was defeated for renomination as Clerk in 1918, Smith temporarily left politics to become

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<sup>899</sup> For Smith's background, see the reprint from the *Literary Digest* found in *Saturday Night*, 12/5/1925, 12.

<sup>900</sup> *Free Press*, 11/30/1918, 10.

<sup>901</sup> Bates, 88; *Free Press*, 5/18/1913, 13.

<sup>902</sup> *Free Press*, 11/30/1918, 10; Lodge, 110.

<sup>903</sup> *Free Press*, 6/20/1918, 12; *Free Press*, 8/26/1924, 1, 4.

circulation manager for the *Dearborn Independent*, but lost that job in spite of success in obtaining subscriptions in Detroit due to disagreements with Henry Ford about its management, shortly before it took its anti-Semitic turn.<sup>904</sup> In 1920, Smith returned to politics, running Hiram Johnson's presidential campaign in Detroit and being elected to the Michigan Senate from an east side seat.<sup>905</sup> In early 1922, Smith's work in politics was rewarded when Truman Newberry (soon to resign from the Senate in connection with charges that he had engaged in corrupt expenditures to enter that body) arranged for his appointment as Postmaster of Detroit.<sup>906</sup> On the one hand, Smith by 1924 had risen to a high administrative position in Detroit, and was in a position where he could unite foes of the Citizens League. However, Smith had held virtual every position in his career through political patronage, and, as such, was regarded by the Citizens League and their allies in Detroit politics as representing the sort of politician they had hoped to eliminate through charter reform.

In certain regards, the joint presence of Martin and Smith as candidates polarized the race, as, by the end of early August and the candidate filing deadline, only six candidates were in the race.<sup>907</sup> The two other candidates with substantial political careers did not stay in the race long: School Inspector John S. Hall withdrew shortly after the filing deadline, while Henry W. Busch, secretary and general manager of the Department

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<sup>904</sup> For Smith's service, see Pipp, 56-57.

<sup>905</sup> Reprint from the *Literary Digest* found in *Saturday Night*, 12/5/1925, 12; *Civic Searchlight*, August 1920, 5.

<sup>906</sup> *Free Press*, 3/9/1922, 3; Lodge, 110.

<sup>907</sup> *Free Press*, 8/10/1924, 1, 2.

of Parks and Boulevards and a figure of note in the Moose, withdrew two weeks later.<sup>908</sup> The other two were of even less note: Alexander Stuart was vice-president of the Continental Bank, while Charles Bowles was a lawyer of far more note for his work in Masonic organizations than for anything connected with his law practice.<sup>909</sup> Overall, the limited notability of the other candidates reflects the ways in which Detroit politics had been polarized since the rise of the Detroit Citizens League. Both the League and its foes had run races charging that their opponents represented the forces of political bossism, and both had treated Detroit politics as being a binary of voters against interests, discouraging the participation of other forces in Detroit politics by implying that there was no room for those outside this narrow binary to function.

The primary campaigns of Martin and Smith furthered the sense of polarization as present in Detroit political life, as well as establishing this race as one between a business-backed elite candidate and one with working-class and ethnic appeal. Martin obtained support from the business organizations operating off the various radial boulevards of Detroit, and gave most of his early campaign talks to the larger civic organizations of Detroit.<sup>910</sup> He ran on the need for efficiency in government, and tended to use his own record to demonstrate how efficient government could be obtained for Detroit.<sup>911</sup> These pleas for efficiency were often tied to visions involving the future of

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<sup>908</sup> *News*, 8/12/1924, 32; *News*, 8/19/1924, 1.

<sup>909</sup> *News*, 8/10/1924, 1; Levine, 138.

<sup>910</sup> *Free Press*, 8/1/1924, 4; *Free Press*, 9/1/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>911</sup> *Free Press*, 8/20/1924, 1, 2; *News*, 9/8/1924, 18.

Detroit, with Martin noting the need to prepare for massive population growth within a few years through care in both infrastructure and in planning.<sup>912</sup> Much of Martin's campaigning, however, was explicitly negative: Martin portrayed Smith as a machine hack in his campaigning, tying him to such utilities as the City Gas Company and the Detroit United Railway, and frequently denouncing the *Detroit Times*, the only daily newspaper in Detroit that backed Smith.<sup>913</sup> In this campaigning, Martin's tactics resembled those used by the Citizens League in recent elections, as that organization had similarly combined appeals to their own success with bringing up fears about the return of the past generation of Detroit politicians to power. However, this was an approach with inherent limitations, as it was one that seems to have made Martin less and less appealing personally, damaging his electoral chances.<sup>914</sup>

Smith's early campaigning differed in audience from Martin's: he tended to speak to organized labor early in the race, and obtained strong support from labor unions, particularly those associated with the streetcar system.<sup>915</sup> He also appealed to his record as an administrator, especially in terms of his service as Postmaster. However, he also ran his campaign heavily in response to Martin's charges: he denied having bad political associates by noting his ties to progressive figures in politics, proclaimed support for municipal ownership in response to claims that he was a front for utilities, and used his

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<sup>912</sup> *Free Press*, 8/22/1924, 1, 2; *News*, 9/9/1924, 1.

<sup>913</sup> *Free Press*, 8/30/1924, 1, 4; *News*, 8/30/1924, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 9/6/1924, 1, 4; *Free Press*, 8/20/1924, 1, 2. The Detroit United Railway was still operating interurban service in Detroit during 1924, leading to it remaining potent as a political target.

<sup>914</sup> *News*, 10/22/1924, 4, admits to his being "peremptory and sometimes irascible".

<sup>915</sup> *News*, 8/20/1924, 1, 2; *News*, 8/27/1924, 11.

post office record to deny that he would be overly political in his administration.<sup>916</sup> He also tried challenging Martin's administrative record, accusing him of supporting a land grab in association with railroad grade separation, adding thousands of dollars to the cost of the election, ignoring the Detroit bus industry, and being incompetent in sewer construction.<sup>917</sup> All of these claims backfired, however: relevant city officials challenged some of Smith's claims, while others were demonstrated as having a faulty basis.<sup>918</sup> This led to Smith dropping most of these claims over time, and having a more difficult time articulating reasons why he was preferable as a candidate to Martin.<sup>919</sup> This ineffectiveness served to damage Smith as a candidate, as it led to him getting an image as making wild charges and as thereby demonstrating a lack of knowledge of city affairs.

Stuart and Bowles, meanwhile, received relatively little press attention before the primary, which was regarded as inevitably leading to a runoff between Martin and Smith. Stuart ran without an organization and refused to state a platform.<sup>920</sup> He compared himself to Hazen Pingree in his appeals, and was in an odd position of being both the only candidate to defend the City Gas Company for increasing gas prices while at the same time denouncing the Canadian government for their role in the Grand Trunk grade separation.<sup>921</sup> Bowles was more active as a campaigner, and seems to have set a more

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<sup>916</sup> *Free Press*, 8/27/1924, 1, 4; *News*, 9/1/1924, 15; *Free Press*, 8/26/1924, 1, 4.

<sup>917</sup> *News*, 8/21/1924, 2; *News*, 8/23/1924, 1.

<sup>918</sup> *News*, 8/23/1924, 1; *Free Press*, 8/26/1924, 1, 7; *News*, 8/29/1924, 1.

<sup>919</sup> *News*, 8/29/1924, 16; *News*, 9/1/1924, 15.

<sup>920</sup> *News*, 9/4/1924, 24.

<sup>921</sup> *News*, 8/17/1924, 3; *News*, 9/4/1924, 6; *News*, 9/4/1924, 24.



coherent set of planks than Stuart did. Some of these were standard, as he joined Martin and Smith in calling for a subway system, establishing a metropolitan area, and settling disputes involving gas and telephone service.<sup>922</sup> He also campaigned strongly against waste by government, and supported law enforcement, especially as it concerned Prohibition, both stances long associated with the Detroit Citizens League.<sup>923</sup> Bowles had some distinctive campaign stances: he argued that the city had focused excessively on business matters and that the city would need to consider humanitarian issues due to the limitations of private organizations for welfare work.<sup>924</sup> He also made a strong effort to avoid campaigning against individuals, resulting in a strong contrast between his campaign and those of Martin and Smith.<sup>925</sup> Ultimately, Bowles increased his campaign activities as the primary drew nearer, but was still regarded as being a distinctly secondary candidate.

In the days prior to the September 9<sup>th</sup> primary, there was a strong sense that this was a race where Martin and Smith were setting the table in preparation for the general election fight that was to come. The *Free Press* and especially the *News* ran harsh front-page editorials daily against Smith, each a variant on the basic charge that the election of Smith would result in the restoration of gang rule to City Hall.<sup>926</sup> Martin tried to expand

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<sup>922</sup> *News*, 9/4/1924, 11.

<sup>923</sup> *News*, 8/31/1924, 4.

<sup>924</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>925</sup> *News*, 9/9/1924, 2.

<sup>926</sup> The *News*, for instance, ran anti-Smith editorials every day during the first nine days of September, carried anti-Smith materials on the front page on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>, and generally engaged in rather

his audience, appealing to ethnic voters and speaking in factories as well as to elites.<sup>927</sup> Smith by this point had completely given up direct attacks on Martin, instead focusing on his own record in his campaigning and trying to benefit from his support from both the Detroit Federation of Labor and the *Times*.<sup>928</sup> The Detroit Citizens League issued primary preferences: while not endorsing any candidates, they preferred Martin and Smith, finding Bowles to lack experience and Stuart without knowledge of the post.<sup>929</sup> Overall, all of this was under the presumption that a full climax was yet to come, and that, once Martin and Smith had advanced to the general election, a much stronger contest would take place, with fireworks beyond those seen before the primary.<sup>930</sup>

### **Primary Ties, Or the Invisible Empire Becomes Visible**

These assumptions about the coming election were blasted to pieces when the results of the primary came in. Smith led in total votes in the first round: his support was strongest on the east side in areas along the Detroit River, but he also gained support along Michigan Avenue on the west side, Gratiot Avenue on the east side, and in the lower west side of the city.<sup>931</sup> Overall, this support was heavily tied to ethnicity and class:

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negative treatment of him as a candidate, while the *Free Press* similarly engaged in heavily front-page editorials, though largely more in favor of Martin than explicitly against Smith.

<sup>927</sup> *Free Press*, 9/6/1924, 1, 4; *News*, 9/8/1924, 1.

<sup>928</sup> *News*, 9/4/1924, 21; *Free Press*, 9/4/1924, 1. For the Detroit Federation of Labor endorsement, see *Free Press*, 9/8/1924, 2, and *Labor News*, 8/29/1924, 3.

<sup>929</sup> *News*, 9/2/1924, 25. For some of the material the Citizens League gathered to make this decision, see Information on candidates, 9/9/1924, Civic Searchlight Papers, Additional Papers, Box 42, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>930</sup> For some of these assumptions, see *News*, 9/9/1924, 4; *Free Press*, 9/9/1924, 1.

<sup>931</sup> All comments in this section and the following concerning the spatial distribution of the vote are taken from *News*, 9/14/1924, 10, which contains a map showing candidate performances by precinct.

these were all working-class areas of the city, with the area along Michigan Avenue heavily associated with Poles, along Gratiot with Poles, Italians, and Germans, and on the lower west side with Hungarians. Moreover, Smith tended to carry these portions of the city by a very wide margin, demonstrating strong working-class ethnic popularity for his candidacy and a lack of such support for his rivals. Martin's second-place finish was also associated with class: he did best in upper-class Protestant parts of the city, most notably the areas west of Woodward Avenue near Highland Park and in the Indian Village area near Jefferson Avenue on the east side. This also fit with the audience he appealed to in the primary and demonstrated that he had succeeded in securing for himself status as the candidate of the business class of Detroit.

Most notable, however, was Charles Bowles' performance: he received over 70,000 votes and came within 2,000 votes of denying Martin a place in the runoff.<sup>932</sup> The Bowles vote was scattered, being strongest along Grand River Boulevard, but with strong support also present in outlying areas of the city, particularly to the extreme northwest and east, and in the southwestern section of Detroit. These areas tended to be ones that had been annexed to Detroit in the years following 1915, consisting largely of recently-built single-family homes.<sup>933</sup> These were also areas settled by native-born non-elite Protestants, with southwestern Detroit in particular being a zone of working-class Protestants. This result was a major jolt, as no one who had been following the race had

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<sup>932</sup> *News*, 9/12/1924, 4, contains a cartoon identifying him as "The Darkest Dark Horse Ever".

<sup>933</sup> The housing status is taken from *News*, 9/14/1924, 10, while the comments about annexation are taken from the maps in *The People of Detroit*, 5.

expected Bowles to have substantial support.<sup>934</sup> Similarly jolting was the result of the Common Council primary for the seat Martin had vacated: Andrew Brodie, an undertaker with no political background, outpolled two former City Councilors, a former City Controller, and an incumbent member of the Michigan House in qualifying for the runoff.<sup>935</sup> Overall, these results upended expectations, demonstrating that the election had not been polarized as had been expected.

To understand what happened that the Detroit political observers missed, it is necessary to look at the larger American political context. During the mid-1920s, the Ku Klux Klan was at the peak of its powers as a political force in the United States, able to defeat Democratic efforts to condemn them in their platform and to discourage Republicans from attempting to do so.<sup>936</sup> The Klan was active in every major section of the United States, but was probably strongest as an urban movement.<sup>937</sup> The Klan mobilized non-elite Protestants as a conventional mass movement, often claiming

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<sup>934</sup> *Free Press*, 9/10/1924, 1.

<sup>935</sup> *Free Press*, 9/11/1924, 1,3; *News*, 9/11/1924, 1.

<sup>936</sup> Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), has issues concerning the applicability of its claims, but is as close as we have had in recent times to a full scholarly survey of the second Ku Klux Klan. Of great utility as a source involving the Klan in gendered terms is Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>937</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) was the first work to go into this in detail, and has yet to be superseded. Of use in relation to it are some of the case studies concerning the Klan in particular cities, such as Robert Alan Goldberg, *Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); William D. Jenkins, *Steel Valley Klan: The Ku Klux Klan in Ohio's Mahoning Valley* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990); and Shawn Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo, New York* (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

fraternal interests similar to the Masons, rather than by being a terroristic organization.<sup>938</sup> The Klan tended to position itself as a force against corruption of the civic politic, with ethnic and religious groups they did not approve of being targets based on local conditions.<sup>939</sup> However, they also targeted conditions as well as people, campaigning against vice and political corruption in the urban sphere. These campaigns had been effective at gaining an urban audience: by 1924, Klan governments had been formed in Indianapolis, Denver, and Portland, and there were few cities in which the Klan did not try to play some role in the urban political sphere.<sup>940</sup> Overall, the Klan was becoming a force to be reckoned with politically, able to mobilize voters regardless of partisan affinities or political organizations.

Compared to neighboring states like Ohio and Indiana, Michigan had not been a stronghold of the Klan in the years leading to 1924.<sup>941</sup> In Michigan, Detroit was a center of Klan organization, with the Symwa Club serving as the organization for local Klansmen waiting for an official charter to be granted by the national Klan.<sup>942</sup> Starting in 1923, the Detroit Klan had gained an increased level of public visibility through mass

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<sup>938</sup> For an example of this way of the Klan concerning itself, see the Klan packet held by the Boston Athenaeum, and this is also noted in Vinyard, 57.

<sup>939</sup> For examples of the Klan stating its goals in its own words, see Ku Klux Klan, *Papers Read at the Meeting of Grand Dragons, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan: Together with Other Articles of Interest to Klansmen* (New York: Arno Press, 1977 reprint of 1923 original).

<sup>940</sup> The Jackson work demonstrates this in considerable detail.

<sup>941</sup> Norman Fredric Weaver, "The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1954), 268.

<sup>942</sup> Jackson, 133.

initiation ceremonies and a cross-burning at City Hall just before the 1923 election.<sup>943</sup> Efforts through the Burns Law to curb the Klan by prohibiting their regalia were ineffective, as Detroit Klansmen tended to either ignore this rule or were willing to engage in public actions without the regalia.<sup>944</sup> However, the Klan had failed to establish themselves as political players yet in Detroit: their strongest effort to date, campaigning against Frank Broderick's bid for the Common Council in 1923, had failed, as Broderick won in spite of their opposition.<sup>945</sup> Similarly, the most notable action of the Klan in state politics to date, efforts to abolish parochial education in 1920, had failed by a two to one margin.<sup>946</sup> However, the Klan could not be dismissed on these past failures, as a Christmas Eve rally in Detroit with thousands of participants demonstrated that they were still growing as a force entering 1924.<sup>947</sup>

In 1924, the Klan engaged in a massive push in Michigan politics, in which they engaged in two separate actions. The Klan supported a proposal by James Hamilton to require mandatory public school attendance between the ages of 5 and 16, in a push against parochial education similar to that engaged by the Klan in other states.<sup>948</sup> This proposal was placed on the November ballot after a ruling by state courts in May of 1924,

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<sup>943</sup> Morris-Crowther, 62; Vinyard, 45-46, 72.

<sup>944</sup> Vinyard, 44-45; Jackson, 130-131; Weaver, 279. Craig Fox, *Everyday Klansmen: White Protestant Life and the KKK in 1920s Michigan* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011), 175-176, goes as far as to argue that these laws might have actually served to legitimize the Klan.

<sup>945</sup> Jackson, 132.

<sup>946</sup> *Michigan Catholic*, 5/1/1924, 1.

<sup>947</sup> Vinyard, 71; Jackson, 132.

<sup>948</sup> Vinyard, 52-53, 79; Weaver, 280-281; Fox, 60.

leading to mobilization for and against this measure.<sup>949</sup> In addition to this push, the Klan organized a slate for statewide offices in the Republican primary, which had generally been tantamount to election in Michigan since the Civil War. The leading Republican politicians in Michigan were tempting targets for this campaign: Governor Alexander Groesbeck had long been charged with building a political machine, while Senator James Couzens was foreign-born, married to a Catholic and with Catholic children, reluctant to campaign on his own behalf, and an irritant to orthodox Republicans in the Senate.<sup>950</sup> Moreover, because there were multiple candidates challenging both men, it meant that the Klan could win by forming a simple plurality. However, the Klan had difficulties finding candidates: in the race for Governor, Hamilton and Klan field organizer Frederick Perry split the Klan vote, while many Klan voters abandoned Lansing businessman Daniel W. Tussing to instead back orthodox Republican candidate and federal judge Arthur Tuttle.<sup>951</sup> Overall, while the Klan was clearly trying to claim a political role, there were limitations present concerning its overall effectiveness.

These organizational limitations to the Klan were demonstrated in the primary. Groesbeck won renomination for a third term with a large plurality, with Hamilton and Perry combining for 200,000 votes.<sup>952</sup> This total, on the one hand, demonstrates some

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<sup>949</sup> *Michigan Catholic*, 5/1/1924, 1.

<sup>950</sup> For Groesbeck as machinist, see Cash Asher, *Ten Thousand Promises* (Grass Lake, MI: Cash Asher, 1937), 7. For Couzens, see Harry Barnard, *Independent Man: The Life of Senator James Couzens* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), particularly 32, 135, 169, as well as the James Couzens Papers at the Library of Congress.

<sup>951</sup> Weaver, 278; Jackson, 133-134; Vinyard, 80; *News*, 9/7/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>952</sup> Vinyard, 80. The *Free Press* and *News* of 9/10/1924 and 9/11/1924 also published the results for this race.

popular strength for the Klan's political message: Hamilton had finished second in the primary, and Perry's fifth-place finish outpolled some notables in Michigan politics.<sup>953</sup> However, even combined this was still over 100,000 votes less than Groesbeck's total, demonstrating that the Klan's message could not overcome a strong opponent and internal divisions. In the race for Senate, the Klan fared even worse, as Tussing finished last behind even a candidate who had dropped out before the primary. Moreover, Klan voters deserting Tussing for Tuttle had a limited impact: Couzens was nominated for a full term, outpolling Tuttle and Tussing combined. On the one hand, the votes for Governor in particular suggest that the Klan was able to appeal to voters who were not Klansmen, as the Michigan Klan in 1924 was estimated as having 60,000 to 75,000 members.<sup>954</sup> However, this still demonstrates limitations in their appeal, as, in order for the Klan to become major political players in any vicinity, they would need to gain support from a wider audience.

In the days following the primary, efforts were made to try to understand the Bowles vote. Bowles himself attributed it to the support of his friends, claiming to have over 1,000 of them (particularly ones he met in Masonic groups) working for him.<sup>955</sup> The *Detroit News* noted Bowles' appeal in newly-built areas with single-family homes and flats, while the *Free Press* suggested that Martin and Smith's mudslinging had resulted in

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<sup>953</sup> Vinyard, 80.

<sup>954</sup> For this estimate in size, see Weaver, 276-277; *Michigan Catholic*, 10/9/1924, 1, 2. Other sources claim as high as 875,000 (Forrest Davis, "Labor Spies and the Black Legion", in Wilma Wood Henrickson, *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 375), but this is considered unlikely, given their relative performance as a political force.

<sup>955</sup> *News*, 9/11/1924, 1.



many voters abandoning their candidacies for Bowles.<sup>956</sup> However, the success of Bowles and Brodie in the primary was rapidly attributed to the Klan: it was noted that a cross was burnt for Bowles just before the primary, while the *Free Press* stated that Bowles having Klan backing had become common knowledge just before the election.<sup>957</sup> Both Bowles and Brodie (who was foreign-born and therefore ineligible for membership) denied being Klan members, but in Bowles' case with some equivocation: the *News* noted Bowles as claiming the Klan was overrated as a political force, but the *Free Press* noted his refusal to denounce the organization had included a claim that there was a tendency to charge white Protestants in politics with being in the Klan.<sup>958</sup> In any event, Bowles gained the image of being the Klan's candidate for mayor, and as being a viable candidate solely through their support.<sup>959</sup> Through this, Bowles had managed to shake up Detroit politics by benefiting from the support of an organization that generally was causing political upheavals.

Why the Klan became interested in this race can be noted by looking at other elements of the race. While Martin and Smith differed heavily on the issues, they shared in common Catholicism as a religion and non-WASP ethnic backgrounds in a city that had rarely elected Catholics as mayor.<sup>960</sup> The Detroit Citizens League had been criticized

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<sup>956</sup> *News*, 9/14/1924, 10; *Free Press*, 9/12/1924, 6.

<sup>957</sup> *Free Press*, 9/10/1924, 1.

<sup>958</sup> *News*, 9/11/1924, 1; *Free Press*, 9/12/1924, 1, 15.

<sup>959</sup> *Free Press*, 9/11/1924, 1, 3.

<sup>960</sup> For Martin's background as Irish, see *News*, 9/7/1924, 1, 2. Smith is identified as having a Polish mother in Boyle, 141, but denied that in *News*, 10/15/1924, 25.

by rank-and-file members for preferring Martin and Smith, with some pushing for them to back a Protestant.<sup>961</sup> To a heavy degree, this demonstrates the split of the Citizens League coalition: the Detroit business elite strongly backed Martin due to his record in administration and his support for economy in government, but this were insufficient for Protestant churchgoers who did not approve of Martin on religious ground. Moreover, Bowles' campaigning as an outsider to the Detroit political system was appealing, as it played to a growing conviction that the Citizens League was just as guilty of political bossism as any of its foes.<sup>962</sup> Other stances of Bowles seemed perfectly designed to appeal to the political Protestantism that emerged in Detroit during the 1910s: his anti-vice pledges had been a standard plank in those campaigns, while his concerns for a humane administration struck an ethical note of a sort that the Citizens League had been neglecting by focusing on the business elite. Overall, Bowles managed to take advantage of an existing atmosphere of political Protestantism in Detroit at a moment when it felt taken for granted, enabling his rapid advance as a political figure.

### **Sticker Madness: A Three-Way General Election**

The two weeks after the primary formed a general break from political campaigning in Detroit. Recounts to determine the final results for the mayor and Council races began on September 16<sup>th</sup> under the supervision of the City Election Commission, which consisted of Common Council President (and Acting Mayor) John C. Lodge, City Clerk Richard Lindsay, and Recorder (head judge of the criminal court) Charles L.

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<sup>961</sup> Memo in response to the Methodist Union Committee, 9/26/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 2, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library; Fragnoli, 311-312.

<sup>962</sup> Fragnoli, 268-269.

Bartlett.<sup>963</sup> On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, they finished their recount, having determined that no errors that had substantially changed results occurred and that Bowles had only gained 119 votes over Martin.<sup>964</sup> Ordinarily, this would have ended the matter, and the race would have become the battle between Martin and Smith that had been expected before the primary. However, even before the recount was requested, rumors had emerged that Bowles would run as a “sticker”, or write-in, candidate if he did not make it to the runoff ballot.<sup>965</sup> While Bowles denied these charges at first, it became less clear what he would do as time went by, in part apparently reflecting a divide in his campaign between Claire Swain, who had mobilized Masons for Bowles, and George Calkins, assistant to Stidger at St. Mark’s.<sup>966</sup> The very discussion of this demonstrated the potential for upheaval, as the general assumption had been that candidates eliminated in primaries would not run as write-in candidates, resulting in potential complications if this tradition was broken.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, Bowles announced that he would run as a sticker candidate in the general election, justifying his actions by noting that there was no rule prohibiting this, claiming that the primary was unfair due to limited publicity, and that he had a duty to run both by the request of friends and in order to stop the implementation of machine politics in Detroit.<sup>967</sup> Notably, some of these claims tied heavily with the rhetoric of

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<sup>963</sup> *Free Press*, 9/17/1924, 15. For the membership of the City Election Commission, see Oakley E. Distin to William P. Lovett, 11/20/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 11, Folder 10, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>964</sup> *Free Press*, 9/23/1924, 5.

<sup>965</sup> *Free Press*, 9/12/1924, 1, 15.

<sup>966</sup> *News*, 9/17/1924, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 9/23/1924, 5.

<sup>967</sup> *News*, 9/23/1924, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 9/24/1924, 1, 16.

political Protestantism, as the anti-machine charges and the argument of morality being essential were both heavily utilized by backers of the Citizens League during the 1910s. At the same time, he was also borrowing criticisms from the foes of political Protestantism: in addition to the already-noted sense of the Citizens League acting as bosses, his denunciations of the Detroit press paralleled a growing conviction among many that Detroit newspapers, particularly the *Detroit News*, had become heavily influential in Detroit politics to the point of trying to select their own candidates for public office and denouncing those who opposed their influence.<sup>968</sup> In these ways, Bowles was using the rhetoric that both of the existing factions in Detroit politics had used against one another as a means to both justify his own political actions and to establish himself as a third force locally. This also guaranteed that the race for mayor would remain messy, with three candidates continuing into the general election.

Bowles immediately started his general election campaign upon noting his continued candidacy, trying to gain an advantage on Martin and Smith, who were waiting until early October before beginning their campaigns.<sup>969</sup> Bowles quickly demonstrated a political following, drawing 1500 to McCollester Hall for an early speech.<sup>970</sup> Much of Bowles' early campaigning focused on voter education, explaining how to properly cast a

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<sup>968</sup> For this criticism of the *News*, see *Saturday Night*, 2/21/1925, Second Section, 2, 8; *Labor News*, 10/10/1924, 1.

<sup>969</sup> *News*, 9/25/1924, 29.

<sup>970</sup> *Free Press*, 9/25/1924, 1.

write-in vote for mayor.<sup>971</sup> Bowles targeted certain groups in his campaign, with a strong early focus on Masonic groups and Protestant churches.<sup>972</sup> He also continued from the primary efforts to gain the support of women, praising them for their civic interest, and generally trying to incorporate a group that had been neglected into Detroit politics.<sup>973</sup> Bowles denied Klan membership, but in a way that seemed designed to keep their support without scaring voters opposed to the Klan.<sup>974</sup> He continued campaigning against political machines, mixing vague general charges with the claim that the street railways had been politicized under city management.<sup>975</sup> In using this claim, Bowles was able to appeal to his background as a streetcar conductor while using the critiques given by the press to Smith's union backing.<sup>976</sup> In the early stages of the race, the sincerity of his campaign was confusing, with questions being raised as to his being a Smith stalking horse because of the ties between Smith, Stidger, and Calkins.<sup>977</sup> Others were more inclined to consider Bowles a threat, with the Wayne County Democratic Party, the Polish Association of America, and a statewide gathering of Methodists all denouncing

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<sup>971</sup> *News*, 9/30/1924, 6.

<sup>972</sup> *News*, 10/1/1924, 16, serves as one example of this.

<sup>973</sup> *News*, 10/1/1924, 16. For women in Detroit politics, see Morris-Crowther, 122-124.

<sup>974</sup> *News*, 10/1/1924, 16, includes both a denial and it being phrased in a way to make it seem positive to both sides in this matter.

<sup>975</sup> *News*, 9/25/1924, 32, contains a whole speech by Bowles demonstrating this.

<sup>976</sup> For Bowles as conductor, see Cash Asher, *Sacred Cows: A Story of the Recall of Mayor Bowles* (Detroit: The Author, 1931), 13. For the press criticism, see *News*, 8/20/1924, 1, 2, as just one example of a line of attack that would be used throughout 1924.

<sup>977</sup> For this charge, see *News*, 9/26/1924, 1.

the Klan.<sup>978</sup> However, Bowles' status was still confused, as it was uncertain how serious a threat he was for the general election.

Martin and Smith responded to the growing threat of Bowles and the Klan in different respects. Martin, for the most part, continued to campaign along the lines that he had been before the primary, continuing to emphasize his experience and the need to prepare for the future of Detroit.<sup>979</sup> He continued to link his campaign with the business interests of Detroit, but also began to tie himself increasingly with James Couzens, in an attempt to take advantage of Couzens' strong popularity in Detroit.<sup>980</sup> However, he also acknowledged how the Klan and other religious issues had entered the campaign, stating that he would rather lose than receive any Klan support and speaking against the parochial school amendment.<sup>981</sup> He also urged the voters of Detroit to maintain their tolerance in spite of the religious issues coming up in the campaign.<sup>982</sup> Some of this connected to efforts of his to improve his political standing among working-class ethnics in Detroit, after his poor performance amongst them in the primary. However, it also reflects abuse he received from the Klan, as Martin charged that Bowles supporters and even some of Bowles' family members had accused him of having alien status.<sup>983</sup>

Overall, while Martin continued to position himself as the candidate of the Detroit elite,

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<sup>978</sup> *Michigan Catholic*, 9/25/1924, 6; *Free Press*, 9/12/1924, 12; *Free Press*, 9/19/1924, 3.

<sup>979</sup> *News*, 10/3/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>980</sup> For this tying in, see *Free Press*, 10/2/1924, 1, 3.

<sup>981</sup> *Free Press*, 10/3/1924, 1, 3.

<sup>982</sup> *News*, 10/3/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>983</sup> *News*, 10/5/1924, 1.

he also positioned himself as a strong foe of the Klan in an effort to gain support from those similarly opposed to that organization.

Smith had a later return to campaigning than either Bowles or Martin, running a largely inactive campaign in the first week of October.<sup>984</sup> On his return, Smith seems to have focused on getting a direct personal connection with Detroit voters, focusing on campaign events in personal homes rather than public speeches.<sup>985</sup> He was still on the defensive concerning charges of him representing gang rule, and in his responses to these charges spent considerable energy criticizing the *News*, which continued to emphasize this as an issue even after the primary.<sup>986</sup> He continued to respond to charges against his record by emphasizing his work on behalf of organized labor as deputy state labor commissioner and for progressives as a politician.<sup>987</sup> He also noted a paradox: in spite of his being used as an example of the threat of gang rule in City Hall, he had never held a position in municipal government, nor had he ever had business with the city.<sup>988</sup> He also turned towards a greater discussion of issues concerning Detroit, pledging support for both a municipal airport and for reapportionment.<sup>989</sup> Finally, he paralleled Bowles in trying to solidify his base, campaigning heavily among ethnic organizations and

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<sup>984</sup> *Free Press*, 10/2/1924, 1, 3, notes that he has not returned to the stump.

<sup>985</sup> *Free Press*, 10/3/1924, 1, 3.

<sup>986</sup> *Free Press*, 10/8/1924, 4.

<sup>987</sup> *News*, 10/9/1924, 29; *Free Press*, 10/10/1924, 3.

<sup>988</sup> *News*, 10/8/1924, 25.

<sup>989</sup> *News*, 10/2/1924, 22.

organized labor.<sup>990</sup> In this approach, he was trying to maintain the following that he had demonstrated in the primary, as, with their continued support, he would be in a position to win the election if the Martin and Bowles strength remained constant.

While Martin and Bowles returned to campaigning, various groups began to mobilize in Detroit in order to fight the Ku Klux Klan. Some of the responses to the Klan came from rival mass movements: the Hamilton-Jefferson Society was organized by Masons and Knights of Columbus in order to maintain tolerance across religious lines, while a Good Government Club was organized to oppose religious, fraternal, and clique issues in Detroit politics, ultimately backing Martin as the best foe to these.<sup>991</sup> Bowles began to see open challenges by the press to discuss his Klan ties, in contrast to Martin and Smith being open concerning their backers.<sup>992</sup> Most notable in Detroit was the campaigning against the public school amendment that would be on the November ballot. Several churches which operated parochial schools that would be forced to close under this measure, including the Catholics, Adventists, Lutherans, and Dutch Reformed Church, organized opposition.<sup>993</sup> They were joined in this opposition by a variety of secular private schools in Detroit and by Rabbi Leo M. Franklin of Temple Beth-El, *de facto* leader of the Detroit Jewish community.<sup>994</sup> Various politicians stated opposition to

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<sup>990</sup> For an example of this, see *News*, 10/10/1924, 22.

<sup>991</sup> *Free Press*, 10/8/1924, 1, 4; *Free Press*, 10/4/1924, 2; *News*, 10/11/1924, 3.

<sup>992</sup> *News*, 10/6/1924, 4.

<sup>993</sup> *News*, 9/29/1924, 1.

<sup>994</sup> *News*, 9/29/1924, 1; *News*, 10/12/1924, 1.



the measure, including Martin, Smith, and John C. Lodge.<sup>995</sup> The *Free Press* and the *News* also were against this measure: the former considered it tyrannical toward minority rights and unconstitutional, while the latter considered it purely destructive in nature.<sup>996</sup> In this campaign against a favorite piece of Klan legislation, the breadth of the opposition to the Detroit Klan became visible.

In the fact of this growing opposition, one notable voice against this opinion gained attention. Charles Bowles refused to take a stance on the school amendment, claiming that it was not a local issue and therefore did not merit his having a stance.<sup>997</sup> This resulted in immediate attacks from the Detroit press: the *Free Press* noted that it was a local issue due to the need for increased local expenditure if it passed and considered it yet another example of Bowles engaging in generalities rather than taking stances on issues, while the *News*, without naming him specifically, charged this with being an endorsement of the amendment without the courage to admit to it.<sup>998</sup> On this issue more than any other, Bowles' ties to the Klan became most evident, reflecting a complicated balancing act between his Klan base and the electorate as a whole. If he openly backed this measure, he would become explicitly a Klan candidate and have no chance of backing from non-Klansmen, while condemning this legislation would have cost him the

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<sup>995</sup> *Free Press*, 10/3/1924, 1, 3; *News*, 10/7/1924, 1; *News*, 10/9/1924, 29.

<sup>996</sup> *Free Press*, 10/6/1924, 6; *News*, 10/10/1924, 4.

<sup>997</sup> *Free Press*, 10/9/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>998</sup> *Free Press*, 10/10/1924, 6; *News*, 10/19/1924, 6.

base that had made him a serious candidate.<sup>999</sup> Faced with this situation, Bowles seems to have decided on the approach of avoiding issues connected to the Klan in the hope that he would fare better by ignoring them than he would be taking a side. At the same time, his lack of a response made his Klan ties clearer and clearer, especially when compared to the forthright responses of both Martin and Smith on this issue.

Bowles' refusal to take a stance on the school issue, however, did not damage his popularity with a large section of the electorate, who either did not care about his stance on this matter or outright approved of it. The Detroit Citizens League as an organization was faced with the Klan as a dividing issue. Their refusal to back Bowles divided leadership: founder Henry Leland responded to their refusal to back Bowles by continuing to withdraw from the organization, while two members of the Executive Committee explicitly stated support for Bowles on anti-Catholic grounds.<sup>1000</sup> Perhaps most notable is a letter William P. Lovett wrote defending the Citizens League's stance to the Methodist Union Committee.<sup>1001</sup> This letter explicitly noted the ways in which the League had been a vehicle for political Protestantism, arguing that Protestant churchmen had a greater influence in Detroit government than in any similar city due to this

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<sup>999</sup> *Free Press*, 10/10/1924, 6, notes that this was one of several issues where Bowles engaged in ducking, rather than taking a specific stance, while Interview with Charles Bowles, 8/13/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library, has Bowles stating that he prefers for the electorate to vote on these matters to eliminate them as issues, in a way that suggests his avoidance.

<sup>1000</sup> William P. Lovett to Pliny W. Marsh, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 7, Detroit Public Library; Bates, 89; Fragnoli, 313. Leland had resigned earlier that year as President (Fragnoli, 286-287), but this further demonstrated his separateness from this organization.

<sup>1001</sup> Memo in response to the Methodist Union Committee, 9/26/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 2, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library.

organization.<sup>1002</sup> Limitations to the League's appeals become apparent: Lovett noted that they were an organization of dry white Protestants, and that this had resulted in problems from the *Detroit Times*, wets, and Catholic and Lutheran clergy.<sup>1003</sup> Insensitivity to other groups was also present: Lovett did not understand why Jews and Poles objected to having the *Civic Searchlight* identify candidates of those backgrounds, and in this insensitivity one can see how the outright bigotry of the Klan could serve as a natural extension.<sup>1004</sup> Finally, the very fact that a good-government association would be writing to a Protestant church group, and taking religious tones in their correspondence, demonstrates how deeply rooted political Protestantism was in the approach of the Citizens League. Overall, this organization was faced with a situation where the ideology it had crafted had led to an offshoot it could not control, resulting in desertions from past rank-and-file supporters.

Bowles demonstrated political strength in other ways as well. Before having to temporarily end campaigning in mid-October due to throat problems, Bowles drew massive crowds, with over 4000 attending an address at the Detroit Armory on October 7th, singing song parodies as they waited for him to arrive.<sup>1005</sup> These backers showed exuberance in other ways: Martin was heckled at Fairview Gardens on October 6<sup>th</sup> by Bowles supporters over his stance on the school amendment, while letter writers to the

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<sup>1002</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>1003</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>1004</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>1005</sup> *News*, 10/8/1924, 25; *News*, 10/10/1924, 36.

*Detroit News* praised his stance on religious matters and argued “Is it not permissible to have one Protestant candidate?”<sup>1006</sup> Making these demonstrations of support of interest is that they were disconnected with the content of Bowles’ campaign. Bowles remained vague in his speeches, arguing for the shutting down of the speakeasies, or “blind pigs”, of Detroit and for a metropolitan Detroit without stating specifics concerning achieving these goals.<sup>1007</sup> This led to sharp opposition: other *Detroit News* letter-writers charged that they “would consider it a calamity if Mr. Bowles were elected mayor on an invisible undercurrent” and criticized various elements of his campaign.<sup>1008</sup> This strong support in the face of these critics demonstrates that to a heavy degree Bowles was able to draw crowds of a sort that had not been previously seen in Detroit politics. At the same time, it was becoming heavily apparent that these crowds were backing Bowles out of a vague feeling of what he represented, rather than anything specific.

While Bowles rose in significance, both Martin and Smith continued to try to claim a status as the anti-Bowles candidate for mayor. Martin expanded his speaking audience from business and professional groups, speaking to ethnic organizations and even trying to defend his record on labor to the Detroit Automobile Workers’ Union.<sup>1009</sup>

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<sup>1006</sup> *Free Press*, 10/7/1924, 1, 2; G.W. Leslie letter to the editor, *News*, 10/12/1924, 6.

<sup>1007</sup> *News*, 10/7/1924, 25. Memo, 10/1/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library, similarly notes this concerning the subject of machine politics.

<sup>1008</sup> Henry Rohr letter to the editor, *News*, 10/10/1924, 4. For some other critiques, see John Francis letter to the editor, *News*, 10/2/1924, 4 (charged with vagueness and hackneyed subjects); Herbert Moss letter to the editor, *News*, 10/16/1924, 4 (lack of public career, rumors about supporters); Leon Graves letter to the editor, *News*, 10/21/1924, 4 (doesn’t understand how he can continue to run as a sticker candidate); Vincent McAuliffe letter to the editor, *News*, 10/21/1924, 4 (playing politics with school amendment).

<sup>1009</sup> *News*, 10/11/1924, 1, 2; *News*, 10/20/1924, 19.

He also expanded his campaign platform, speaking about the need for municipal ownership of the Detroit City Gas Company as well as budgeting, administration, and planning.<sup>1010</sup> Smith also expanded past his earlier factory, union, and ethnic audiences, speaking during reel changes at movie theaters.<sup>1011</sup> In addition to defending his record, he extended his positions on issues, arguing for utility and transportation extensions to outlying areas and charging city government with being excessively secretive.<sup>1012</sup> More than Martin, he made opposition to the Klan a chief issue in his campaigning. Some of this involved direct ethnic appeals: he noted to African-Americans that the Martin campaign had regarded them as the underworld before the primary, and suggested to Poles that elites backing Martin had slurred them, in both cases making him the only real political option they had against the Klan.<sup>1013</sup> However, this Klan opposition was broad in form, as Smith expected to also gain Protestant and Masonic support against the Klan.<sup>1014</sup> Overall, these approaches demonstrate different understandings in claiming to be the anti-Klan candidate: Martin tried to expand his following beyond his primary base, while Smith tried to consolidate his base and maintain his prior lead.

### **Riot in The Gardens: The Boiling Point Is Reached**

These efforts were complicated by the fact that conditions in Detroit were growing tenser as the campaign continued. Some of these tensions suggest that the

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<sup>1010</sup> *News*, 10/15/1924, 25.

<sup>1011</sup> *News*, 10/11/1924, 3; *News*, 10/14/1924, 15.

<sup>1012</sup> *News*, 10/12/1924, 3; *Free Press*, 10/16/1924, 1, 3; *News*, 10/18/1924, 3.

<sup>1013</sup> *Free Press*, 10/13/1924, 2; *News*, 10/17/1924, 31.

<sup>1014</sup> *News*, 10/15/1924, 25.

negative campaigning between Martin and Smith in the primary demonstrated personal animosities between the two, as the former was convinced that the *Detroit Times*, Bowles, Bowles' campaign manager George Calkins, and Calkins' former employer William L. Stidger were conspiring to elect Smith.<sup>1015</sup> This charge alone demonstrates increased tensions in the campaign, as the very fact of it being made, regardless of accuracy, suggests that Martin was seeing conspiracy against him uniting both of his opponents. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, this led to a quarrel at the Gratiot Avenue Improvement Association, in which Smith charged Martin with offering him the post of Commissioner of Public Works if he dropped out of the race.<sup>1016</sup> Bowles had added to the unsettled climate: he had on one hand played up to tensions by warning about "lawless and undesirable classes" electing a mayor, while at the same time became a target when he tried to compare the Klan to the Masons and Knights of Columbus.<sup>1017</sup> While hundreds of people attended Bowles' speeches, they were not always favorable audiences. On October 17<sup>th</sup>, he was heckled when speaking to the Automobile Workers' Union over his refusal to state his stances concerning the parochial school amendment and the open shop.<sup>1018</sup> The next day, worse broke out outside Moose Hall: after waiting for a half-hour without success to speak to the Street Car Men's Union, his supporters got into fistfights

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<sup>1015</sup> *Free Press*, 10/13/1924, 1 ,3. Bowles had admitted Calkins' membership in the Klan to the Detroit Business Women's Club.

<sup>1016</sup> *Free Press*, 10/14/1924, 13; *News*, 10/14/1924, 15.

<sup>1017</sup> *News*, 10/9/1924, 29; *News*, 10/21/1924, 23.

<sup>1018</sup> *News*, 10/18/1924, 3.

with those of a judicial candidate, forcing the police to be deployed.<sup>1019</sup> His backers were also willing to heckle other candidates, as Smith found out at Cadillac Motors on October 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1020</sup> Combined, these incidents suggest growing political tensions in which various figures could no longer cooperate, with the risk of an explosion at any moment.

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, these tensions exploded outside the Arena Gardens on Woodward Avenue, where Aldrich Blake, former associate of John C. Walton in the campaign against that Klan that had led to Walton's removal as Governor of Oklahoma in 1923, was scheduled to speak on the Klan.<sup>1021</sup> This speech was tied to the general political climate in Detroit, as Martin had agreed to give an introductory speech for Blake.<sup>1022</sup> Six thousand people gathered outside the Arena Gardens in the early evening hours, forming a crowd large enough to stop traffic for three blocks down Woodward.<sup>1023</sup> This was a crowd that both intended to prevent others from attending the anti-Klan rally at the Arena Gardens and to try to urge political support for Bowles. It was noted that many women, often with babes in arms, were present, which was regarded as symbolizing how Bowles had appealed to women and tried to obtain their political mass

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<sup>1019</sup> *News*, 10/19/1924, 1.

<sup>1020</sup> *News*, 10/21/1924, 23.

<sup>1021</sup> *Free Press*, 10/21/1924, 15.

<sup>1022</sup> *News*, 10/22/1924, 1, 2. Sister Mary Madonna Weigel, "The Recall of Mayor Charles Bowles of Detroit, July 1930", (M.A. thesis, Catholic University of America, 1951), 15, claims that Martin had invited him, but this is not clear in the surviving evidence.

<sup>1023</sup> Unless otherwise cited, all material in this paragraph is taken from *Free Press*, 10/22/1924, 1, 3; *News*, 10/22/1924, 1, 2; *New York Times*, 10/22/1924, 1; *Los Angeles Times*, 10/22/1924, 1; and *Washington Post*, 10/22/1924, 1, each of which differs with one another enough to suggest independent authority on this event, while the secondary accounts (Jackson, 134-135; Vinyard, 85; Levine, 138-139) all seem to be based solely on these accounts with no other outside sources.

mobilization. The crowd engaged in several activities to demonstrate Bowles support, including passing out cards on his behalf and plastering Bowles stickers on every car coming down Woodward.<sup>1024</sup> When it was apparent that this crowd was going to make it impossible for people to attend the rally, the police were called in, with a riot call issued to every precinct in the city. Ultimately, the police had to use red pepper and tear gas in order to drive the crowds away from the Arena Gardens. This did not end the Bowles demonstrations: some gathered on side streets after being driven away from the Arena Gardens and continued to rally for Bowles. Hundreds of others, meanwhile, had been able to obtain entry into the Arena Gardens, where they held a mass walkout at the start of the meeting. Finally, even during the rally and in spite of police presence meant to prevent it, cat-calling by those outside was still audible inside the Arena Gardens. Overall, these events demonstrate how strong the political climate had gotten in Detroit, as tensions around the Klan had led to Klan sympathizers trying to block any unfavorable meeting.

The Arena Garden incident was noted as abnormal in several regards. Aldrich Blake, while making his address, noted that this was the first time he had ever needed police protection, and that all efforts to break up his speeches had been in Michigan, where he estimated that the Klan controlled 29 counties and could end up dominating the state within twelve months.<sup>1025</sup> Police Commissioner Frank Croul issued an order to

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<sup>1024</sup> Levine, 139, finds the nature of the stickers, which apparently depicted a little red schoolhouse, of significance.

<sup>1025</sup> *Free Press*, 10/22/1924, 1, 3.



prevent there from being any follow-ups to this incident taking place.<sup>1026</sup> Martin, after leaving the Arena Gardens, spoke at Odd Fellows Hall, denouncing Bowles as an obscure divorce lawyer who was a serious candidate solely through Klan support.<sup>1027</sup> In his campaigning the next day, he asked Detroit voters to behave with common sense, claiming that this had been the first time religion had become key in Detroit politics.<sup>1028</sup> Smith, who had had a speech before 1000 at Hudson Motors disrupted by Bowles supporters, was even harsher, calling Bowles an unsuccessful lawyer promoted by the Klan.<sup>1029</sup> Both Martin's and Smith's comments serve to demonstrate how the Arena Gardens incident reshaped the race, as this incident guaranteed that the Klan's support of Bowles would become the key issue in the race, shifting focus from other issues and making Bowles himself more of a campaign focus than he had been in the past.

Bowles was placed on the political defensive very quickly after the Arena Gardens incident. Just the day before, Bowles had been able to disclaim Klan membership to the Wayne County Women's Republican Club in a way that equated them with the Masons and Odd Fellows.<sup>1030</sup> The next day, he was in no position to be that facile, denying before an audience at Studebaker that he knew anything about planning for the Arena Gardens incident.<sup>1031</sup> The *Free Press* described events like that at the Arena

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<sup>1026</sup> *News*, 10/22/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1027</sup> *News*, 10/22/1924, 27.

<sup>1028</sup> *News*, 10/23/1924, 29.

<sup>1029</sup> *News*, 10/22/1924, 27; *News*, 10/23/1924, 29.

<sup>1030</sup> *News*, 10/22/1924, 27.

<sup>1031</sup> *News*, 10/23/1924, 29.

Gardens as inevitable when secretive societies tried to enter politics, while the *News* compared Bowles to Pollyanna.<sup>1032</sup> It soon reached the press that Bowles was being sued over the misadministration of funds intended for the Northland Country Club.<sup>1033</sup> Faced by this, Bowles attempted defiance: before a crowd of four thousand women at the Detroit Armory on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, he offered \$5,000 if anyone could prove him a Klan member, and his continued campaign against dirty politics seems to have been explicitly aimed to the response he got after the Arena Gardens.<sup>1034</sup> Other Bowles speeches tried to avoid these issues, with many being closed to the public.<sup>1035</sup> There was one further blow to his campaign to come: on October 28<sup>th</sup>, George Calkins was exposed by the *Detroit News* as a gambler and passer of bad checks who had fled Salt Lake City without notifying his creditors, forcing Calkins to resign as Bowles' campaign manager two days later.<sup>1036</sup> The Arena Gardens incident encouraged a general examination into the records of Bowles and his associates in ways that they had avoided earlier in the campaign, demonstrating greater public scrutiny. However, it was unclear what this would mean, as the continued large crowds for Bowles suggested that many would follow him politically regardless of what charges were made against him.

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<sup>1032</sup> *Free Press*, 10/23/1924, 6; *News*, 10/24/1924, 1.

<sup>1033</sup> *News*, 10/24/1924, 1; *Free Press*, 10/25/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1034</sup> *Free Press*, 10/24/1924, 14; *News*, 10/24/1924, 31.

<sup>1035</sup> *News*, 10/26/1924, 2.

<sup>1036</sup> *News*, 10/28/1924, 1, 2; *News*, 10/30/1924, 2.

One thing that this turn had not done was make this campaign any less poisonous. Martin continued to be heckled by Bowles supporters, charging that rumors had been spread accusing him of being divorced and of being of Italian heritage.<sup>1037</sup> He continued to try to link the campaigns of Bowles and Smith, charging the two of them with both using the religious issue.<sup>1038</sup> Martin seems to have regarded the Bowles campaign as having been destroyed by the Arena Gardens incident, and used this to shift to going after Smith on the issue of gang rule. However, he did not abandon warning Detroiters about the Klan: Aldrich Blake spent at least a week in Detroit after the Arena Gardens incident campaigning for Martin as being the first politician willing to stand on the same platform as him.<sup>1039</sup> The Detroit Citizens League, meanwhile, formally endorsed Martin, praising his experience and courage, noting that Smith was effective in office but had dubious political ties and denouncing Bowles as being either ignorant of Detroit's problems or refusing to make any public statements concerning them.<sup>1040</sup> However, William P. Lovett was growing more and more frustrated with Bowles supporters as the campaign continued, noting a developing reactionary backlash and sharing with Reinhold Niebuhr a fatalistic view that nothing could stem the Klan tide.<sup>1041</sup> Even Bowles had complaints

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<sup>1037</sup> *Free Press*, 10/23/1924, 3; *News*, 10.30.1924, 27.

<sup>1038</sup> *News*, 11/1/1924, 6.

<sup>1039</sup> *News*, 10/27/1924, 19; *Free Press*, 10/30/1924, 3; *Michigan Catholic*, 10/30/1924, 10.

<sup>1040</sup> *Civic Searchlight*, October 1924, 4; *News*, 10/25/1924, 2.

<sup>1041</sup> Lovett to Harry C. Mann, 10/17/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 7, Detroit Public Library; Lovett to Tracy W. McGregor, 10/20/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 7, Detroit Public Library; Lovett to R.[Reinhold] Niebuhr, 10/29/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 8, Detroit Public Library. Niebuhr was then pastor of the Bethel Evangelical Church.

concerning his treatment during the campaign, charging motorcycle policemen with harassing his backers.<sup>1042</sup> In all of these ways, there was a continued sense that this was a nasty campaign, provoking conspiracy theories and fatalism from those witnessing it.

As the campaign came to a close, Martin, Smith, and Bowles continued to scramble for any support they could obtain. One favorite target was churches, with some, such as Niebuhr's Bethel Evangelical, having all three candidates visit within a few days of each other.<sup>1043</sup> Labor was similarly contested: while Smith had the official endorsement of the Detroit Federation of Labor (who considered Martin anti-labor and Bowles as lacking any real record), all three candidates continued to speak in factories to reach the large un-unionized industrial labor force of Detroit.<sup>1044</sup> The support of women was also desired: Bowles was regarded as having a lead to the point where the rumor emerged that the League of Women Voters would endorse him, but Martin was able to point to his work for women's police divisions and Smith his support for suffrage in their appeals to women voters.<sup>1045</sup> Finally, African-Americans were seen as up for grabs by the candidates. Smith seems to have had an advantage, as the only candidate to address the NAACP and as using his African-American support in the primary against his foes.<sup>1046</sup>

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<sup>1042</sup> *Free Press*, 10/24/1924, 14.

<sup>1043</sup> *News*, 10/28/1924, 23; *News*, 10/30/1924, 27.

<sup>1044</sup> For this statement, see *Labor News*, 10/24/1924, 4; *News*, 10/27/1924, 19; *News*, 10/29/1924, 25; *News*, 10/30/1924, 27.

<sup>1045</sup> For a Bowles rally aimed specifically at women, see *Free Press*, 10/24/1924, 14. For the League of Women Voters remark, see *Free Press*, 10/25/1924, 4. For Martin and Smith, see *News*, 11/3/1924, 14.

<sup>1046</sup> *News*, 10/24/1924, 31; *Free Press*, 11/1/1924, 3.

However, Martin could point to an endorsement from the Universal Negro Improvement Association in his favor, and even Bowles, given his use of African-Americans at campaign functions, may have held hopes for support.<sup>1047</sup> Overall, this scramble demonstrates how Detroit politics was in flux, and that, with few organizations able to channel votes, candidates were willing to speak to any group they could in order to obtain support.

Continued efforts were made to discuss issues in this election. Smith noted a need for infrastructure, with increased utility developments and more transit and recreational facilities being seen as necessary.<sup>1048</sup> Martin continued to bring up administrative issues, noting a need to clean the heavily-polluted Detroit River, improved garbage disposal, and concerns about telephone rates.<sup>1049</sup> He also continued to focus on good government issues, charging that Smith would cost Detroit millions if elected by siding with the Oakman brothers in disputes concerning subdivisions and paving.<sup>1050</sup> Bowles, meanwhile, stuck to issues he had previously set in the race, standing for strong law enforcement, urging an end to litigation over gas and telephone rates, and supporting the construction of subways.<sup>1051</sup> He also continued to refuse to denounce other candidates, and responded to attacks on his record by comparing it to that of Hazen Pingree.<sup>1052</sup>

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<sup>1047</sup> *Free Press*, 10/23/1924, 10; *News*, 10/30/1924, 27.

<sup>1048</sup> *Free Press*, 10/26/1924, 2.

<sup>1049</sup> *Free Press*, 10/31/1924, 14; *News*, 10/31/1924, 31.

<sup>1050</sup> *News*, 10/29/1924, 25.

<sup>1051</sup> *Free Press*, 10/29/1924, 10.

<sup>1052</sup> *News*, 11/1/1924, 6.

Notably, none of the three candidates thought it was still a three-candidate race: in addition to Martin thinking Bowles out, Smith regarded Martin as out, reducing his campaigning against him, and Bowles regarded Smith as out.<sup>1053</sup> In these various respects, there were still efforts to bring up major issues of importance to the future of Detroit, in an effort to call attention to the important administrative elements of the position of mayor.

However, all of these issues were trumped by the Klan, which maintained its status as the chief issue in several ways. Martin had used opposition to the school amendment in his campaigning on municipal finances, noting that it would force an increase in the tax rate from \$21.96 to \$29 in order to pay for the additional schools.<sup>1054</sup> Governor Alexander Groesbeck blamed racial and religious issues in local politics on the lack of party lines, while Wayne County's Democrats asked for either Martin or Smith to withdraw to create a united front against the Klan.<sup>1055</sup> Smith got into trouble when he charged the Klan as being brought to Detroit by hillbillies, as hundreds of Southerners denounced him at the Kentucky Club.<sup>1056</sup> Smith's abilities to claim to be an anti-Klan candidate were also challenged, as both Martin and the *News* continued to link his

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<sup>1053</sup> *Free Press*, 10/28/1924, 3.

<sup>1054</sup> *Free Press*, 10/29/1924, 3.

<sup>1055</sup> *Free Press*, 10/29/1924, 9; *Free Press*, 10/31/1924, 1, 7. For a defense of Detroit's non-partisan politics, see Lovett to Milton Carmichael, 11/24/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 11, Folder 9, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1056</sup> *News*, 10/27/1924, 31; *News*, 11/1/1924, 17; twenty men from Tennessee to editor, *News*, 11/2/1924, 6.

campaign with that of Bowles in efforts to bill Martin as the anti-Klan candidate.<sup>1057</sup>

Smith went as far as regretting the Klan presence in this race, feeling that it had served to limit the discussion of other issues.<sup>1058</sup> As was to be expected, Bowles was most affected by the Klan being a political issue. At the Women Citizens' League on October 29<sup>th</sup>, he had again avoided discussing the school amendment by charging the person asking about it with not eligible to ask questions.<sup>1059</sup> Gamblers, meanwhile, were betting heavily for Martin, feeling that that the Arena Gardens incident had swung thousands of votes from Bowles.<sup>1060</sup> This even led to negative reactions to Bowles, who ended up missing events due to his car being tampered with.<sup>1061</sup> Overall, these various points demonstrate that the 1924 election continued to be seen as it closed as a Klan referendum, continuing to make this race highly toxic in form.

The largest demonstration of the Klan as the chief issue came on the evening of November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Saturday before the election.<sup>1062</sup> That night, between 25,000 and 50,000 people gathered at Middle Belt and Ford Roads in Dearborn for a large Klan gathering. In respect to the Burns Act and as a demonstration of a lack of fear of

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<sup>1057</sup> *News*, 10/26/1924, 1, 2; *News*, 10/30/1924, 4.

<sup>1058</sup> *Free Press*, 11/1/1924, 3.

<sup>1059</sup> *Free Press*, 10/30/1924, 7.

<sup>1060</sup> *Free Press*, 11/2/1924, 3.

<sup>1061</sup> *News*, 10/31/1924, 31.

<sup>1062</sup> All material in this paragraph not otherwise cited comes from *Free Press*, 11/3/1924, 7. *News*, 11/3/1924, 1, 2, commented on the event in a different manner (arguing that the Klan was an opportunity for graft, rather than specifically covering the events), and the secondary references (Jackson, 136; Levine, 139-140) seem to lack any independent authority.

recognition, none of those present were apparently robed or hooded. This rally alone was of note, as its timing seemed designed to demonstrate the strength of the Klan just before the election. Just as important was that this rally seems to have been held specifically to aid Charles Bowles. The vehicles that brought those attending were covered in stickers for him, while those guarding the event were similarly open for Bowles. Most important in connection with these events, however, was the question as for where Bowles was when this rally was taking place. He had cancelled previously scheduled events due to illness the day before, and was similarly missing from all three rallies that he was scheduled to attend that day.<sup>1063</sup> Ultimately, no clear evidence ever indicated where he was or what he was up to, but the common assumption was that he had attended this rally instead of those for which he had previously committed. If true, this would demonstrate the power of the Klan by showing that Bowles would risk alienating other supporters of his to attend one of their events. Even if false, the general belief that he was there was important, as a reminder as for how closely his campaign was linked in the popular imaginary with the Klan. In any event, the very size of this event mattered, as it demonstrated that Martin and Smith would have to make strong efforts in order to prevent the Klan from electing Bowles.

Various anticipations were present as the campaign came to a close. Bowles ended his campaign at the Arena Gardens where his backers had caused a riot two weeks earlier to a wild crowd that kept disrupting his speech with applause, claiming to stand

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<sup>1063</sup> For Bowles claiming to be sick, see *News*, 11/2/1924, 3.



for religious liberty and a clean campaign.<sup>1064</sup> Martin became the first candidate to ever visit the Ford Rouge plant in Dearborn, continuing to run on his experience and his backing from James Couzens.<sup>1065</sup> Smith ended his campaign at the Detroit Armory, where he continued to denounce both the Klan and the *Detroit News*, and with a thirteen-speech tour of Detroit.<sup>1066</sup> Rabbi Leo M. Franklin warned the Catholic Study Club that “religious prejudice has tasted the blood of the Jew and now seeks that of the Catholic”.<sup>1067</sup> The *Free Press* and the *News* urged voters to vote as soon as possible, and the Employers Association tried to organize factory shutdowns to allow for this, in an election where between 320,000 and 330,000 were expected to vote.<sup>1068</sup> Disorder was expected, as 800 policemen were ordered to serve at polling places on election day.<sup>1069</sup> A large number of people wished to monitor the vote, with the Detroit Citizens League, the Detroit Federation of Labor, the Good Government Committee, the Public School Defense League, the Independent Progressive Party, and the Catholic Diocese of Detroit claiming credentials as challengers.<sup>1070</sup> Overall, all of these elements indicate that there

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<sup>1064</sup> *Free Press*, 11/4/1924, 3; *News*, 11/4/1924, 21.

<sup>1065</sup> *News*, 11/3/1924, 1; *Free Press*, 11/4/1924, 1, 3. For a less positive consideration of Martin’s visit, see James Sweinhart to W.J. Cameron, 11/13/1924, Nevins and Hill Research Notes, Box 30, Folder 15, Benson Ford Research Center, and Harry H. Bennett to W.J. Cameron, 12/2/1924, Nevins and Hill Research Notes, Box 30, Folder 15, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1066</sup> *News*, 11/2/1924, 3; *News*, 11/4/1924, 21.

<sup>1067</sup> *Free Press*, 11/4/1924, 5.

<sup>1068</sup> *News*, 11/3/1924, 1; *Free Press*, 11/4/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1069</sup> *News*, 11/1/1924, 1; *Free Press*, 11/4/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1070</sup> *Ibid.* The Public School Defense League was the organization supporting the parochial school amendment.

was still a wild campaign going on as the election came to a close, and that there was a general desire to claim some sort of involvement in the face of the Klan issue. There was also some danger present, as it was not clear what reactions would take place concerning the results.<sup>1071</sup>

### **Recount: The Election Without A Winner**

Some of the anticipated chaos did not happen: there was a fight at a polling place at Harper and East Grand and some other minor incidents of violence, but the full-scale rioting that such observers as William Lovett were expecting did not occur, and the worse problem on election day was violations of the laws concerning campaigning near polling places.<sup>1072</sup> Detroit had the largest turnout in its history, with 325,678 going to the polls.<sup>1073</sup> Spatial location motivated voters: 95% of the eligible electorate on the near west side voted, and turnout was greater on the east side and far west side than in the north end.<sup>1074</sup> Similarly, women turned out to a greater extent than usual, with a third of early voters being women.<sup>1075</sup> In the official returns, Smith won with 116,417 votes, compared to 106,783 for Bowles and 85,632 for Martin.<sup>1076</sup> Smith hung onto his primary

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<sup>1071</sup> Lovett to Malcolm W. Bingay, 11/7/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 11, Folder 8, Detroit Public Library, demonstrates these anticipations.

<sup>1072</sup> *News*, 11/4/1924, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/5/1924, 1; *News*, 11/5/1924, 27.

<sup>1073</sup> *Free Press*, 11/6/1924, 1, 12.

<sup>1074</sup> *Free Press*, 11/5/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1075</sup> *News*, 11/4/1924, 1, 2. For critical comments on their conduct after the election, see *Free Press*, 11/6/1924, 6.

<sup>1076</sup> For a largely complete count by precincts, see *News*, 11/5/1924, 23. I have compiled these results, as cross-checked them with the map at *News*, 9/14/1924, 10 to check on the claims made in *Free Press*, 11/5/1924, 1, 2 and *News*, 11/5/1924, 1, 2. All spatial comments made in this paragraph are based on these sources.

support, staying strong on the east side. However, alterations came in the relative votes for Bowles and Martin: Bowles stayed strong along Grand River Boulevard and in southwest Detroit and the northern and eastern fringes of the city, and also cut heavily into Martin's vote on the far east side and in the areas west of Woodward and north of Grand Boulevard, with Martin being strongest only in areas immediately south of Highland Park and in the Indian Village section of the city. Notably, Bowles was stronger than the Klan overall in Detroit: the school amendment failed in Detroit by a wide margin, and Andrew J. Brodie lost his race for Common Council by a better than two to one margin to labor-affiliated former Councilman Robert G. Ewald.<sup>1077</sup> In these ways, it seems that things would be politically quieter in Detroit after the hubbub of the election.

However, the counting of the votes indicated a more complicated political situation to come. The official watchers of the Detroit Citizens League indicated that the election boards on the precinct level were generally honest: there was some questionable behavior and issues with assisted voters, but no evidence of any systematic fraud.<sup>1078</sup> Moreover, the actions done on behalf of candidates seem to have cancelled each other out, as rejection of Bowles ballots in the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward was paralleled by too many of them being accepted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, and no part of the city seems to have had greater

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<sup>1077</sup> *Free Press*, 11/6/1924, 1, 12. The school amendment similarly lost in Michigan by a wide margin.

<sup>1078</sup> For reports by these watchers, see Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 6, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library, with additional correspondence from these watchers in Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 13, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library, and some post-election communications on this to Oakley E. Distin of the City Election Commission in Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 11, Folder 10, Detroit Public Library.

problems in terms of conducting the election than any other section.<sup>1079</sup> In these ways, the election was clearly conducted in an honest manner, with those at the precinct level trying for honest results.<sup>1080</sup> The rules under which they were conducting the election, however, were ones that caused problems. Detroit's election law required write-in ballots to follow a very specific set of procedures in order for them to be counted. Almost 17,000 of the ballots cast were not counted, and, even before the results were made official, there were reports that Bowles would want a recount, believing that most of the votes not being counted were cast for him.<sup>1081</sup> Because a mayor could not be seated until after the results were finalized, this made it possible that no one would be made mayor until after the 1925 election should Bowles engage in litigation.<sup>1082</sup> Martin, blaming Smith for bringing Bowles into the race, encouraged him to get a recount, and Smith was willing to pay half the costs in order to demonstrate an honest result.<sup>1083</sup> As a result of this, the election was not yet finished, as fighting was soon to begin concerning who could be considered rightfully elected.

Bowles officially requested a recount on November 8<sup>th</sup>, charging not that fraud or corrupt means had taking place in connection with the election, but that a large number of

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<sup>1079</sup> For these specific issues, see Mr. Adair report, 1<sup>st</sup> Precinct of 15<sup>th</sup> Ward, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 6, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library, and Effie Dean report, 9<sup>th</sup> Precinct of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 6, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1080</sup> For this conclusion as reached by Lovett, see Lovett to Oakley E. Distin, 11/7/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 11, Folder 10, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1081</sup> *News*, 11/5/1924, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/6/1924, 1, 12; *News*, 11/6/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1082</sup> *Free Press*, 11/8/1924, 1, 3.

<sup>1083</sup> *Free Press*, 11/6/1924, 1, 12; *News*, 11/6/1924, 1, 2.

ballots favorable to him (between 12,000 and 15,000 according to City Clerk and chair of the City Election Commission Richard Lindsay, 16,846 according to Bowles) had not been counted and would secure him the election if they had.<sup>1084</sup> The reasons these votes weren't counted varied: 256 precincts had ignored ballots with variations in the spelling of his name, with 260 different variations being documented.<sup>1085</sup> Thousands hadn't checked an X when filling in the write-in portion of the ballot, while thousands more had only included Bowles' last name or given him a wrong first name.<sup>1086</sup> Thousands of ballots had been dismissed as spoiled, while over a thousand more were considered blank but had evidence that a sticker had been applied. On November 10<sup>th</sup>, the first legal battle over the results began over the standards in interpreting ballots. Bela J. Lincoln, chief lawyer for Bowles, argued that sounds should be used, in which any name that could be interpreted as being "Charles Bowles" would be counted, while Allan P. Campbell, president of the Board of Education and Smith spokesman, urged that traditional rules apply.<sup>1087</sup> The City Election Commission chose to maintain their previous standard and not count by sound, meaning that Bowles would largely be unable to get the ballots under question counted.<sup>1088</sup> However, this guaranteed further fights, as it was regarded as

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<sup>1084</sup> *News*, 11/7/1924, 1, for the ballot estimates; *News*, 11/8/1924, 1, and *Free Press*, 11/9/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1085</sup> *News*, 11/8/1924, 1.

<sup>1086</sup> For a complete tallying of the issues that various ballots had, see *Free Press*, 11/21/1924, 3.

<sup>1087</sup> *News*, 11/10/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1088</sup> *Free Press*, 11/11/1924, 1, 3.

inevitable that Bowles would sue, forcing courts to ultimately decide the results of the election.<sup>1089</sup>

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, Bowles took the election to the courts, obtaining a writ of mandamus over the counting of the ballots in Wayne County Circuit Court that charged the City Election Commission with disqualifying 15,000 of his supporters.<sup>1090</sup> The counting began the same day, and it rapidly became clear that, in addition to not counting the ballots under dispute, the City Election Commission would disqualify more Bowles ballots in the recount, leading Bowles to get another writ of mandamus to increase the ballots under consideration.<sup>1091</sup> This led to more disputes: Smith attorneys disputed both the Circuit Court's jurisdiction on this matter and Bowles' standing as a candidate, while Bowles attorneys threatened to force a new set of elections.<sup>1092</sup> On November 20<sup>th</sup>, the recount was completed, giving Smith 116,775 votes, Bowles 102,602 votes, and Martin 84,462.<sup>1093</sup> This did not end the matter: Bowles claimed 15,545 ballots were still under dispute and if counted would lead to his being elected by over 1,000 votes, resulting in an appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court.<sup>1094</sup> The next day, however, Bowles surprised many observers by giving up: while he still felt he had enough votes to win, he didn't feel that he had a chance of victory in the courts, which would take months to reach a

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<sup>1089</sup> *News*, 11/11/1924, 1.

<sup>1090</sup> *News*, 11/12/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1091</sup> *News*, 11/13/1924, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/14/1924, 1, 7.

<sup>1092</sup> *Free Press*, 11/14/1924, 1, 7; *Free Press*, 11/15/1924, 1, 5; *News*, 11/15/1924, 1.

<sup>1093</sup> *News*, 11/20/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1094</sup> *News*, 11/20/1924, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/21/1924, 3.

decision.<sup>1095</sup> This resulted in the immediate elevation into office of Smith, who was sworn in as mayor on the afternoon of November 21<sup>st</sup>.<sup>1096</sup> However, the question of who would have won if a full count was made was never resolved. The *Detroit News*, for instance, noted that 12,567 ballots that were unquestionably meant for Bowles had been thrown out, which would have left him behind Smith by 1,606 votes, but that 2,653 ballots that were sealed and locked were also under dispute, and, had they all been counted for Bowles, he would have won by 1,047 votes.<sup>1097</sup> Overall, this meant that the 1924 election was ultimately an inconclusive one, and one that would be interpreted locally depending on which candidate the interpreter had already supported.

Ultimately, several points become apparent when reviewing the results of the 1924 election. The first of these was that the Ku Klux Klan had become a strong force in Detroit politics, able to make an obscurity like Bowles a strong candidate for mayor chiefly by their support. In doing this, the Klan had succeeded less by any approach that was completely new, but by using the rhetoric of political Protestantism which had been successful for years in Detroit politics. In doing this, they were especially able to mobilize non-elite Protestants, who for cultural issues were uncomfortable with Smith and whom the elite-focused campaign of Martin had utterly neglected, and women, who had not yet been adequately incorporated into Detroit politics. In these ways, a large part of the Klan's success involved drawing votes from those who felt left out of the Detroit political

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<sup>1095</sup> *News*, 11/21/1924, 1, 2.

<sup>1096</sup> *Free Press*, 11/22/1924, 1, 3.

<sup>1097</sup> *News*, 11/22/1924, 1, contains the calculations for the votes cast, while the results if counted reflect my math. Notably, while the 1,606 figure was noted elsewhere (*Free Press*, 11/21/1924, 3), Bowles' own math had him winning by 1,029 (*News*, 11/21/1924, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/22/1924, 1, 3.)

system and taking advantage of where the established Detroit political factions had failed to incorporate voters. This vote was seen as one chiefly motivated by religious prejudices, especially ones concerning both the presence of two Catholics as candidates for mayor and those connected with opposition to parochial schools. This also reflected a weakness in the Detroit Citizens League, which had focused attention to business supporters at the expense of the Protestant churchgoers the League had been originally created to politically mobilize. It was also clear that the Klan was not finished in its campaigning for office in Detroit. Both the fact that Bowles might have won with favorable ballot rulings and the narrowness of Smith's ultimate victory encouraged the Klan to try again the following year, when the regular election for mayor would be held. In these ways, the 1924 election has two points of relevance. On the one hand, it demonstrates how the Klan could become a major political force by tapping into a political climate already present in a major city. At the same time, it served as a prelude, as more battles were to come over the administration of Detroit



#### **Chapter 4: Klan Submergent: 1925 and the Fall of Detroit**

After either narrowly losing or being cheated out of winning the 1924 election, Charles Bowles and the Ku Klux Klan were ready for a rematch in the election the following year. This fight would be a direct battle with John W. Smith, and would in many regards be a fight to claim the vote, chiefly of upper-class Protestants, that had backed Joseph A. Martin in 1924. The Klan strongly organized for 1925, and engaged in organization on a ward and precinct level not seen in Detroit since the end of the party system. In spite of this, the Klan was still ultimately unsuccessful in electing a mayor, as upper-class Protestants, whom had received friendly treatment from the Smith administration, lacked interest in Bowles' appeals on moral issues, and were bothered by Bowles' supporters and limited substance, voted for Smith. In the long run, the Klan would collapse in both Detroit and nationally within a few years of 1925, as a result of internal corruption and failures in administration. Bowles, having largely broken in association with the Klan, managed to be elected Mayor in 1929, only to be successfully recalled after nine disastrous months in office in which he associated strongly with the vice elements he had been opposed to in his 1924 and 1925 campaigns. The battle lines present in 1920s Detroit would change, as class politics emerged with the rise of the United Auto Workers to replace the religious politics of the 1910s and 1920s. However, the resentments that led to the rise of the Klan did not go away, as the strong racial fault lines present in contemporary Detroit are a direct product of the religious fault lines present in the 1920s, as much of what made Detroit boom in that era had severe long-term consequences for Detroit.

### Smith and Bowles Redux

In the year following the 1924 election, John W. Smith, Charles E. Bowles, and Joseph A. Martin prepared for a rematch. Smith as mayor built bridges with the business community that had backed Martin heavily in 1924. On taking office, Smith noted a need for retrenchment, stating that Detroit could not continue the expenditure of funds that it had engaged in during the expansion of the previous decade.<sup>1098</sup> To do this, Smith established a finance committee containing many from Detroit's business elite.<sup>1099</sup> Smith also took care in responding to the charge against him of political bossism, largely leaving incumbent officials in place and taking care not to award office to political supporters.<sup>1100</sup> He also demonstrated an interest in non-political administration by having such issues as traffic handled by special committees staffed by experts.<sup>1101</sup> This approach won him new followers, as both the *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit Saturday Night*, which had backed Martin in 1924, admitted to being surprised and impressed at his administration.<sup>1102</sup> Overall, Smith in office seems to have been trying to unite anti-Klan forces in Detroit, by running an administration that could appeal to the upper-class Protestants of Detroit while at the same time not cost him his base among working-class Catholics.

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<sup>1098</sup> *Free Press*, 1/3/1925, 1.

<sup>1099</sup> *The Detroiter*, 1/5/1925, 14.

<sup>1100</sup> For an arch treatment of the claims involving Smith and appointments, see *Saturday Night*, 7/4/1925, 1.

<sup>1101</sup> *The Detroiter*, 2/16/1925, 5, 6, 19.

<sup>1102</sup> *Saturday Night*, 2/21/1925, Section 2, 2, 8.

Martin, meanwhile, had his political stock take several blows in 1925. Shortly after the 1924 election, a series of investigations began into Detroit's Department of Public Works, demonstrating corruption, incompetent construction, and general ineptitude as having been present during Martin's time as Commissioner.<sup>1103</sup> These charges hurt Martin's reputation as an expert administrator, as these charges suggested his being incompetent at best and downright crooked at worst. Martin spent the year engaging in subdivision development in Detroit, with James Couzens as his business partner.<sup>1104</sup> This ultimately was just as damaging to Martin's political future, as Couzens broke the partnership and dissolved the firm by the end of the year as a result of concerns over Martin's handling of business and his efforts to try to claim more of Couzens' money.<sup>1105</sup> This combined loss of a reputation and a political benefactor affected Martin's actions: while he considered running for mayor into September of 1925 (with strong encouragement from the *Detroit News*), he ultimately did not run, instead supporting his brother's bid for City Council.<sup>1106</sup> His non-candidacy was significant, as it meant that the upper-class Protestants who had backed him in 1924 would need to find a new candidate to support.

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<sup>1103</sup> *Free Press*, 11/23/1924, 1, and *passim*; *News*, 11/22/1924, 1, 2, and *passim*. Sidney Fine's *Frank Murphy: The Detroit Years* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975) contains a summary on these findings.

<sup>1104</sup> For an example of materials concerning this partnership, see Joseph A. Martin to James Couzens, 11/21/1924, James Couzens Papers, Box 33, Folder 7, Library of Congress.

<sup>1105</sup> James Couzens to Joseph A. Martin, 12/17/1925, James Couzens Papers, Box 40, Folder 19, Library of Congress.

<sup>1106</sup> *News*, 9/6/1925, 1, 2; *News*, 9/10/1925, 1, 2; *News*, 9/17/1925, 4; *Free Press*, 9/4/1925, 5.

After the recount that decided the 1924 election, it was apparent that Bowles would be a candidate for mayor the following year. During the following months, Bowles began an indirect campaign for the office of mayor. As with Smith, he tried to engage in outreach to communities that opposed him in 1924, trying to appeal to ethnic Detroiters.<sup>1107</sup> At the same time, however, he kept his relationship with the Klan hazy, continuing to deny his own membership in the Klan while refusing to engage in any criticism of that organization.<sup>1108</sup> Bowles also tried to improve his image on public issues, attending many hearings on matters of city administration. His presence at these got the attention of Smith, who at least once used his presence in order to make a political point.<sup>1109</sup> Finally, he also positioned himself as being a candidate to gain the support that Martin had received in 1924, using the good-government and anti-vice rhetoric that the Detroit Citizens League had great success with in the 1910s.<sup>1110</sup> This positioning paid off for both Smith and Bowles: no one else filed to run for mayor, leaving the votes of upper-class Protestants up for grabs.<sup>1111</sup> This also meant that political energy would be conserved by both Smith and Bowles: with no primary race in the coming election, both candidates chose to delay the start of their campaigning, instead focusing on the weeks immediately before the election.

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<sup>1107</sup> Jackson, 141.

<sup>1108</sup> For some cynical analysis of Bowles as a potential candidate, see *Saturday Night*, 7/18/1925, 1.

<sup>1109</sup> *Free Press*, 8/25/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1110</sup> For some ideas of this vision, see the statement by Bowles in *Free Press*, 9/5/1925, 4.

<sup>1111</sup> *News*, 9/10/1925, 1, 2.

While Smith and Bowles rested, the Ku Klux Klan began active preparations for the coming mayoral campaign. Part of their preparations involved taking advantage of differences in the 1925 social climate compared to that of 1924. A string of violent attacks on African-Americans moving into white neighborhoods took place, peaking in mid-summer with the attack on Ossian Sweet.<sup>1112</sup> At least one newspaper charged the Klan with collaborating with African-Americans to provoke racial incidents in order to elect Bowles.<sup>1113</sup> While there is no evidence for this charge, it is of interest in suggesting how some in Detroit interpreted the Klan's political goals, suggesting that they were hoping to split Smith's coalition by forcing him to choose between supporting the ambitions of African-Americans or working-class Catholics. Ultimately, Smith equivocated when faced with this situation, blaming both the Klan and African-Americans for these disturbances and creating an investigative committee to study Detroit race relations.<sup>1114</sup> This seems designed to appease both groups without making any specific promises: his issuing of blame avoided charging working-class Catholics with any wrongdoing, while any investigation would finish until after the election, buying him time in connection with African-Americans. Overall, this demonstrates that the Klan could very well have political hopes up for 1925, as this added situation of racial unrest could be the ticket for the Klan to build a majority.

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<sup>1112</sup> The Boyle and Vine works are two major recent studies of the Ossian Sweet case. For a summary of other racial incidents in 1925 Detroit, see Levine, 153-158.

<sup>1113</sup> *Saturday Night*, 7/18/1925, 1.

<sup>1114</sup> For Smith's statement, see *Free Press*, 9/13/1925, 1, 2. Boyle, 195-196, offers critical commentary on this statement.

Other Klan preparations involved the race for City Council, for which all nine seats would be up in 1925. The Ku Klux Klan formed a five-candidate slate, mixing established politicians and political newcomers.<sup>1115</sup> Robert G. Ewald (who had beaten a Klan candidate in 1924) and Fred Castator were incumbent City Councilors who had built their careers through the support of organized labor and Detroit's working class, while Sherman Littlefield had been long active in Detroit politics and had been on the City Council until his defeat in 1923.<sup>1116</sup> In contrast to these three were two candidates with direct Klan ties: Andrew J. Brodie, running again after making the run-off in 1924, and Philip A. Callahan, dentist and former president of the Symwa Club which had been the early organization of the Detroit Klan.<sup>1117</sup> This slate seems designed to expand the base of the Klan, particularly targeting working-class Detroiters generally and working-class Protestants specifically through Castator and Ewald. There was also an effort to take advantage of the fracture of the Detroit Citizens League, in flux after founder Henry Leland broke all ties with the organization.<sup>1118</sup> By running solely candidates who had been favorably received by the Citizens League, the Klan seems to have been trying to consolidate its appeal to the Protestant laymen who had been the bulk of the Citizens

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<sup>1115</sup> A copy of the Klan slate of candidates is found in Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library. This slate was publically admitted as a Klan slate in *Free Press*, 9/30/1925, 5.

<sup>1116</sup> For the close ties of Ewald and Castator to organized labor, see *Labor News*, 10/19/1923, 1; for background material on these three and all other candidates for Council, see *Free Press*, 9/30/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1117</sup> For Brodie's Klan ties in 1924, see *Free Press*, 9/11/1924, 1, 3; *Free Press*, 9/30/1925, 1, 3. For Callahan, see Jackson, 142; Vinyard, 88; *Free Press*, 9/30/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1118</sup> For information on conditions within the Detroit Citizens League in 1925, see Raymond R. Fragnoli, *The Transformation of Reform: Progressivism in Detroit- And After, 1912-1933* (New York: Garland, 1982), 313-314. For Leland's resignation, see *Saturday Night*, 4/25/1925, 2.

League and who had backed Bowles heavily in 1924.<sup>1119</sup> Finally, this slate was notable as being large enough to either aid Bowles if he was elected or block Smith if Smith won, while at the same time being small enough so that the Klan could focus and take advantage of splits from other candidates.<sup>1120</sup> Overall, this slate demonstrates that the Klan was trying to become an independent force in Detroit politics, hoping to expand Bowles' 1924 support into a broader political movement.

### **Klan Power**

The primary on October 6<sup>th</sup> served as the first demonstration of Klan political strength. In the primary election, Ewald, Castator, and Littlefield led the field for City Council, with Callahan finishing fifth and Brodie seventh, as many voters cast ballots solely for the Klan candidates.<sup>1121</sup> This demonstrated that the Klan could trump the longstanding force of incumbency in Detroit politics: perpetually Council vote-leader (and acting mayor during the 1924 election) John C. Lodge was pushed to fourth, while Littlefield, Callahan, and Brodie were the only non-incumbents to finish in the top twelve in the vote, especially notable given Callahan and Brodie's lack of a political base outside the Klan.<sup>1122</sup> The spatial location of the vote was of interest, as the northern and northwestern sections of the city apparently had a larger turnout than normal to back the

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<sup>1119</sup> Fragnoli, 317-319.

<sup>1120</sup> *News*, 10/5/1925, 1, while not naming the Klan directly for reasons which will be apparent shortly, notes both the plans for a "plunker" vote, and that these slates were distributed outside churches.

<sup>1121</sup> *Free Press*, 10/7/1925, 1, 3; *News*, 10/7/1925, 1.

<sup>1122</sup> Clifford A. Prevost, in *Free Press*, 10/8/1925, 12, argued that it was in fact the vote for Callahan and Brodie that best indicated Klan strength, given the political strength outside the Klan held by Ewald, Castator, and Littlefield.

Klan.<sup>1123</sup> Finally, there was a distinctive ethnic and religious tinge present in the voting: two of the three incumbent City Councilors to finish outside the top nine, Frank Broderick and James J. Murphy, were Catholics, and, while two Polish candidates finished in the top eighteen and made the general election, no Jews or African-Americans did so.<sup>1124</sup> Overall, this primary demonstrated that the Klan had become a force in Detroit politics independent of Bowles, with foes estimating the ability to swing at least 30,000 votes.<sup>1125</sup> This also meant that the Klan had momentum going into the general election that could shape the race.

The Detroit press had a mixed reaction to the emergence of the Klan as a political threat. The *Times*, which had backed Smith in 1924, continued to give him their support in 1925.<sup>1126</sup> The *Free Press*, meanwhile, praised Smith's record as an administrator, noted Bowles as lacking any relevant experience, and charging that the Ku Klux Klan with acting as a political party in violation of the city charter.<sup>1127</sup> The weekly *Saturday Night* had praised Smith throughout 1925, comparing his administration favorably to Couzens.<sup>1128</sup> They were particularly blunt in analyzing Bowles, noting that he was only a serious candidate due to Klan support, wondering what pledges he made to obtain it, and

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<sup>1123</sup> *Free Press*, 10/7/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1124</sup> For the religious affinities of Broderick and Murphy, see *Michigan Catholic*, 10/29/1925, 1. The comment on the nature of the candidates is based on an examination of those nominated.

<sup>1125</sup> *Saturday Night*, 10/10/1925, 1.

<sup>1126</sup> Unfortunately, I have been unable to obtain access to the *Times* for these years, in spite of repeated efforts. However, other references (such as *Free Press*, 10/30/1925, 7) indicate this as being the case.

<sup>1127</sup> *Free Press*, 9/26/1926, 6.

<sup>1128</sup> *Saturday Night*, 4/11/1925, 1.



charging him and the Klan with conspiracy against Smith.<sup>1129</sup> This backing was particularly notable in ideological and class terms: both of these newspapers took conservative stances on major issues, and *Saturday Night* in particular considered itself an upper-class publication.<sup>1130</sup> In gaining their support, Smith demonstrated how the Klan was serving to reshape Detroit politics, as those who had backed elite candidates in other circumstances aligned with Smith to fight the Klan. It also demonstrated that Smith was in a good position to gain backing from former Martin supporters, as the arguments made in his favor demonstrated the possibility to appeal based on his service in office, and not just as an anti-Klan candidate.

The *News*, meanwhile, engaged in an entirely different analysis of the race. They took a harsh editorial line towards Smith in office, charging Smith with undermining municipal ownership by supporting streetcar unions.<sup>1131</sup> The *News* repeated its charge from 1924 that Smith with being responsible for Bowles' write-in campaign, claiming that Martin would have won easily otherwise.<sup>1132</sup> Equally notable was the treatment Bowles received from the *News*. While admitting Bowles was lacking in experience, the *News* noted it in a regretful manner, and gave Bowles' campaign more detailed coverage than other publications.<sup>1133</sup> Most important, however, was how the *News* responded to the

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<sup>1129</sup> *Saturday Night*, 7/18/1925, 1; *Saturday Night*, 9/21/1925, 1.

<sup>1130</sup> This point on the ideological stances of these publications has been determined after the scanning of months' worth of editions of these publications, which makes their stances apparent.

<sup>1131</sup> *News*, 8/12/1925, 6; *News*, 8/14/1925, 4; *News*, 8/23/1925, 6.

<sup>1132</sup> *News*, 10/30/1924, 4; *News*, 10/31/1925, 1.

<sup>1133</sup> For this element in tone, see *News*, 9/17/1925, 4. For coverage differences, compare the *News* and *Free Press* for September of 1925.

idea that the Klan was a political issue. Overall, the *News* avoided mentioning the Klan in connection with the race for mayor, treating Smith's denunciations of that organization as basically political.<sup>1134</sup> Even when admitting the presence of racial and religious problems in Detroit, the *News* either chose to blame the Smith administration for this situation or otherwise suggested all sides as being at fault, in ways that avoided mentioning the Klan.<sup>1135</sup> This editorial tendency was reinforced by *New* tending to publish strongly pro-Bowles letters to the editor, who served to reinforce the *News*' anti-machine and Klan-denying rhetoric.<sup>1136</sup> Even in describing the success of the Klan council slate, the *News* avoided mentioning the Klan by name even when describing their actions.<sup>1137</sup> Overall, the *News* was distinctive in how far out of the way it went to try to avoid acknowledging the Klan as being present in 1925 Detroit.

This commentary on the race by the *News* differed heavily from their coverage in 1924, when the *News*, if not as anti-Klan as the *Free Press*, still openly acknowledged Bowles' ties to that organization and that it was a major issue.<sup>1138</sup> This shift resulted in sharp commentary by the *News*' rivals. *Detroit Saturday Night* noted as early as February that the *News* was bitter both that Martin had lost the race for mayor and that Smith had

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<sup>1134</sup> *News*, 9/14/1925, 4.

<sup>1135</sup> *News*, 9/17/1925, 4; *News*, 9/26/1925, 4.

<sup>1136</sup> This can be easily determined through a perusal of the letters columns of the *News* from September to November of 1925.

<sup>1137</sup> *News*, 10/7/1925, 1.

<sup>1138</sup> For one example to demonstrate both, see *News*, 10/30/1924, 4.

not been the machine politician they claimed him to be in office.<sup>1139</sup> Notably, this commentary used the rhetoric of the machine against the *News*, charging them with preferring to have the ability to dominate over elective officials and with being vengeful against those who had any independence from their interests.<sup>1140</sup> The *Free Press*, while also charging the *News* with bossism, noted that they were in a difficult political position: they seemed unable to back Smith after their campaign against him in 1924, but also seemed reluctant or otherwise unable to openly back Bowles.<sup>1141</sup> This commentary suggests that the *News* found themselves without a candidate when Martin didn't run, disliking Smith and likely to be financially ruined if they openly backed the Klan. The way in which they had been anti-Klan in 1924 may be telling, as their stance, unlike the *Free Press*, had been heavily tied specifically with support of Martin.<sup>1142</sup> As a result, the *News* seems to have decided to focus instead on longstanding concerns of theirs concerning support for municipal ownership and opposition to machine politics, pretending that the major issue of 1925 was not an issue at all. Overall, this led to reportage that differed strongly from its competitors, to the point where, reading the *Free Press* and *News* for the same day, it is hard to tell that they were covering the same election.

Smith and Bowles began their campaigns the week after the primary, setting the tone for the rest of the election. Smith ran on his record during his year as major, and

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<sup>1139</sup> *Saturday Night*, 2/7/1925, 1; *Saturday Night*, 2/21/1925, Section 2, 2, 8.

<sup>1140</sup> *Saturday Night*, 3/14/1925, Section 2, 2; *Saturday Night*, 4/11/1925, 1.

<sup>1141</sup> *Free Press*, 9/23/1925, 6.

<sup>1142</sup> *News*, 11/4/1924, 4, serves as a demonstration of this.

used his appointments of businessmen to major city committee as a response to the charge of his being a machine politician.<sup>1143</sup> In making this stance, he seems to have been continuing his effort to appeal to former Martin supporters, making his first address to the Gratiot Avenue Improvement Association, one of several organizations of businessmen focused on improving the radial boulevards of Detroit. However, after visiting them, he went to three locations associated in one form or another with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>1144</sup> While he does not seem to have brought up the Klan in his addresses at these places, his presence still seems to be a way for him to appeal to the voters who were the chief targets of the Detroit Klan. As such, he seems to have begun mobilization of Catholics and other anti-Klan ethnic and religious groups in Detroit, in preparation for more specifically anti-Klan campaigning later. In these regards, Smith started his campaign by both winning over those who had supported Martin over him in 1924, while at the same time trying to maintain and mobilize his core supporters from that election.

The Bowles campaign started in a similar manner, with Bowles touring Detroit speaking to voters in various locations.<sup>1145</sup> At some points, Bowles was running in coordination with the Klan slate for City Council, by this point calling itself the “Big Five”.<sup>1146</sup> At the same time, however, Bowles seems to have been anxious not to be seen as being solely the Klan candidate, giving an early campaign address to the Council of

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<sup>1143</sup> *Free Press*, 10/13/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1144</sup> *News*, 10/13/1925, 19, 22.

<sup>1145</sup> *News*, 10/9/1925, 29.

<sup>1146</sup> *Free Press*, 10/13/1925, 4.

Civil Liberties at American Eagle Lodge Hall.<sup>1147</sup> In some regards, he was consolidating his past support from 1924 in the same way that Smith had, touring both Protestant churches and the fraternal organizations of Detroit. This had a dual importance: Bowles had established himself in civic life through these organizations, and they continued to have strong political and social roles. At the same time, he tried appealing to voters he hadn't appealed to in 1924: he campaigned on the east side, spoke to Danish and German organizations, and even attempted to meet with a Jewish branch of the Odd Fellows.<sup>1148</sup> In this early touring, Bowles was trying to build a majority by crossing over to voters who had backed Smith in 1924, in contrast with Smith's focus on upper-class Protestant support.

Bowles' ideological appeals, meanwhile, were established in his campaign-opening address at the Detroit Armory on October 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1149</sup> The fact that he opened his campaign with a mass rally, and that he apparently had a full house, demonstrates both how mass political action was of symbolic importance to Bowles and how he was able to draw an audience for it.<sup>1150</sup> He stood for good government, asking that mudslinging and racial politics not be used, in a way that seems designed to appeal to the reformist approach that had become of great importance starting in the mid-1910s in Detroit. He continued trying to avoid either linking himself with or condemning the Ku Klux Klan,

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<sup>1147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1148</sup> *News*, 10/15/1925, 20; *Free Press*, 10/14/1925, 8.

<sup>1149</sup> Unless otherwise cited, stances taken by Bowles in his Armory address are taken from *News*, 10/16/1925, 33, 35, 36, 38, 48, which contained a full transcription of his armory address.

<sup>1150</sup> For the context of the speech, see *News*, 10/16/1925, 1, 2; article by William C. Richards in *Free Press*, 10/16/1925, 1, 3.

and joined the *News* in charging Smith's campaigning against the Klan as being motivated by political expediency. There was a fiscal paradox present in his campaign: he wanted economy in government, including a budget bureau and opposition to bonding debt, but at the same time wanted increased spending on such items as streets and alleys, the Health Department, and recreational buildings. Some of this spending was based in need: Bowles noted that sewer improvements were needed because the pollution of the Detroit River violated treaty agreements with Canada, while increased school spending was needed due to 15,000 students being on half-time schedules due to overcrowding. On the whole, Bowles seems to have been trying to take the popular side in terms of his spending stances, and hoping that the contradictions he presented were not challenged.

Most important of the issues that Bowles campaigned on at the Armory was the subject of vice. He argued that in spite of the fact that a majority of the voters had indicated a desire for stronger law enforcement by backing himself and Martin in 1924, law enforcement conditions had been growing worse in Detroit, which he portrayed as overrun with criminals, including 6000 prostitutes registered with the Health Department. He also claimed that the large amounts of money spent on the Police Department were spent in vain, due to their being hindered by city government. In making this charge, Bowles was continuing his charge of Smith being influenced by politics, and that it was better politics for him to protect vice than fight it. This he tied to other matters as well, including repeating the *News* charge of Smith politicizing the Department of Street Railways. One of Bowles' most explicit stances came in transportation: he opposed both subways due to cost and time limitations and instead argued for putting streetcars

underground in downtown Detroit to solve transportation problems. Finally, he denounced his political foes, charging a combine of professional politicians and the press with working against his campaign and using the Klan as an issue to wreck it. Overall, Bowles used his Armory speech to claim the reform mantle in Detroit politics, using a mixture of the anti-politician and anti-vice arguments that had helped the Detroit Citizens League rise in prominence during the 1910s.

In addition to this generally reformist stance, several other points can be noted involving the way Bowles positioned himself as a candidate. As noted earlier, his stance on budgeting seems to be combining desires in Detroit, especially in the outlying areas that had backed him in 1924, for both a controlled tax rate and increased public works, taking the popular stances on both issues while not noting the contradiction present. His campaign on vice, meanwhile, appealed to the Protestants who made the Citizens League important in the 1910s and who were turning in large numbers to the Klan in the 1920s, but also positioned himself as a foe to city government without having to take precise stances in terms of what the Smith administration was doing wrong or what he would do to correct things.<sup>1151</sup> He also took a distinctly conspiratorial stance in his portrayal of a press-politician axis, which seems designed to appeal to those who felt that city government had not been particularly responsive to them. Many of his stances seem designed to appeal to as many voters as possible: his Klan stance, for instance, seems designed so that he could simultaneously not offend the Klan while at the same time claiming some appeal to those who were not Klan supporters. Similarly, he avoided any

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<sup>1151</sup> *Saturday Night*, 10/24/1925, 1, 3, make a point of Bowles' lack of a specific program on these issues.

stances that would have placed him as for either labor or management in class matters, suggesting that he saw a need for the votes of both in order to win. Overall, the Bowles stance seems to have been to try to unite anyone with objections as to the administration of city government in Detroit, and, by avoiding making specific stances that would alienate any of them, build an electoral majority.

### **Candidates On the Move**

Smith and Bowles continued following the lines on which they opened their campaigns in the following weeks. Smith toured the city, focusing on his record, claiming that it demonstrated honesty in office, that he had brought a lower tax rate, and could in the future make Detroit a major aviation center.<sup>1152</sup> He also challenged Bowles' abilities, claiming that Bowles was ducking major issues and was opposing Smith solely for religious purposes.<sup>1153</sup> However, Smith seems to have wanted to avoid making a negative campaign against Bowles his only issue, perhaps in response to critics of his 1924 campaign. He used the issue of stability in his campaigning, noting that the rapid overturn of mayors had made planning impossible.<sup>1154</sup> His campaigning also demonstrated a continued understanding of his need to appeal both to his 1924 base and to former Martin backers. As a result, he continued speaking to factory workers and on the east side, but also made sure to visit improvement associations and associations of ministers in an

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<sup>1152</sup> *Free Press*, 10/17/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 10/20/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1153</sup> *Free Press*, 10/17/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 10/15/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1154</sup> *News*, 10/22/1925, 18. Smith was the fifth mayor of Detroit since December 1922.



effort to receive their support.<sup>1155</sup> Overall, Smith was trying to combine the forces that opposed Bowles in 1924 into a united front, and did so by casting himself in a positive light as well as through denouncing Bowles as a Klan candidate.

Bowles' campaign, meanwhile, had several complications present. The Klan was in some trouble in Detroit: their downtown landlord sued, charging them with using false pretenses to obtain office space, and they were faced with a court case concerning this after the election.<sup>1156</sup> Bowles was also in trouble over campaign expenses: the Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney had forced him to reveal his primary expenditures, and while his official account claimed to be following the limited spending allowed in Michigan, it was noted that it would not cover any funds the Klan was spending on his behalf.<sup>1157</sup> His campaign rhetoric had also gotten him in trouble: Frank Croul and William Rutledge, Commissioner and Superintendent respectively of the Detroit Police Department, denied that the police had been stymied by excessive political influence, and Croul claimed both that that had not been the case in the fifteen years he had been in police administration and that Bowles was damaging police moral for political gain.<sup>1158</sup> This charge seems to have given Bowles particular trouble, leading him to avoid making a response during the rest of the campaign.<sup>1159</sup> His claims about vice also got him into

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<sup>1155</sup> For one list demonstrated the wide variety of people he spoke to in one day, see *Free Press*, 10/18/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1156</sup> *Free Press*, 10/11/1925, 9; *Free Press*, 10/16/1925, 8.

<sup>1157</sup> *Free Press*, 10/14/1925, 6; *News*, 10/17/1925, 14.

<sup>1158</sup> *Free Press*, 10/18/1925, 1, 2; *News*, 10/18/1925, 1; *Saturday Night*, 10/24/1925, 1, 3; *Free Press*, 10/20/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1159</sup> *Free Press*, 10/19/1925, 4, notes him as starting to duck this matter immediately.

trouble: when he claimed to see from his office window five gambling houses and then refused to give any information to the police, he was charged with insincerity and with using vice charges solely for publicity purposes.<sup>1160</sup> Overall, Bowles was faced with two new challenges: because he was more of a public figure than he was in 1924, his stances on the issues were increasingly under question, and because this was a race against Smith alone he had to directly compare his stances with a specific candidate, instead of letting his split opposition damage itself as in 1924. This affected his campaigning, as the generalities he had used in 1924 were less effective when compared to the record of an incumbent.

Perhaps in realization of this, Bowles limited his campaigning to a particular set of issues.<sup>1161</sup> He chiefly was concerned with vice, charging Smith with failing to enforce vice laws, particularly as they related to the “blind pigs”, or speakeasies, of Detroit.<sup>1162</sup> This was charged with being a political quid pro quo in which Smith received political support from blind pig operators in exchange for continued operation.<sup>1163</sup> In making this charge, Bowles called back to the rhetoric that the Detroit Citizens League had used against the Royal Ark organization of retail liquor dealers in the 1910s in their fight for charter reform, and reflected how his campaign was reliant on backing from the Protestant churchgoers who had backed the Citizens League. This rhetoric was aimed at a

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<sup>1160</sup> *Free Press*, 10/21/1925, 16.

<sup>1161</sup> A copy of Bowles' platform in card form, dated to 10/6/1925, is in Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1162</sup> *News*, 10/19/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1163</sup> *News*, 10/16/1925, 33, 35, 36, 38, 48.

specific audience: he chiefly campaigned in churches and among fraternal organizations, and even hostile sources noted that he was effective at getting full houses for his speeches.<sup>1164</sup> His use of rhetoric against the political leadership of the city was especially notable on transportation matters, as Bowles' campaign for "subway dips", in addition to reversing his pro-subway stance of 1924, put him against virtually every civic leader in Detroit, who were then backing the Rapid Transit Commission proposals for a Detroit subway system.<sup>1165</sup> However, the fact that he made transportation such an important issue is of interest, as it seems to have been a way for Bowles to appeal to voters both in outlying areas (who wanted a fix to transportation problems as soon as possible), as well as to the upper-income Detroiters who would be paying the most for a subway system. Overall, while he tried to broadly appeal in his audiences, it seems clear that his chief audience for his campaign were still the non-elite Protestants from outlying areas that had backed him in 1924, as reflected in his rhetoric.

The audience for Bowles' campaign was also distinctive in another fashion, as his campaign gained the reputation as one which by Detroit standards relied heavily on women to spread his message and engage in campaign work on his behalf.<sup>1166</sup>

Unfortunately, many of the sources who note this are vague in terms of details, making it hard to determine exactly what roles women played on his behalf. Understanding the

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<sup>1164</sup> *Free Press*, 10/20/1925, 14.

<sup>1165</sup> For Bowles' stance, see Clifford A. Prevost, *Free Press*, 10/22/1925, 9. For an analysis on the differing views on the subject, see Clifford A. Prevost, *Free Press*, 10/28/1925, 1, 2. For the opinion of the Rapid Transit Commission, see *Free Press*, 10/22/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1166</sup> For Bowles as using women heavily in his campaigning, see *Free Press*, 10/20/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 10/31/1925, 1 (a front-page editorial urging women not to vote for the Klan); *News*, 10/16/1925, 1, 2; *News*, 10/28/1925, 4; *Michigan Catholic*, 10/15/1925, 4.

reasons for their support is also complicated: organizers for Smith's women's committee suggested it was a combination of a lack of knowledge of municipal affairs combined with appeals to emotionalism and prejudice, but the assumptions this argument makes about both women and Bowles supporters fits contemporary stereotypes too neatly to be fully trustable.<sup>1167</sup> However, there are elements to this backing that do symbolize how Bowles was mobilizing those who were outside the Detroit political establishment. Neither faction in Detroit politics prior to 1924 had been particularly effective in or interested in incorporating women: the Detroit Citizens League was very much a movement run by men, especially as upper-class influences supplanted Protestant laymen, while working-class leadership in Detroit was similarly masculine.<sup>1168</sup> The Smith campaign demonstrated this continuing condition: while he planned to use housewives to engage in door-to-door campaigning for him, the groups he was trying to win over most were such male bastions as improvement associations.<sup>1169</sup> By mobilizing for Bowles, women were claiming a place in the Detroit political sphere which had not been previously present, while working for a candidate who was highly willing to accept their support. Overall, this suggests that women backing Bowles had a deeper attachment than just being in reaction to Catholics or to vice conditions, instead being among the forgotten people so important to Bowles' campaigning.

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<sup>1167</sup> *Free Press*, 10/20/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1168</sup> The primary results demonstrate this lack of a full connection: four women ran (*News*, 10/4/1925, 1, 2), but none came particularly close to being nominated (*News*, 10/7/1925, 1).

<sup>1169</sup> *Free Press*, 10/22/1925, 1, 3.

### **Horsewhips and Chickening Out**

The ways in which the Bowles campaign mobilized women managed to serve as the first of two events on back-to-back days that served as turning points for the Bowles campaign. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mrs. Eli J. Forsythe, wife of the minister of the Fort Street Congregational Church, urged from the pulpit that Smith backers, especially women for Smith, should be tarred and feathered.<sup>1170</sup> By itself, this was notable in demonstrating both the significance of women to the Bowles campaign and the harsh feelings that were present in this election. However, two elements in connection to this made these remarks damaging to Bowles: he had spoken at the Fort Street Congregational Church prior to Mrs. Forsythe's statement, which implicitly suggested that he backed these remarks, and Klan literature had been openly passed out inside the church, serving as a reminder of his Klan ties.<sup>1171</sup> In general, the Klan of the 1920s had had its greatest success when it was seen as a mainstream mass movement, and as being a fraternal movement along the lines of the Masons. When the Klan obtained a terroristic image, however, it tended to decline in overall support. In 1924, the Arena Garden riot was key in Bowles losing the election as it had served to mobilize an electorate against the Klan who feared it engaging in acts of this nature against its foes. By threatening violence against political opponents, Mrs. Forsythe simultaneously rekindled fears of terrorism and encouraged Klan foes to

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<sup>1170</sup> Clifford A. Prevost, *Free Press*, 10/23/1925, 1, 5; *Saturday Night*, 10/31/1925, 1; *Michigan Catholic*, 10/29/1925, 9.

<sup>1171</sup> *News*, 10/22/1925, 21, notes that Bowles was scheduled to speak, while *News*, 10/23/1925, 56, indicates that he did (characteristically, without mentioning the tar and feathers). For the Klan literature, see Clifford A. Prevost, *Free Press*, 10/23/1925, 1, 5.

mobilize for Smith.<sup>1172</sup> Moreover, Bowles avoided making a statement on these remarks and continued denying the Klan as a political issue, which only served to emphasize his close Klan ties. Mr. Forsythe did not aid matters, as within a week he both denounced political activities by the Catholic Church and demanded that evangelists increase their activities, furthering a bigoted image.<sup>1173</sup> Overall, these remarks and Bowles' inability to respond furthered his image as a Klan candidate, limiting his ability to expand his electoral support and encouraging political action against him.

Public speaking of a different kind damaged the Bowles campaign even further. The Detroit Board of Commerce had tried to arrange a debate between Smith and Bowles, on October 12<sup>th</sup> claiming to have come to an agreement for an October 26<sup>th</sup> debate over WGHP radio.<sup>1174</sup> On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, Bowles pulled out of the debate.<sup>1175</sup> He gave contradictory reasons for why he did this, alternatively claiming to have never committed, feeling that Smith would have an unfair advantage unless Bowles saw his speech in advance, and that it had been a trap.<sup>1176</sup> This refusal served to damage Bowles' credibility in a different way than the Forsythe remarks. Even the Bowles-friendly *Detroit News* admitted that Bowles lacked any record in public life, and most other commentators regarded him as being a serious candidate more or less solely due to his

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<sup>1172</sup> For some examples of the public reaction to these remarks in the form of letters to the editor, see *Free Press*, 10/28/1925, 6; *Free Press*, 10/29/1925, 6; *Free Press*, 10/30/1925, 6; *Free Press*, 10/31/1925, 6.

<sup>1173</sup> *Free Press*, 10/26/1925, 2; *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1174</sup> For the details of this arrangement, see *The Detroitier*, 10/19/1925, 10.

<sup>1175</sup> *Free Press*, 10/24/1925, 1.

<sup>1176</sup> *News*, 10/22/1925, 33; *News*, 10/27/1925, 43; *News*, 10/28/1925, 24.

Klan backing. In order to break this image, Bowles would need to articulate clear views on substantive issues, and demonstrated some appeal to the electorate at large.<sup>1177</sup> By refusing to debate Smith, Bowles simultaneously turned down a perfect opportunity to demonstrate his credibility on major issues to a large section of the Detroit electorate and suggested that he could not stand being compared directly with Smith on major issues.<sup>1178</sup> This managed to make the Forsythe controversy even stronger, as the inability of Bowles to state other issues made the Klan's activities an even greater political issue.<sup>1179</sup> For his part, Smith took the high road, simply regretting that he could not debate Bowles, coming across in a far better light than Bowles did.<sup>1180</sup> Bowles was further damaged as a candidate, as the image of him as lacking both clear stances and a clear reason for being mayor gained power.

One of the best remaining sources for the opinion of relatively ordinary Detroiters about this political situation and a demonstration of the polarization in 1925 Detroit can be found in the letter columns of the *Free Press* and *News*. For the most part, these reflected the editorial stances of the newspapers, with the *Free Press* chiefly running anti-Bowles letters and the *News* running pro-Bowles letters. The negative treatment of the Klan by the *Free Press* took several forms, with correspondents noting that no legitimate

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<sup>1177</sup> The tone of the *News* editorial of 10/20/1925, 4, while serving as yet another opportunity to attack Smith, demonstrates this point, as it seems to suggest this as a means to improve Bowles' credibility as a candidate.

<sup>1178</sup> Moreover, radio audiences in 1925 were disproportionately better-off than the electorate as a whole, meaning that Bowles was throwing away the chance to appeal to a group that he was strongly campaigning against Smith for the votes for.

<sup>1179</sup> Note, for instance, *Saturday Night*, 10/31/1925, 1, which links these two points.

<sup>1180</sup> *Free Press*, 10/27/1925, 1, 5.

fraternal organization was as secretive about its membership as the Klan, the comparison of Klan robes to nightgowns, charges of postal law violations, and the claim that the Klan would engage in actions comparable to the Herron labor unrest.<sup>1181</sup> The Klan's support for laws against parochial education were noted in a challenge to their claims about not being intolerant, while many writers responded to the Forsythe remarks, including one archly suggesting that large amounts of tar would be needed in Detroit after the election.<sup>1182</sup> Others directly noted issues, claiming Smith as a taxpayer candidate and noting Bowles as lacking knowledge of city affairs.<sup>1183</sup> Finally, the *News* was directly challenged by letter writers, with one charging them with wanting the Klan to win.<sup>1184</sup> These responses give an idea as for the range of anti-Klan arguments, and, if the last names used by the letter writers have meaning, of ethnic groups opposed to the Klan. Moreover, it is clear in this how Bowles would have trouble building a majority, as, like the *Free Press* itself, many Klan opponents in 1925 had been Martin supporters in 1924.

The letters to the *News* differed from those to the *Free Press* in several ways, including number (the *News* ran more), timing (the *News* started running letters in late August, while the *Free Press* largely waited until October), range of issues (such matters

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<sup>1181</sup> J.A. Moross to Editor of the *Free Press*, 9/14/1925, *Free Press*, 9/24/1925, 6 (secrecy on membership); Henry Rohr to the Editor of the *Free Press*, 9/26/1925, *Free Press*, 10/1/1925, 6 (reference to nightgowns); "Detroitter", *Free Press*, 10/14/1925, 6 (Herron comparison); Charles K. Radcliffe to Editor of the *Free Press*, 10/23/1925, *Free Press*, 10/28/1925, 6 (violation of postal laws).

<sup>1182</sup> For the references to the Forsyth remarks, see the sources cited in Footnote 77. For the stance on schools, see F.W. Ronan to Editor of the *Free Press*, 10/6/1925, *Free Press*, 10/11/1925, 6.

<sup>1183</sup> Edward Carolan to Editor of the *Free Press*, 10/11/1925, *Free Press*, 10/18/1925, 6 (Bowles as lacking knowledge); Alfred P. Adams to Editor of the *Free Press*, 10/27/1925, *Free Press*, 10/31/1925, 6 (Smith as taxpayer candidate).

<sup>1184</sup> Robert J. Wojcinski to Editor of the *Free Press*, 10/17/1925, *Free Press*, 10/28/1925, 6.



as city annexations showed up more often), identification of letter writers (the *News* seems to have had more writers using initials or pseudonyms), and even diversity of opinion (the *News* ran more pro-Smith material than the *Free Press* ran pro-Bowles material). However, the most notable constant came in terms of the relative treatment of the candidates. Smith was often denounced, charged with being a machine politician, heavily tied to vice, motivated entirely by political expedience, winning in 1924 only due to split opposition, and as having a campaign that harassed Bowles backers.<sup>1185</sup> Overall, these letters suggest that much of Bowles' support, rather than being based on his own merits, was in negative response to Smith and what he was seen as politically representing. However, positive points for Bowles were made, with him being portrayed as a candidate of the people and as manly, in contrast to Smith being political and slanderous.<sup>1186</sup> Most notable was the continued denial of the Klan being an important issue. Some letter writers were vague on how religious issues mattered in 1924, others charged Smith with being the one to make religious and racial issues important, still more claimed that decency was the chief issue, and one went as far as not seeing how the Klan backing Bowles was an issue.<sup>1187</sup> Notably, letters asking about Bowles having Klan ties

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<sup>1185</sup> Eben S. Duncan, *News*, 8/23/1925, 6 (machine politician elected by minority vote and tied to vice); L.M. Miller, *News*, 10/9/1925, 4 (charge of vice backing); Frank Jos. Havlena, *News*, 10/29/1925, 4 (harassment by Smith backers).

<sup>1186</sup> "Mrs. A.J.B.", *News*, 9/22/1925, 4 (Bowles man of the people); Melvin Shaw, *News*, 9/28/1925, 4. (Bowles as manly).

<sup>1187</sup> Eben S. Duncan, *News*, 8/23/1925, 6 (vagueness on religion as 1924 issue); P.H. Gill, *News*, 9/22/1925, 4 (blames Smith for racial unrest); "A Reader", *News*, 9/23/1925, 4 (wants evidence from Smith concerning Klan as issue); "Tolerant", *News*, 10/16/1925, 4 (blames Smith for religious and racial issues); Mrs. A. Kunna, *News*, 10/28/1925, 4 (decency as issue); W.C. McKnight, *News*, 11/1/1925, 6, 20 (doesn't see why Klan backing matters).

received a direct editorial response by the *News* denying this, in contrast to their non-intervention with most other letters.<sup>1188</sup> Overall, these letters suggest how Bowles obtained his support, and are especially interesting in suggesting why those who were not Klan members would back him. At the same time, weaknesses of Bowles are still apparent: his praise tends to be stylistic rather than substantive, and the ducking of the Klan suggests how even many of his supporters seem to be reticent to admit to this issue. However, these are still letters of great use, as they are one of the few sources left of the pro-Bowles voters.

As the campaigns came to a close, questions involving the organization of the Ku Klux Klan on Bowles' behalf emerged. As early as September, it was noted that Ira W. Stout, Kleagle of the Detroit Klan, was organizing against Smith, denying that he would engage in secret campaigning.<sup>1189</sup> The Klan had meetings to organize workers during the primary season, and on primary day had telephone workers at headquarters and election watchers at the polls.<sup>1190</sup> During the general election it was claimed that the Klan organized on the ward, precinct, and block levels and were operating via automobile

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<sup>1188</sup> For instance, Bowles was given a published response to a Jack F. Cremer letter in the *News* of 9/2/1925 (1) asking about Klan commitments, while the *News* itself responded to a "Constant Reader" letter of 10/26/1925 (4) asking about Bowles' Klan ties. In contrast, Smith never received a right of response, and the only time the *News* responded to a letter concerning Smith (one of 8/5/1925 (4) by R.L. Drake, asking about DSR unions) was highly negative. ‘

<sup>1189</sup> *Free Press*, 9/18/1925, 3. It should be noted that, while I have not been able to find the original, I have found several references to an anti-Catholic statement made to the *Times* in late September of 1925 (*Saturday Night*, 9/26/1925, 1; *Michigan Catholic*, 10/1/1925, 7), of some interest as a direct statement of his political goals.

<sup>1190</sup> *Free Press*, 9/30/1925, 5; *Free Press*, 10/7/1925, 1, 3.

throughout the city.<sup>1191</sup> The Klan was charged with behaving like a political machine, with a direct connection being made between their conduct and that of William Hale Thompson in Chicago.<sup>1192</sup> This undercut the use of machine charges against Smith by showing his opponents were not free of them, and also suggested that the Klan was serving as a de facto party in a city that had lost such organization through charter reform.<sup>1193</sup> Notably, the subject of organization raised questions involving Klansmen from outside Detroit being involved in this election. This was seen as the last chance for the Michigan Klan to recover from its heavy defeats in 1924, and that they would fight hard to stay afloat. Charges were made that Klansmen from outside Detroit were contributing large sums of money against state law and that they were engaged in corrupt registration of voters.<sup>1194</sup> This led to the charge by the *Free Press* that thousands of Klansmen were invading Detroit to participate in the election.<sup>1195</sup> Notably, a newspaper fight concerning fraud was present: the *News* concentrated on registrations in the core of the city to charge Smith with corrupt practices, while the *Free Press* focused on registrations in the 16<sup>th</sup> Ward in the city's northwest and the 21<sup>st</sup> Ward in the northeast

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<sup>1191</sup> Statement by Cal Greenway to George Welsh (then Lt. Gov of Michigan), in *Free Press*, 10/25/1925, 5.

<sup>1192</sup> Ibid for the direct comparison to Thompson; for comparisons to political organizations generally, see Clifford A. Prevost, *Free Press*, 9/14/1925, 1, 3; *Free Press*, 9/21/1925, 6; *Free Press*, 10/8/1925, 6.

<sup>1193</sup> *Free Press*, 10/8/1925, 6, makes this comparison.

<sup>1194</sup> *Free Press*, 9/26/1925, 4 (corrupt registration); Statement by Cal Greenway to George Welsh, in *Free Press*, 10/25/1925, 5 (use of funds).

<sup>1195</sup> *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1, 2.

when considering fraud.<sup>1196</sup> Ultimately, the City Election Commission denied these fraud allegations, claiming that it largely reflected the mobility of Detroit's population.<sup>1197</sup> However, these charges have significance in demonstrating how the election had given rise to distinct paranoia involving Klan activities, with then being suspected of being willing to fix the election if necessary.

Similar attempts were made to understand how Bowles obtained a following. *Free Press* political writer William C. Richards interpreted Bowles as being an emotional candidate of importance less for himself than as being representative of a larger movement.<sup>1198</sup> In this understanding, Bowles was a candidate who received support by voters trying to break away from dull lives, and who by backing Bowles gained a sense of excitement. This approach involved reading more into Bowles than was actually present, with support that was not based on his merits. This challenged his stances on issues: his vice comments were regarded as standard campaign talk, while it was noted that he lacked any sort of real business experience like that his backers sometimes assumed. Even his skills as a public speaker were challenged: he was charged with being mechanical and as engaging in severe repetition, making for an interesting contrast with the speeches of his published in the *News*, which do not demonstrate these issues. Bowles being a candidate who relied on intolerance was also assumed: while the Klan was not directly mentioned, his status as a candidate of anti-Catholics, racists, religious

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<sup>1196</sup> *Free Press*, 9/26/1925, 4; *News*, 10/29/1925, 1. For a charge of hypocrisy to the *News*, see *Saturday Night*, 10/31/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1197</sup> *Free Press*, 10/24/1925, 13.

<sup>1198</sup> All points in this paragraph are taken from William C. Richards, *Free Press*, 10/26/1925, 1, 2.

fundamentalists, and foes of cosmopolitanism was. Finally, this claimed that Bowles knew full well that his campaign worked in this manner, and that he was by no means a political tool. While this approach continued to assume a fundamental irrationality with the Bowles vote, this analysis does have interest in suggesting that the Bowles vote was considered a phenomenon in 1925, demonstrating how political conditions were seen even then as exceptional.

### **Campaign Climax**

The last week of the campaign was mixed for the Smith and Bowles campaigns. Smith cut back on his public speaking, as his physicians noted that he was suffering from throat issues due to it.<sup>1199</sup> However, he continued to visit a variety of places, attending rallies among ethnic groups, political clubhouses, civic institutions, and among city employees on the same night.<sup>1200</sup> He noted a need for community peace after the election, stating that the political climate was threatening to tear apart Detroit.<sup>1201</sup> He also continued to stand on his record, noting a need for further civic improvements in outlying areas.<sup>1202</sup> In spite of a fever, he continued campaigning to election day, arguing for a need for a high turnout.<sup>1203</sup> His illness did affect his campaign, as it meant that he would be in no position to use his personal appeal to counteract the Klan's mass mobilization. Smith

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<sup>1199</sup> *Free Press*, 10/26/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1200</sup> *Free Press*, 10/28/1925, 1, 3, has all of these in one night, while the *News* kept meticulous lists of all places the candidates were supposed to visit while campaigning.

<sup>1201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1202</sup> *Free Press*, 10/21/1925, 1, 24; *Free Press*, 10/30/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1203</sup> *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1, 14.

made up for this from other backers: every daily and weekly publication in Detroit but the *News* seems to have backed his reelection, with the *Free Press* endorsing his work against government waste and for better transit and sewage while dismissing his foes as disappointed office-seekers and their newspaper enabler.<sup>1204</sup> Smith also used ads on his behalf, including from businessmen who were backing him and an anti-Klan slate for the City Council.<sup>1205</sup> Perhaps most notably, Reinhold Niebuhr of Bethel Evangelical Church and Leo M. Franklin of Temple Beth El used their last services before the election to condemn the Klan and worked to organize Protestants and Jews on behalf of Smith.<sup>1206</sup> This demonstrated that, even as his illness limited his activities, Smith still had backers who were working to thwart the Klan.

However, others who had been long active in Detroit politics did not similarly assist Smith. James Couzens kept to a personal political tradition in which he did not campaign for candidates, avoiding making any statements for any candidates running.<sup>1207</sup> Joseph A. Martin similarly avoided taking a stance, claiming to be out of politics and thereby continuing a situation in which the Martin vote was available for the pickings of

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<sup>1204</sup> For the *Free Press* endorsement, see *Free Press*, 10/30/1925, 1. For the broad support, see *Saturday Night*, 11/7/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1205</sup> *Free Press*, 10/31/1925, 2.

<sup>1206</sup> *News*, 11/2/1925, 16; *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 1, 2. Regrettably, the Reinhold Niebuhr Papers at the Library of Congress contain little from the Detroit section of his career, and what they do contain sheds little light on his actions at this time.

<sup>1207</sup> James Couzens to James Smith, 8/7/1925, James Couzens Papers, Box 37, Folder 6, Library of Congress, openly goes as far as admitting that he had not been paying much attention to local affairs, and, while he went as far as defending non-partisan elections to a critic (Couzens to Mrs. Paul W. Tara, 9/30/1925, James Couzens Papers, Box 39, Folder 3, Library of Congress), none of his surviving correspondence in the James Couzens Papers indicates that he took any side in this matter.

both candidates.<sup>1208</sup> The Detroit Citizens League equivocated in terms of the Klan.<sup>1209</sup> On the one hand, they openly stated opposition to religious bigotry, which by itself was of note given its explicitly Protestant origins.<sup>1210</sup> However, this was not reflected in their candidate endorsements: they did not back a candidate for mayor, while giving “preferred” status to Klan member Philip Callahan’s race for City Council.<sup>1211</sup> This suggested evasiveness, as it seemed that the Citizens League, while willing to oppose what the Klan stood for, was less willing to openly state itself as opposed to the Klan.<sup>1212</sup> In this way, the ongoing division between Protestant churchgoers and business interests in terms of control seem important, as the Citizens League seems to have wanted to avoid offending the former in order to avoid permanently losing their support. Overall, this created an opening for Bowles, demonstrating that many who had backed Martin in 1924 were not willing to back Smith in 1925.

Even the most notable endorsement Smith received had complications present. Henry Ford had largely been apart from Detroit political life, personally residing in Dearborn and with main plants in Dearborn and Highland Park. This apartness was

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<sup>1208</sup> *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 4.

<sup>1209</sup> Fragnoli, 318, attributes this to the Committee on Candidates objecting to William P. Lovett’s desire to directly oppose the Klan.

<sup>1210</sup> For the official statement by the Citizens League, see the *Civic Searchlight* for October 1925 (copy in Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library). Substantively the same materials were published in *News*, 10/25/1925, 2.

<sup>1211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1212</sup> For criticism along these lines, see *Free Press*, 10/28/1925, 6; *Saturday Night*, 10/31/1925, 1. Of these, the former attributes it to alignment with a political clique, while the latter suggests it was motivated by fear.

present in his company, as Joseph Martin's speaking at the Rouge plant prior to the 1924 election seems to have irritated management.<sup>1213</sup> Moreover, there were growing tensions in the workforce, as political disagreements spread to the industrial world.<sup>1214</sup> Given all this, Ford's decision to back Smith shortly before the election was something of a surprise.<sup>1215</sup> Ford's own conspiratorial mindset was present in his endorsement, as he compared the Klan to the Masons, Knights of Columbus, and Wall Street as joint foes. Moreover, it was an endorsement that complicated the Smith base, as the *Dearborn Independent* (for which Smith was the first circulation manager) had become notorious for its anti-Semitic contents.<sup>1216</sup> As a result, the Klan, in a spectacular display of audacity, tried to gain Jewish support by using this endorsement against Smith.<sup>1217</sup> Overall, it was unclear who would be motivated by this endorsement, as the audience to whom Ford had the greatest appeal, working-class Protestants, was also the group most in support of Bowles.

Bowles, meanwhile, did not have the same set of complications in play that Smith did. He made attempts to appeal for the votes of groups long associated with Klan

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<sup>1213</sup> James Sweinhart to W.J. Cameron, 11/13/1924, Nevins and Hill Research Notes, Box 30, Folder 15, Benson Ford Research Center; Harry H. Bennett to Joseph Palma, 12/2/1924, Nevins and Hill Research Notes, Box 30, Folder 15, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1214</sup> *Saturday Night*, 10/31/1925, 1.

<sup>1215</sup> Article by William C. Richards, *Free Press*, 10/31/1925, 1.

<sup>1216</sup> Much has been written about Ford and the *Dearborn Independent*, of which some of the most interesting materials comes from E.G. Pipp, who resigned as editor over this material, both in his *Pipp's Weekly* and *Pipp's Magazine* and in his *Henry Ford: Both Sides of Him* (Detroit: Pipp's Magazine, 1926), 66-71.

<sup>1217</sup> *Free Press*, 11/1/1925, 1, 2.



harassment, including making several speeches to the Detroit branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.<sup>1218</sup> In other regards, he stuck to more familiar audiences, visiting both longstanding supporters in fraternal organizations and Protestant churches and the political clubs and improvement associations where he would need to build a majority through.<sup>1219</sup> He continued with his standard line of campaigning, noting his political independence. This including targeting of newspaper foes, as he denounced the *Free Press* and *Times* for backing Smith at his last large rally at the Light Guard Armory.<sup>1220</sup> He also continued to use vice as a critical issue in his campaign, going as far as claiming that reductions in the crime rate merely meant that the police were less effective at arrests.<sup>1221</sup> Overall, Bowles spent the last days of his campaign repeating the themes that he had used previously, in many cases ones he had used in 1924, and hoping that these themes would be enough for him to claim a majority of the vote.

Complicating Bowles' ability to get a majority was the continued connection of his campaign with the Klan. A speaker urged a vote for the Klan slate after Bowles spoke at Immanuel Baptist Church, while Klan publications were distributed to the crowd outside of the Knights of Pythias Church after another speech.<sup>1222</sup> The day before the election, a cross was burnt after a Bowles automobile rally, reminiscent of similar cross

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<sup>1218</sup> *News*, 10/27/1925, 43; *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 12. Several authors have written on UNIA in Detroit during the 1920s, but none of them seem to have brought up this particular endorsement.

<sup>1219</sup> As with Smith, the daily listings of candidate speaking arrangements in the *News* are the best available source to see this campaigning.

<sup>1220</sup> *Free Press*, 10/30/1925, 7.

<sup>1221</sup> *Free Press*, 10/29/1925, 24.

<sup>1222</sup> *Free Press*, 10/29/1925, 24; *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 1, 3.

burnings towards the end of the 1924 campaign.<sup>1223</sup> Adjuncts to the Klan were also charged with aiding Bowles: the Kamelia organization of female Klan supporters was accused of running house-to-house campaigns for Bowles during the day while the Klan engaged in night campaigning.<sup>1224</sup> Other events demonstrated the Klan as being a negative presence in political life: a Klan flag was set up outside City Hall, while over two thousand pints of beer were seized from a truck parked outside Klan headquarters.<sup>1225</sup> The *Free Press* charged the Klan with bringing paid operatives into the city to work for Bowles, and charged on election day that they would be dictators of Detroit if Bowles won.<sup>1226</sup> Overall, Bowles was not able to break his image as being a Klan candidate, as he was neither able to credibly deny Klan ties nor avoid the issue of the Klan campaigning strongly for him.

Perhaps the ultimate indication of the significance of the 1925 election came through national coverage. Whereas most elections received summary reports in the national press, a series of detailed articles were produced the week before the election by John J. Leary Jr. of the *New York World* that received front-page treatment from the *Free Press*.<sup>1227</sup> These articles conveyed information in summary form that noted what was not clear in local coverage. The Klan in Detroit being anti-Catholic was explicated, with

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<sup>1223</sup> *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 4.

<sup>1224</sup> *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1225</sup> *Free Press*, 11/1/1925, 1; *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 1.

<sup>1226</sup> *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 6; *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1.

<sup>1227</sup> Unless otherwise cited, all citations to follow are to be understood to be from *Free Press* publication of John J. Leary Jr. articles originally published for the *New York World*.

notes that the Klan was trying to cooperate with Jews and African-Americans and that they bragged about driving Catholics out of Southern politics.<sup>1228</sup> The Klan was acting openly in this account, and not using the robes and masks long associated with them.<sup>1229</sup> That they were operating as a political organization was clear: meetings for precinct works, printed slates, and plans to have poll workers were all noted, as well as a six-digit campaign fund.<sup>1230</sup> In contrast, Smith was noted as having an enthusiastic campaign, but as being poorly organized.<sup>1231</sup> This was even reflected in a gendered sense, as pro-Klan women were noted as being far more enthusiastic than anti-Klan women.<sup>1232</sup> While the Bowles campaign seemed optimistic (with a victory rally planned at Danceland for election night), it was noted as having collapsed in support over the last three weeks of the campaign, and needing both Protestant solidarity and a low turnout because they had failed to crossover to other groups.<sup>1233</sup> Overall, these articles are of great use, as they demonstrate the Klan as being a political organization within Detroit, and clarify some points that are vague in the local accounts.

In addition to the mayoral election, other elections in Detroit demonstrated Klan-based tensions. Most notable among these was for the City Council. The Klan slate fell

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<sup>1228</sup> *Free Press*, 10/29/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1230</sup> *Free Press*, 10/30/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 10/31/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1231</sup> *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1233</sup> *Free Press*, 10/30/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 10/31/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/2/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1, 2.

apart somewhat late in the campaign: Robert Ewald publically repudiated Klan backing, while Fred Castator's endorsement was condemned by the Detroit Federation of Labor.<sup>1234</sup> Various other slates were present: Frank Broderick, Arthur Dingeman, and James J. Murphy, incumbent Catholic City Councilors, ran on an anti-Klan slate, while the Detroit Citizens League, businessmen campaigning for Smith, and the Detroit Federation of Labor all ran slates of their own.<sup>1235</sup> In this disorder, the effects of the end of political parties as an organizing force in Detroit politics were apparent, with candidates obtaining backing from multiple slates. The lack of unity within the Detroit working-class was made evident by the presence of both Klan and anti-Klan candidates on the Detroit Federation of Labor slate, while the Detroit Citizens League slate maintained a politically Protestant outlook in largely backing the Klan slate.<sup>1236</sup> Other fights were present: a battle to increase the size of the Recorder's Court became a battle between the *News* and the Detroit Citizens League against their foes, with charges of gangsterism and political cliques being thrown about by both sides.<sup>1237</sup> While the Klan stayed out of this fight publically, this fight did demonstrate how political fracturing enabled the Klan to find a political foothold. Overall, the Klan was in an excellent

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<sup>1234</sup> *News*, 10/28/1925, 12; *News*, 10/31/1925, 3.

<sup>1235</sup> *Labor News*, 10/2/1925, 1; *News*, 10/25/1925, 2; *News*, 11/2/1925, 10; *News*, 11/4/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1236</sup> The Detroit Federation of Labor slate included Ewald, Castator, Dingeman, Broderick, and Murphy (as well as Vincent P. Dacey, who had also an as an anti-Klan candidate), while the only Klan candidate not to get at least a "preferred" status from the Citizens League was Brodie, whereas all three anti-Klan candidates were ruled "not recommended" by that organization.

<sup>1237</sup> *Free Press*, 9/25/1925, 6; *Free Press*, 10/29/1925, 1; *News*, 10/23/1925, 4.

position to politically rise in 1925 due to its being an organized force in the generally disorganized atmosphere of Detroit politics.

These sets of tensions climaxed on election day 1925. Frank Croul gave full instructions to the police involving conducting the election, cancelling all police leaves and ordering the reserves to be ready in preparations for another Arena Gardens.<sup>1238</sup> Smith spoke to 100,000 over WCX, while a cross was burnt after a Bowles meeting.<sup>1239</sup> The *Free Press* warned about the Klan danger, while the *News* denounced machine politicians.<sup>1240</sup> A record turnout was expected, with the *Free Press* expecting 250,000 voters and the *News* 300,000, 4,100 ready to work the polls, and many more campaigning for Smith and Bowles.<sup>1241</sup> Notably, this was an election day which, like the campaign, had a heavy involvement by women: it was estimated that 40% of the total voters were women, and that they had in many polling places been the only people serving as challengers, while also picketing and distributing literature for both Smith and Bowles.<sup>1242</sup> The suggestion was made that this was an act by women motivated by vice being brought up as a campaign issue, particularly in discussions in churches.<sup>1243</sup> In this, it suggests that the campaigning of women for Bowles can be interpreted as their incorporation into the practices of political Protestantism, as a movement dominated by

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<sup>1238</sup> *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1239</sup> *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1, 14; *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 4.

<sup>1240</sup> *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1; *News*, 11/3/1925, 4.

<sup>1241</sup> *News*, 11/3/1925, 1, 2; *Free Press*, 11/3/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1242</sup> *Free Press*, 11/4/1925, 1, 3; *Free Press*, 11/4/1925, 5.

<sup>1243</sup> *Free Press*, 11/4/1925, 5.

men in the 1910s when the Detroit Citizens League was organized now incorporated women as active workers. Even the subject matters demonstrate this, as the anti-vice and anti-politician campaigns of women in the 1920s matched those raised by men a decade earlier. Overall, this suggests further how the rise of the Klan had shaken Detroit politics, as it had resulted in the incorporation of women along lines that had in the recent past served to mobilize Protestant men.

### **The Failure of the Ku Klux Klan**

Ultimately, this election did not devolve into chaos: while there were issues with campaign buttons and literature too close to the polls, no riots broke out, and there was no disorder in the streets.<sup>1244</sup> Similarly, the Klan did not get the political breakthrough they were expecting: Smith won the election, receiving over 30,000 votes more than Bowles.<sup>1245</sup> As in 1924, Smith had his best performance in the near east side of the city, winning landslides in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> wards while carrying the 15<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> by less substantial margins. Bowles remained popular on the west side of the city: he carried the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> wards. Several items served to defeat Bowles. He had largely maximized his vote in outlying areas of the city in 1924, failing to gain support in 1925. The racial crises of 1925 failed to mobilize voters towards the Klan, with Bowles' strength actually declining in neighborhoods where racial unrest

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<sup>1244</sup> *News*, 11/4/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1245</sup> All statistics given involving vote totals in the 1925 elections are taken from *Free Press*, 11/6/1925, 12. The results were published in it on a precinct-by-precinct level only; I have engaged in the work of formatting to determine what this meant in terms of wards. Finally, these results were neither official nor complete (several precincts were missing), so they will not tally to the list of votes given.

had occurred.<sup>1246</sup> Finally, Bowles failed to obtain the bulk of the Martin vote.<sup>1247</sup> Smith's performance in several areas of the city demonstrated crossover from Martin to Smith: Smith beat Bowles in the high-income 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> wards in the core of downtown Detroit, carried the 17<sup>th</sup> which had backed Martin in 1924 when no other ward did, and came to a draw in the 21<sup>st</sup> incorporating the easternmost section of the city.<sup>1248</sup> Overall, high-income voters in the northern and eastern portions of the city, which had been the chief Martin strongholds in 1924, turned heavily towards Smith in 1925. In these ways, the class elements of the Klan become apparent, as they were unable to unite with elite Protestants and lost the election as a result.

The results of the City Council race demonstrated more complexity in terms of understanding the strength of the Klan in Detroit politics. Four of the five Klan slate candidates managed to win, while Broderick and Murphy of the anti-Klan slate were defeated.<sup>1249</sup> However, this did not come about solely due to the strength of the Klan. Whereas all five Klan candidates finished in the top seven in the primary, only one finished in the top five in the general election.<sup>1250</sup> Moreover, said candidate was Robert

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<sup>1246</sup> *Free Press*, 11/5/1925, 1, 2. Because of annexations and increases in precincts, the precinct map for 1924 is of limited utility, and I have not found a similar one for 1925. However, an examination of the precinct-by-precinct results seems to suggest a basic continuity.

<sup>1247</sup> *Free Press*, 11/4/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1248</sup> This determination was made by comparing the 1924 and 1925 election results- while, as previously mentioned, precinct changes make a direct comparison impossible throughout the city, some wards had minimal enough changes that they can be used, and, in any event, a distinctive pattern can be found in precincts that switched from Martin in 1924 to Smith in 1925.

<sup>1249</sup> *News*, 11/4/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1250</sup> Compare the results in *Free Press*, 10/7/1925, 1, 3, with those in *News*, 11/8/1925, 1.

Ewald, who had bought ads repudiating the Klan after they endorsed him.<sup>1251</sup> Similarly, seventh-placed Fred Castator had been defended from charges of being a Klan stooge, while eighth-placed Sherman Littlefield had been in politics since the 1890s and had prior success running citywide. The candidates with deeper Klan ties did far worse: Andrew J. Brodie finished twelfth, while Philip A. Callahan only was confirmed as finishing ninth after a recount.<sup>1252</sup> Moreover, a comparison of the Callahan vote to the Bowles vote indicates that there were not one and the same, as thousands more voted for Callahan than Bowles. Overall, the Klan slate paralleled the Bowles vote in terms of spatial popularity, doing well in the west side, north of Highland Park, and in the eastern fringe and losing badly in downtown and the lower parts of the east side.<sup>1253</sup> Ultimately, the limitations of the Klan as a political force were demonstrated: the Klan declined as turnout increased, had limited appeal in the core of the city, and had failed to formulate a majority. For these reasons, it was apparent that the Klan had not managed to establish themselves as a full force in Detroit politics.

Other groups had mixed success in terms of influencing Detroit politics. The Detroit Citizens League by far demonstrated the greatest strength, as all four candidates it endorsed and four of the five candidates it favored won, while they succeeded in defeating the not-recommended Broderick and Murphy.<sup>1254</sup> Moreover, this success

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<sup>1251</sup> For an example of such an Ewald ad, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 10/30/1925, 9.

<sup>1252</sup> For some of the coverage of this recount, see *Free Press*, 11/11/1925, 2; *Free Press*, 11/19/1925, 11.

<sup>1253</sup> *News*, 11/4/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1254</sup> Compare the Detroit Citizens League slate in *News*, 10/25/1925, 2, with the results in *News*, 11/8/1925, 1.



further demonstrates how the vote for the Klan slate was not necessarily a Klan vote: the four Klan candidates who won had some Citizens League support, while Brodie lost without Citizens League aid. Organized labor had less success, backing Smith but only electing three of six Council candidates and failing to prevent expansion of the Recorder's Court.<sup>1255</sup> Even the businessmen backing the incumbents were unable to save Broderick and Murphy, who lost in spite of backing from both labor and management. The newspapers ended up in ranging positions: the *News* behaved like a sore loser after the election but managed to see victory for the Recorder's Court measure, while the *Free Press* helped to elect Smith but failed in its campaigns to defeat Callahan and the increased Recorder's Court.<sup>1256</sup> These points are useful in demonstrating that, contrary to claims made by each other and by Bowles, there were limits to newspaper power in Detroit, as the newspapers could not unilaterally defeat candidates they did not like. Overall, these mixed results serve to demonstrate how Detroit lacked any central forces who could clearly organize city politics, helping to explain how Bowles had been able to carve space out for himself in the first place.

Ultimately, figuring out how Charles Bowles lost in spite of the efforts of the Klan holds some interest. The combination of the Smith endorsement by Henry Ford, the Forsythe remark about tarring and feathering, and the refusal of Bowles to debate Smith

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<sup>1255</sup> Compare the labor slate in *News*, 10/31/1925, 3, with the results in *News*, 11/8/1925, 1.

<sup>1256</sup> For these results as embarrassing to the *News*, see *Free Press*, 11/4/1925, 6; for the *News* as sore losers, see *News*, 11/6/1925, 4; for the *Free Press* campaign against Callahan, see *Free Press*, 10/30/1925, 6; for the Recorder's Court measure, see *Free Press*, 10/27/1925, 1, and *News*, 11/1/1925, 1, 2.

were given some credit in analysis after the fact.<sup>1257</sup> Other observers noted the presence of a united front against Bowles, demonstrated by the range of ideologies and ethnic audiences of the newspapers that had opposed Bowles in 1925.<sup>1258</sup> However, the ultimate issue that seems to have doomed Bowles was his inability to broaden his appeal to anyone who had backed Martin or Smith in 1924. His appeals to the Jewish and African-American communities did not succeed, while the explicitly anti-Catholic stance of the Klan ruled out any Catholic backing swinging to Bowles. Ultimately, however, it was the failure of the Bowles campaign to connect with upper-income Protestants that doomed him. The Smith administration, in its outreach to the business elite of Detroit, had seemed to assuage many in that class that Smith was not a threat in his administration. Similarly, the vice issue appears to have had limited appeal, as it was phrased in ways that did not connect to upper-class audiences. Finally, Bowles never found an issue that would appeal to the city's upper-class, and his refusal to debate seemed to solidify him as lacking any substance. Ultimately, the Klan managed to make Bowles politically by connecting him to a larger audience than he would have had otherwise, but he was unable to build on it and obtain majority support. In this way, the Klan failed to reorganize Detroit politics, as it was unable to expand as a movement beyond the support of non-elite Protestants.

### **Political Aftermaths**

Charles Bowles, John W. Smith, and Joseph A. Martin had mixed political careers in the years following 1925. Bowles never stopped running, using a combination of name

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<sup>1257</sup> Article in *Literary Digest*, reprinted in *Saturday Night*, 12/5/1925, 12.

<sup>1258</sup> *Saturday Night*, 11/7/1925, 1, 3.

recognition, multiple seats up for a vote, and lesser-profile opponents to obtain election to the Recorder's Court in 1926 in spite of Detroit Citizens League opposition.<sup>1259</sup> His record on the bench drew mixed reviews: the Detroit Citizens League endorsed him in his reelection bid in 1929, but their executive secretary William P. Lovett charged him with lacking interest in improving the court's efficiency, while his official court reporter charged Bowles with having corrupt relations with bail bondsmen, accepting bribes to release gamblers from jail, and even attempted extortion.<sup>1260</sup> Perhaps most relevant about how Bowles viewed the bench was a claim that reached the Citizens League in March of 1929, charging him with telling a fellow judge that he found court to be a good place to campaign and to make personal and political friends.<sup>1261</sup> This attitude indicates that, unlike many other politicians, Bowles would regard reaching the bench not as the apex of his political career, but as a means to gain higher office.

John W. Smith ran for a third term in 1927, and was challenged by, among others, Joseph A. Martin, returning to political life after several years in private business. In his challenge, Martin largely ran on the administrative issues he had used in 1924, pledging to improve city infrastructure and to remove politics from city departments.<sup>1262</sup> Smith, on

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<sup>1259</sup> *Michigan Catholic*, 11/4/1926, 1.

<sup>1260</sup> William P. Lovett to M.S. Rice, 3/19/1929, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library; Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1261</sup> Note, 3/8/1929, on Recorder's Court, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1262</sup> Flyer, nd [1927], Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 21, Folder 5, Detroit Public Library.

the other hand, largely ran on the basis of his record in office.<sup>1263</sup> In the primary, both were overwhelmed by longtime Common Councilor John C. Lodge, who without actively campaigning obtained a majority of the vote.<sup>1264</sup> Martin, who finished a distant third, endorsed Lodge in the general election, charging Smith with having politicized city administration.<sup>1265</sup> Smith, meanwhile, based his general election campaign on his opposition to Prohibition, charging it with being unenforceable and drawing police away from other needs.<sup>1266</sup> This reunited the forces of political Protestantism that had split in 1924: the Detroit Citizens League, Anti-Saloon League, and Council of Churches campaigned against Smith, as did a much-diminished Ku Klux Klan.<sup>1267</sup> Ultimately, the continued importance of cultural issues, combined with Lodge appealing to the upper-class Protestants who had refused to back Bowles in 1925, sunk Smith, who lost the election as a result of the continued opposition of residents of outlying areas of the city.

Martin's 1927 candidacy amounted to a last hurrah politically: he did not receive a post in the Lodge administration and returned to private business. In the early morning hours of October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1928, Martin died when the car he was a passenger in hit a telephone pole at high speed.<sup>1268</sup> This accident was mysterious in several regards: he had

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<sup>1263</sup> For Smith running on a positive record, see article by John Boettiger, *Chicago Tribune*, 10/24/1927, 12.

<sup>1264</sup> *New York Times*, 10/13/1927, 27.

<sup>1265</sup> *Escanaba Daily Press*, 10/21/1927, 17.

<sup>1266</sup> Larry D. Engelmann, "A Separate Peace? The Politics of Prohibition Enforcement in Detroit, 1910-1920", *Detroit in Perspective* 1:1 (Autumn 1972), 59-62.

<sup>1267</sup> Article by John Boettiger, *Chicago Tribune*, 10/23/1927, 1, 2.

<sup>1268</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 10/18/1929, 1.

allegedly been spending the evening in the company of two men in trouble for Prohibition law violations who had been following the car at the time of the accident, and his widow became a target of extortionists shortly after the funeral.<sup>1269</sup> In a sign of how severe his break with James Couzens had been in 1925, none of Couzens' surviving correspondence even mentioned his death. Overall, the bright future expected of Martin in the early 1920s did not come into being, as he slipped from relevance once out of office. Moreover, the nature of his death, when combined with previous questions raised in the investigation of the Department of Public Works and by Couzens in his business practices, suggests that he might have been a disappointment in office, as the rectitude he was assumed to have was continuously challenged.

In 1929, Detroit had its seventh race for mayor during the 1920s. Lodge, still with the strong support of the Detroit Citizens League, ran for a second term in office. However, this bid had two complications: his refusal to campaign on his own behalf limited his ability to respond to political challenges, and many of his 1927 backers were disappointed by the continued vice problem in Detroit.<sup>1270</sup> Both Smith and Bowles ran against Lodge, the latter resigning from the Recorder's Court to do so.<sup>1271</sup> The primary was a repeat of the 1924 general election: Smith led the field due to his working-class Catholic support, while the working-class backers of Bowles were able to poll enough

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<sup>1269</sup> *Benton Harbor New Palladium*, 10/17/1928, 10; *Washington Post*, 1/8/1919, 13.

<sup>1270</sup> Fragnoli, 328-329, 331-332; Sister Mary Madonna Weigel, "The Recall of Mayor Charles Bowles of Detroit, July 1930", M.A. thesis- Catholic University of America, 1951, 27.

<sup>1271</sup> Weigel, 25-26.

votes to knock Lodge and his upper-class backers out in the primary.<sup>1272</sup> The general election in turn resembled that of 1925, with the *Free Press*, *Times*, and *Detroit Saturday Night* backing Smith, while Bowles had the sympathies of the *News* and the Citizens League but no direct backing from either.<sup>1273</sup> Bowles won in a upset by less than 9,000 votes, with the decline of the Ku Klux Klan in Detroit making a difference in two ways: upper-class Protestants who would not back him with the Klan as an issue shifted their support to him in 1929, while the ethnic groups that had mobilized against the Klan in 1924 and 1925 were less motivated to stop Bowles without the Klan as an issue.<sup>1274</sup> In these ways, while the Klan had been able to grant Bowles a consistent base of electoral support, it was their demise as a strong political entity that enabled him to obtain the office he had failed to get with their support in 1924 and 1925.

### **Charles Bowles in Trouble**

Bowles squandered the support that had led to his becoming mayor immediately upon entering office. The most prominent issue that alienated backers involved his handling of criminal matters. While Bowles had been charged with being friendly to criminals as early as his service on the Recorder's Court and as being crooked as early as his 1924 campaign for mayor, these associations seem to have become especially evident during his 1929 campaign. Bowles was charged with running one campaign amongst

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<sup>1272</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 10/10/1929, 8.

<sup>1273</sup> For this summary, see Memo on Bowles Candidacy, 10/11/1929, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1274</sup> For an analysis of Bowles' campaign in 1929, noting how he simultaneously backed himself away from direct Klan ties while still taking advantage of the support of racists, see Karen R. Miller, *Managing Inequality: Northern Racial Liberalism in Interwar Detroit* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 117-124.

respectable people and another with gangsters, using the executive vice president of the Michigan Law Enforcement League to collect money from gangsters.<sup>1275</sup> Within a month of the election, the Detroit Citizens League estimated that, of a campaign budget between \$250,000 and \$500,000 (by itself a violation of Michigan's stringent campaign-finance laws), \$100,000 had come from Detroit gambling interests.<sup>1276</sup> Even Bowles admitted in private to these connections, introducing a leading figure in gambling circles to Police Commissioner Harold Emmons as being of political assistance.<sup>1277</sup> By itself, these connections demonstrate Bowles as a hypocrite, as the man who had made vice his chief issue in 1925 was not afraid to take vice money four years later. Just as important, however, was the complication this meant for his administration, as it meant that a man who had been regarded as an anti-vice and good-government candidate was closely tied to vice interests, leaving Bowles with a major conflict in political interests to manage.

Further complicating matters for Bowles was that gambling interests weren't the only groups contrary to his political image that he had affiliations with. In 1924 and 1925, Bowles had run heavily against the Detroit political establishment, making one of his chief campaign points the image of his being unbossed and without conflicting loyalties. If he was ever sincere in these beliefs, this seems to have ended in 1929, when the political organization of Governor Fred Green, who was similarly charged with vice

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<sup>1275</sup> Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center; "In re: A.W. (Bert) Young", nd [mid-1930], Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1276</sup> Memo, 11/26/1929, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1277</sup> Report #6, Harold Emmons statement, 5/31/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

ties, aided him in getting elected as mayor.<sup>1278</sup> These ties grew even stronger after the election, when former Police Commissioner John Gillespie became a figure in the Bowles administration.<sup>1279</sup> Gillespie's career in Detroit politics had long been checkered: he was fired as Police Commissioner in 1916 due to charges of neglect in enforcing vice laws, and as a candidate for mayor in 1918 used the threat of lawsuits in order to force the Detroit Citizens League to edit their statement of his record in the *Civic Searchlight*.<sup>1280</sup> In an effort to return as Police Commissioner, Gillespie used a combination of Protestant ministers and vice lords to push for his appointment.<sup>1281</sup> While this failed, Gillespie did become Commissioner of Public Works, long one of the chief administrative positions in Detroit municipal government. The very rise of Gillespie demonstrates Bowles as having difficulties maintaining his previously-stated beliefs, as this was exactly the kind of politician he had campaigned against in 1924 and 1925. Making things even more complicated, however, was Bowles' personal temperament, as several who dealt with him noted him as being indecisive and as tending to say yes to

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<sup>1278</sup> William P. Lovett to Executive Board, 3/4/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 2, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library, 1.

<sup>1279</sup> Fragnoli, 342; Weigel, 51; Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1280</sup> Files, Detroit News Reference Room, on John Gillespie, Frank Hill Research Papers, Box 5, Folder 7, Benson Ford Research Center; Memo, 3/25/1930, concerning John Gillespie, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1281</sup> Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.



everyone to avoid fights.<sup>1282</sup> This meant that Detroit had a mayor who could not lead, leaving Gillespie in a strong position to heavily influence city government.

The ways in which this combination of vice and political influences would harm Bowles' political career emerged quickly after the election. At his inauguration, many long-standing supporters were unable to attend due to the large number of seats issued to vice interests.<sup>1283</sup> Bowles continued to associate with gamblers in office, granting one a police badge and using his official car to pick up another.<sup>1284</sup> These ties even led to gamblers attempting to influence Bowles' policy, with one noting that Bowles had trouble responding to advice.<sup>1285</sup> Within a few months in 1930, it became evident that vice had grown with Bowles as mayor: he was charged with letting organized gamblers driven out of the city by the Lodge administration to return, allowing bookmakers to operate in exchange for protection money, and even with allowing slot machines to be introduced to Detroit.<sup>1286</sup> Making Gillespie Commissioner of Public Works similarly resulted in criticism: Gillespie was charged both with having a greater say in

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<sup>1282</sup> Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center; 8/17/1925 memo on Bowles interview, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1283</sup> Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1284</sup> Charles Davie statement, nd [mid-1930], Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center; Report #39, McKinnon statement, 7/12/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1285</sup> Report #6, Harold Emmons statement, 5/31/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1286</sup> William P. Lovett memo, 4/25/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library; Memo, 6/25/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library; "In re: A.W. (Bert) Young", nd [mid-1930], Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

administrative decisions than Bowles did and with building a political organization on his own behalf in City Hall.<sup>1287</sup> There was an irony to this, as the Bowles who had campaigned against the politicization of city employees went farther than any recent mayor to politicize municipal government. In these ways, Bowles simultaneously demonstrated an utter lack of interest or ability in carrying out the campaign planks he had used so heavily since 1924, and began to give Detroit the kind of city administration he had made his career campaigning against.

In May of 1930, this combination of vice and political influences resulted in a major police scandal. Bowles had appointed former President of the Detroit Board of Commerce Harold Emmons as Police Commissioner, apparently after failing to find anyone willing to agree to be a fall guy in case of scandal.<sup>1288</sup> There are contradictory claims about what Emmons was told involving control of policing at the time of his appointment, but there is evidence that in practice Gillespie superseded Emmons' authority, while another city official apparently sold police positions for a \$200 fee.<sup>1289</sup> When Bowles and Gillespie left Detroit to attend the Kentucky Derby, Emmons saw his

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<sup>1287</sup> William P. Lovett memo, 4/25/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library; Cyril Arthur Player, "Gangsters and Politicians in Detroit: The Buckley Murder", in Wilma Wood Henrickson, *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 342.

<sup>1288</sup> Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1289</sup> Compare the previously cited Ambrose and Emmons statements in the Benson Ford Research Center for the lack of clarity involving police powers. William P. Lovett memo, 4/25/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library, charges Gillespie with having actual police control, while Jordan Earl Longfield Statement, 9/10/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center, contains the charge over the sale of police positions.

chance to reclaim authority, engaging in vice raids across Detroit and attempting to give the kind of police administration Bowles had claimed to support as a candidate.<sup>1290</sup> These acts ended badly for Emmons, who was fired almost immediately after Bowles and Gillespie returned to Detroit.<sup>1291</sup> However, this firing backfired on Bowles, as it came across as him both punishing a city official for doing his job and as openly betraying the principles he had claimed to back as a candidate just six months earlier. Moreover, Bowles was simultaneously in trouble for his handling of the Department of Street Railways, where he dismissed Frank Couzens (son of James) as a Commissioner for opposing a fare hike and the appointment of an injury claims lawyer to a key legal post.<sup>1292</sup> Moreover, by dismissing Emmons, Bowles managed to alienate the upper-class Protestants whom he had never been able to fully connect with politically. While Bowles tried to save face by hiring a Department of Justice official to replace Emmons and claiming that it was a firing due to incompetence, it was clear that Bowles was in serious political trouble.<sup>1293</sup>

Making this even greater trouble for Bowles was that people had been working against his administration since his election. Smith tried to prevent Bowles from being

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<sup>1290</sup> Fragnoli, 345-346.

<sup>1291</sup> *New York Times*, 5/21/1930, 33.

<sup>1292</sup> Weigel, 60-61. For a stance defending this firing, and the Bowles administration more generally, see Cash Asher, *Sacred Cows: A Story of the Recall of Mayor Bowles* (Detroit: The Author, 1931), 110, 118, 121.

<sup>1293</sup> Asher, 44-45, 71, repeats the incompetence charge and praises the replacement, while *Washington Post*, 7/13/1930, M13, 21, contains this defense directly from Bowles.

sworn in via legal action, charging that he had been elected through vote fraud.<sup>1294</sup> While these efforts failed, various recall efforts had been in the works since the election: Gillespie himself seems to have been working on such an effort between when he was denied the post of Police Commissioner and when he was made Commissioner of Public Works.<sup>1295</sup> Moreover, Bowles had made enemies out of previous supporters. Milton and Robert Oakman, after long being associated with Smith, had backed Bowles in the 1929 election.<sup>1296</sup> They both turned against him after the election, possibly when disappointed in seeking office, and worked to arrange for a Bowles recall.<sup>1297</sup> Bowles was also in trouble for his stances on the issues: the Bowles administration had cancelled a pay increase for teachers, announced an increase in the tax rate, and proposed to fire all aliens from city employment, in each case alienating more residents of Detroit.<sup>1298</sup> After the Emmons firing, a group of businessmen got involved in the recall efforts, consolidating various efforts into one movement.<sup>1299</sup> By June, enough signatures had been gathered (possibly by fraud) in order to place a recall vote on the July ballot.<sup>1300</sup> Overall, Bowles

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<sup>1294</sup> *Washington Post*, 11/16/1929, 10.

<sup>1295</sup> Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center.

<sup>1296</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 5/23/1930, 21.

<sup>1297</sup> *Washington Post*, 7/13/1930, M13, 21.

<sup>1298</sup> Weigel, 55-58.

<sup>1299</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 5/23/1930, 21. Asher, 125-131, offers a more critical opinion on the recall.

<sup>1300</sup> *Washington Post*, 6/20/1930, 1. For the charge of fraud in most detail, see Asher, 135-152 *passim*.

had ended up rapidly in a political crisis as a direct result of his administration of city government.

Bowles responded to the recall at first by attempting to block it through an injunction, going as far as appealing to the Michigan Supreme Court in order to stop it.<sup>1301</sup> On July 8<sup>th</sup>, these efforts came to an end, with the recall election set for July 22<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>1302</sup> In the two weeks that followed, much campaigning took place over the radio: Bowles was charged with tolerating lawlessness, grafting in public works, granting monopolies in garbage collection, building a political machine, hiding public records, and with interfering in civil service.<sup>1303</sup> John Gillespie, running the Bowles campaign, charged that if Bowles were recalled it would result in the *News* and *Free Press* dominating city affairs, continuing the anti-interest rhetoric that Bowles had used in 1924 and 1925.<sup>1304</sup> Bowles also appealed to his previous backers, using churchmen to appeal on his behalf to the churchgoers of Detroit.<sup>1305</sup> The Detroit Citizens League, which supported the recall, discovered the strength of his support among churchgoers the hard way: many churches refused to distribute the *Civic Searchlight* urging Bowles' recall,

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<sup>1301</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 6/24/1930, 6.

<sup>1302</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 7/8/1930, 8.

<sup>1303</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 7/13/1930, 18; *New York Times*, 7/20/1930, 18; *Chicago Tribune*, 7/21/1930, 14.

<sup>1304</sup> Weigel, 92-93. To a heavy degree, the entirety of the Asher book can be taken as a statement of this theme, as it focuses on charges that the *News* and *Free Press* were responsible for the recall of Bowles.

<sup>1305</sup> "A Message to the Churches from A Committee of Prominent Church Men who have Investigated the Facts", nd [July 1930], Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 15, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library.

while others wrote letters to the League protesting its decision.<sup>1306</sup> These letters demonstrated that the cultural issues of importance in past races were still relevant in Detroit, with one writer charging a conspiracy of wets and Catholics with recalling Bowles.<sup>1307</sup> It even devolved into a battle of dueling political leaders, with Gillespie and Robert Oakman using their radio broadcasts as much against each other as concerning the recall.<sup>1308</sup> In these respects, while radio had replaced other campaign mediums in importance, the tone in which the 1924 and 1925 elections had been fought continued in 1930.

Ultimately, the forces for recall won, receiving a majority of over 30,000 votes on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>1309</sup> The voting had a gendered element to it: as few as 20% of the voters were women in a severe drop-off compared to 1929, theorized as being caused by the women who had so strongly backed Bowles in his previous bids for office staying at home rather than admitting to being wrong about him.<sup>1310</sup> However, Bowles' recall did not immediately remove him from office, as he would under local law remain mayor until a second election to replace him was held.<sup>1311</sup> Moreover, Bowles automatically had the

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<sup>1306</sup> Fragnoli, 348-349; J.G. Haller to Lovett, 7/19/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 15, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library, H.L. Watkins to Lovett, 7/19/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 15, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1307</sup> J.G. Haller to Lovett, 7/19/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 15, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1308</sup> Asher, 163-187 *passim*; Weigel, 91n76; Lovett to George Beverly Marsh, 7/19/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 15, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1309</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 7/23/1930, 1.

<sup>1310</sup> *New York Times*, 7/23/1930, 1.

<sup>1311</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 7/23/1930, 1.

right to run, and because only a plurality was needed still had a strong chance to win if facing split opposition.<sup>1312</sup> Bowles certainly had no intention of surrendering office, noting during the recall efforts that he was running to succeed himself.<sup>1313</sup> However, an event on the early morning of the recall complicated matters, as WMBC radio announcer and anti-Bowles campaigner Gerald Buckley was gunned down in a hotel lobby.<sup>1314</sup> This assassination gave Buckley the status of a martyr, and served as a reminder of how lawlessness had grown in Detroit: Bowles had previously responded to gangland violence by suggesting that the police just step aside and let gangsters kill each other.<sup>1315</sup> Bowles' allies mismanaged this assassination when they charged that Buckley was murdered due to gangland ties of his own, as, when the police failed to demonstrate the evidence to prove this, it came across as blaming the victim to avoid taking responsibility for their own faults.<sup>1316</sup> In the days after the election, a reorganized police force started engaging in vice raids, while Gillespie resigned as Commissioner of Public Works.<sup>1317</sup> While these acts seemed to have been efforts to save face for Bowles in the coming election, it was unclear if they would be effective.

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<sup>1312</sup> *Washington Post*, 7/23/1930, 1, 5.

<sup>1313</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 7/24/1930, 1, 4.

<sup>1314</sup> *New York Times*, 7/23/1930, 1, demonstrates this clearly, with the announcement of Buckley's murder at the end of an article on the recall.

<sup>1315</sup> For the public's response, see *Los Angeles Times*, 7/26/1930, 4. For Bowles' image related to crime general, see Paul Kaveeff, *The Purple Gang: Organized Crime in Detroit 1910-1945* (Lanham, MD: Barricade Books, 2000), Ch. 8 *passim*, and Questions, Detroit Citizens League to Charles Bowles, 7/14/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1316</sup> Player, 344.

<sup>1317</sup> Player, 344; Wiegel, 105-106; *Los Angeles Times*, 7/26/1930, 4.

The second recall election was held on September 9<sup>th</sup>, and in several regards demonstrated the factions present in 1924. Bowles appealed to the electorate by charging the recall with being fraudulent and continued to campaign against the press, claiming to have made Detroit a dry city and to have lowered taxes.<sup>1318</sup> In these stances, he was continuing to appeal to the Protestant churchgoers of Detroit, using rhetoric of the sort that he had used in 1924 and 1925. The Detroit Citizens League, *News*, and *Free Press* again backed a longtime city official for mayor, supporting former City Controller George Engel, who had been yet another official fired by Bowles.<sup>1319</sup> Smith once again ran for mayor, but those who had backed him in the previous four elections abandoned him in 1930.<sup>1320</sup> The *Times*, Detroit Federation of Labor, NAACP, and various ethnic societies instead endorsed Recorder's Court Judge Frank Murphy, who had run the investigation that demonstrated Department of Public Works corruption under Martin.<sup>1321</sup> The results of this election paralleled this factional backing: Smith was a distant fourth, while Engel, whose campaign had been damaged by the charge of his being hand-picked by elite interests, finished third.<sup>1322</sup> In spite of his problems, Bowles managed to hold onto working-class Protestant support, receiving over 80,000 votes. However, this was

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<sup>1318</sup> Clarence E. Wilcox, Douglas A. Graham, Frederick W. Cowley, Charles F. Kuhn, William M. Walker, Charles J. Burnham, J. Howard Cooley, Ira Wilkinson, and William F. Beyer letter, 9/5/1930, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Additional Papers, Box 15, Folder 3, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1319</sup> Weigel, 109, 114, 102; Asher, Ch. 11 *passim*; Fragnoli, 350-351.

<sup>1320</sup> Weigel, 120.

<sup>1321</sup> Fragnoli, 351-352.

<sup>1322</sup> All comments on the results are based on *New York Times*, 9/10/1930, 3. The previously-cited Asher work contains much criticism of Engel as a hand-picked candidate.



not enough, as Murphy won by over 10,000 votes, carrying the same ethnic voters Smith had in 1924. Once again, Bowles delayed the certification of the results by demanding a recount, but admitted defeat two weeks later, conceding the election and the office of mayor to Murphy in late September.<sup>1323</sup>

### **The Reshaping of Detroit Politics**

The tone and form of Detroit politics began to shift with the election of Murphy. In his first year of office, Murphy spent a large amount of money on unemployment relief, politically recognized organized labor in Detroit, and feuded with Ford concerning his conduct during the Depression.<sup>1324</sup> On the surface, this would seem to weaken Murphy in the face of the large number of voters who had backed Martin, Lodge, and Engel in the preceding half-decade, especially given that Engel and Bowles had combined for over 40,000 votes more than Murphy and Smith. In 1931, Harold Emmons ran for mayor with the backing of Henry Ford, with whom he was associated with as an attorney.<sup>1325</sup> Emmons tried to use religion to his benefit, passing out in front of churches a pamphlet claiming that Protestants if united could defeat the Catholic Murphy.<sup>1326</sup> He

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<sup>1323</sup> *New York Times*, 9/23/1930, 2.

<sup>1324</sup> William J. Cameron to Ernest G. Liebold, 7/6/1931, Ernest G. Liebold Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, Benson Ford Research Center; Beth Tompkins Bates, *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 130-134, J. Woodford Howard, *Mr. Justice Murphy: A Political Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 35-36, 40-43.

<sup>1325</sup> For Emmons as tied to Ford, see *Automotive Industries*, 6/15/1922, transcript in Nevins and Hill Research Notes, Box 33, Folder 44, Benson Ford Research Center. For Emmons as backed by Ford, see David L. Lewis, "History of Negro Employment in Detroit Area Plants of Ford Motor Company 1914-1941" (1954), copy in Research Papers (Accession 423), Benson Ford Research Center, 23.

<sup>1326</sup> "How and Why are You Voting November 3rd?", nd [1931], Frank Murphy Papers, Wallet 2, Folder 2, Detroit Public Library. Bates, 141-142, suggests that this could have been produced by the Klan.

also ran on partisan lines (Murphy was one of the few Detroit political figures of the 1920s who was a Democrat), denouncing Murphy's relief policies as wasteful.<sup>1327</sup> These approaches, however, were utterly ineffective, as Murphy won reelection by over 70,000 votes.<sup>1328</sup> In doing so, Murphy had the largest number of total votes for any candidate for mayor, and had the largest win by percentage since Frank Doremus was basically unopposed in 1923. This landslide demonstrates a shift in the issues that mattered in Detroit, as the religious divides that had been of importance during the 1920s lost their significance in the face of hard times.

This symbolic political overturn made itself evident in races for other offices in 1931 and 1932. Six of those elected to the Common Council in 1929 were gone after the 1931 election, with one losing badly in the primary for mayor and five others losing in either the primary or general election for Council.<sup>1329</sup> Among those defeated were Philip A. Callahan, who survived in Detroit politics by disassociating himself with the Klan, going as far as considering a conversion to Catholicism in 1928.<sup>1330</sup> In many regards, this election was a comeback for those who had played a role in the upheaval that began in 1924, as John C. Lodge, Frank Couzens, Richard Lindsay, and John W. Smith all won

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<sup>1327</sup> *Washington Post*, 10/7/1931, 1; article by Gladys H. Kelsey, *New York Times*, 11/8/1931, E5.

<sup>1328</sup> *New York Times*, 11/4/1931, 8.

<sup>1329</sup> Article by Gladys H. Kelsey, *New York Times*, 11/8/1931, E5.

<sup>1330</sup> *The Official Catholic Year Book: A Comprehensive Summary of the History, Activities and Accomplishments of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States of America* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1928), 29. "How and Why Are You Voting November 3rd?", nd [1931], Frank Murphy Papers, Wallet 2, Folder 2, Detroit Public Library, 8, on the other hand, lists him as a Protestant candidate for the Common Council, confusing this matter.

seats.<sup>1331</sup> 1932 witnessed even more spectacular reversals: after forty years as one of the most Republican major cities in the United States, a Democratic landslide swept virtually every office in Detroit.<sup>1332</sup> One of the Republicans who came closest to surviving was Charles Bowles, who narrowly lost a bid for Congress from a district containing the West Side voters that had been strong for him in his previous bids for office. Interestingly, his 1932 platform was a reversal of much of what he previously stood for, demanding a referendum on Prohibition, old-age pensions, homeowner relief, and even spoke vaguely on the need for wealth redistribution.<sup>1333</sup> In terms of tone, however, some consistency can be found: Bowles was once against campaigning as a supporter of those who felt left out of the political system, and again positioned himself against the powers that be. However, the issue shift serves to further demonstrate that Bowles ran for office on the basis of whatever support he could get, rather than be concerned with any sort of ideological consistency.

The most important political realignment in Detroit became fully apparent starting in the mid-1930s, as labor began to organize in the automotive industry, long a bastion of the open shop.<sup>1334</sup> Some of this realignment happened at the state level: Murphy, elected Governor in 1936 after a stint in the Philippines, supported the United Auto Workers in

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<sup>1331</sup> Article by Gladys H. Kelsey, *New York Times*, 11/8/1931, E5.

<sup>1332</sup> List of members of the state legislature after the 1932 elections, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Subject Files, Box 17, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1333</sup> Ad stating Bowles' congressional platform, 11/4/1932, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Candidate Files, Box 3, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1334</sup> Bates, Chs. 8 and 9 *passim*; B. J. Widick, *Detroit: City of Class and Race Violence* (Chicago: Quadrangle Book, 1972); Ticknor, 219-224.

their sit-down strikes, and while this cost him the 1938 election, it began a long-term association between Michigan Democrats and the UAW that resulted in statewide transformations in the following decades.<sup>1335</sup> Just as relevant were the changes that began to take place on the local level. In 1937, the UAW saw a chance with Frank Couzens chose not to run for reelection as mayor, running its own candidates for Mayor and Common Council.<sup>1336</sup> The traditional labor-backed politicians were displaced: John W. Smith, running once again with Detroit Federation of Labor backing, finished third in the primary.<sup>1337</sup> Notably, however, this old-time leadership did not have common cause with the UAW: Smith and longtime Detroit Federation of Labor leader Frank X. Martell backed City Clerk Richard Reading, who ran a generally conservative campaign charging the UAW and CIO with trying to destroy nonpartisan government in Detroit, in the general election.<sup>1338</sup> Ultimately, while Reading won in a landslide and the UAW Council slate (including future longtime UAW leader Walter Reuther) was defeated, their very campaign was notable as a sign that economic policies were to play a role in municipal elections that had not previously been the case.<sup>1339</sup> Smith, who had tried to bridge the gap between management and labor, returned to the Common Council the following year and

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<sup>1335</sup> For a monograph considering this matter, see Sidney Fine, *Sit-Down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968).

<sup>1336</sup> For a detailed consideration of this election, see Thomas Lloyd Jones, "Labor and Politics: The Detroit Municipal Election of 1937", (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1998).

<sup>1337</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 10/6/1937, 1, 5. For Smith's backing by the Detroit Federation of Labor, see *New York Times*, 8/13/1937, 3.

<sup>1338</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 10/22/1937, 3; article by F. Raymond Daniell, *New York Times*, 11/1/1937, 10.

<sup>1339</sup> For an analysis of these results, see F. Raymond Daniell, *New York Times*, 11/7/1937, 70.

served until his death in 1942, but had no successor in Detroit politics.<sup>1340</sup> Similarly, Charles Bowles' working-class Protestant support vanished: he finished sixteenth in the race for Common Council, and, while continuing to run for public office into the 1950s, basically became a nuisance candidate with no substantial following.<sup>1341</sup> Even the Detroit Citizens League transitioned: William Lovett remained as Executive Secretary into the 1940s, but by the late 1930s his focus had shifted from the religious concerns of the 1920s to worries about labor dictatorship in Detroit.<sup>1342</sup> In these ways, it was clear that matters of class had risen as the chief divide in Detroit politics, negating the cultural issues of the previous decades.

### **The Continued Power of Cultural Politics**

Cultural issues, however, did not disappear from Detroit politics once class issues had gained significance. The Black Legion was notoriously strong in Detroit during the 1930s, but its terroristic activities meant that it never held the direct political role that the Klan of the 1920s had been able to demonstrate.<sup>1343</sup> More to the point was what happened

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<sup>1340</sup> *New York Times*, 6/18/1942, 21, though it should be noted that this obituary is riddled with inaccuracies.

<sup>1341</sup> For a demonstration of this decline, see election statistics for the 1935 and 1937 elections, Maurice Sugar Collection, Box 2, Folder 1, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

<sup>1342</sup> For some demonstrations of Lovett's stance, see *City Club Bulletin*, 12/20/1937, in Detroit Citizens League Papers, Subject Files, Box 5, Folder 7, Detroit Public Library; Lovett to Lewis E. Harthill, 4/16/1941, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Subject Files, Box 6, Folder 4, Detroit Public Library; *Civic Searchlight*, June 1941, in Detroit Citizens League Papers, Subject Files, Box 6, Folder 8, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1343</sup> For an analysis of this organization, see Maurice Sugar, "Memorandum on the Black Legion", Maurice Sugar Collection, Box 18, Folder 1, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, and Maurice Sugar, "A Psychological Interpretation of the Black Legion", Maurice Sugar Collection, Box 18, Folder 4, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

when the UAW next tried to act as an independent political operator in Detroit. In 1939, the UAW had backed Common Council President Edward Jeffries against Reading, whose career collapsed due to massive corruption.<sup>1344</sup> By 1943, the UAW lost faith in Jeffries after his handling of racial matters led to a major race riot, and instead backed Circuit Court Commissioner Frank FitzGerald.<sup>1345</sup> After finishing behind in the primary, Jeffries, who was backed by the Detroit Citizens League and the city's press, began a strong counter-attack against the UAW, continuing the warnings about UAW domination that Reading had used in 1937.<sup>1346</sup> However, Jeffries also ran against open housing, charging its backers as being equally dangerous for Detroit.<sup>1347</sup> This campaign worked, resulting in Jeffries' reelection, and would be of significance in future Detroit elections. Even as UAW-backed Democrats would dominate voting for state and federal elections, they would have limited success in local races due to racial issues. In this way, a continuation from the 1920s is present, as it is apparent that Detroit's working class still did not see itself as united in local politics even as unity grew elsewhere. Moreover, it demonstrated that Detroit politics as motivated by fears of the other were continuing: instead of worries about Catholics by working-class Protestants, white Protestants and Catholics alike would worry about African-Americans invading their neighborhoods. In

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<sup>1344</sup> *New York Times*, 11/8/1939, 16.

<sup>1345</sup> Steve Babson, *Working Detroit: The Making of a Union Town* (New York: Adama, 1984), 119.

<sup>1346</sup> Dominic Capeci, editor, *Detroit and the "Good War": The World War II Letters of Mayor Edward Jeffries and Friends* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 16.

<sup>1347</sup> Babson, 119-120; Angela D. Dillard, *Faith in The City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 158; Alan Clive, *State of War: Michigan in World War II* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), 163-164.

these respects, the issues that the Klan had used for Bowles in 1925 became of deep importance long after both the Klan and Bowles were politically negated.

The pattern established in 1943 repeated itself throughout the 1940s. In 1945 and 1949, the UAW again tried to elect a mayor, backing UAW vice-president Richard Frankensteen in 1945 and Common Council President George Edwards in 1949.<sup>1348</sup> In both years, a mixture of issues were used against the UAW, including fears of a labor dictatorship, ties between the CIO and Communists, and, probably most importantly, the matter of open housing.<sup>1349</sup> Moreover, the bad ties between the UAW and established labor interests in Detroit continued, as individual AFL unions tended to oppose the UAW.<sup>1350</sup> In both cases, this led ultimately to victory by candidates (Jeffries again in 1945, City Treasurer Albert Cobo in 1949) who were backed by business interests, the Detroit Citizens League, and the city's newspapers. Even when the UAW tried a different tact, it did not work out: when they tried supporting Jeffries covertly in 1947, it led to his defeat by Common Councilor Eugene Van Antwerp, who charged him with standing pat when faced with UAW unrest.<sup>1351</sup> After 1949, the UAW focused more on statewide politics, aiming its energies on assisting G. Mennen Williams in his administration and

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<sup>1348</sup> Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 14.

<sup>1349</sup> Colleen Doody, *Detroit's Cold War: The Origins of Postwar Conservatism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 54-62.

<sup>1350</sup> Article by Arthur Evans, *Chicago Tribune*, 10/20/1945, 7; Article by Selig S. Harrison, *Washington Post*, 10/2/1949, B3.

<sup>1351</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 10/8/1947, 9; *New York Times*, 11/5/1947, 6.

largely regarding local elections as an afterthought.<sup>1352</sup> Overall, limitations to class politics become apparent: the UAW was unable to unite the working-class of Detroit in local elections, with working-class Protestants and Irish Catholics being especially prone to break away over racial matters.<sup>1353</sup> Overall, issues of religion were gone, but they had been replaced by the politics of race, leaving cultural fears as perpetual issues in Detroit.

The Ku Klux Klan in Detroit, meanwhile, collapsed rapidly in the years following 1925. As a political movement, their lack of success in 1925 was fatal, as it became apparent that they could not claim a majority of Detroit's voters even in seemingly ideal conditions. In the following years, they became more of a pressure group working on behalf of Protestant candidates rather than an independent political force. Moreover, there was a growing tendency for them to be working for candidates who did not want their support: John C. Lodge, for instance, publicly noted that he was appalled by religion becoming a political issue in 1927.<sup>1354</sup> While the lack of surviving records makes exact estimates impossible, it is believed that the Klan lost half their membership in 1926 alone, and may have been down to only a few hundred members by 1928.<sup>1355</sup> Moreover, the movement fractured as it shrunk, with several lawsuits charging Klan officials with engaging in fraud in Michigan and Detroit causing embarrassment in the late 1920s and

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<sup>1352</sup> A.J. Stovall, *The Growth of Black Elected Officials in the City of Detroit, 1870-1973* (Lewiston, NY: Mellon University Press, 1996), 119.

<sup>1353</sup> Martin Halpern, *UAW Politics in the Cold War Era* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 43.

<sup>1354</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 11/10/1927, 3.

<sup>1355</sup> Jackson, 142.



early 1930s.<sup>1356</sup> The sentiment that had been favorable to the Detroit Klan had not gone away, as the hard-core support for Bowles in the face of his legal troubles in 1930 demonstrates.<sup>1357</sup> However, they declined in terms of being able to engage in significant political actions, instead being more limited to symbolic deeds like parades and cross burnings. In the late 1930s, the Detroit Klan turned to using Communism as their chief issue, in an attempt to rally support.<sup>1358</sup> Ultimately, however, the Klan was dead as an organization in Detroit, officially dissolving in 1942 when the local branch splintered from the national Klan.<sup>1359</sup>

The decline of the Klan in Detroit paralleled a substantial decline nationwide: the Ku Klux Klan peaked in the years between 1923 and 1925 and rapidly collapsed in the years that followed. Often, this trajectory was demonstrated in public office: in general, the tendency was for the Klan to rise to power due to various issues in a particular place, only to rapidly lose support due to a combination of corruption, incompetence, and general ineffectiveness in terms of delivering on their platforms.<sup>1360</sup> This trend was heavily demonstrated in the urban Klan, as Portland, Denver, and Indianapolis each had

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<sup>1356</sup> Norman Fredric Weaver, "The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1954), 271-275, offers a summary of these suits.

<sup>1357</sup> Statement by Jack Ambrose, 6/5/1930, Secretary's Office-General (Accession 162), Box 1, Folder 5, Benson Ford Research Center, demonstrates some continued pressure by the Klan behind the scenes, though clearly as a lesser force compared to the 1920s.

<sup>1358</sup> "The Fourteen Point Program of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Inc", (Detroit: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Realm of Michigan, nd [late 1930s]).

<sup>1359</sup> Weaver, 291-292.

<sup>1360</sup> Jackson demonstrates this in an urban sphere, as do Goldberg, Moore, Jenkins, and Lay.

similar experiences.<sup>1361</sup> In general, Klan governments lost overwhelmingly the next time they faced the electorate in any vicinity, while Klan-backed politicians tended to have one of two trajectories: those who stayed firmly for the Klan tended to fall into quick oblivion, while those who survived politically tended to break Klan ties once in office and try their hardest to erase this image. Philip A. Callahan demonstrates the latter approach in Detroit, managing to win reelection in 1927 and 1929 by removing his image as being a Klan candidate. However, the general image of Klan-backed politicians as crooked held in his case: Callahan became a state public-aid administrator during the 1930s, only to be implicated in the theft of office materials for personal use in the early 1940s.<sup>1362</sup> Ultimately, the Klan failed to establish itself as a lasting political organization anywhere in the United States, and tended to be discredited whenever it held public office.

Moreover, there is no reason to believe that things would have turned out differently for the Detroit Klan had Bowles been seated in 1924 or elected in 1925. The charge that Bowles had engaged in corrupt practices on the Recorder's Court suggests that he was corruptible in his public duties long before 1929, making it plausible that the events of 1930 would have been replicated had he been elected a few years earlier. Even if Bowles avoided both personal corruption and associations with gamblers personally, however, there is still a strong possibility that his associates would have engaged in corrupt practices, given the concurrent scandals about both fraud in the Detroit Klan and

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<sup>1361</sup> For short accounts of these rises and falls, see Jackson, Chs. 10, 14, and 15.

<sup>1362</sup> *Escanaba Daily Press*, 8/19/1942, 2.

the corruptibility of the Department of Public Works. Moreover, several elements of his character that had been noted in both 1924 and 1925 would have been at issue, as he had already been observed as unable to say no to anyone and as avoiding confrontations whenever possible. Had he been elected in 1925, Klegal Ira Stout seems likely to have ended up in the position that John Gillespie held in 1930, and similar Klan pressures would have been present in 1924.<sup>1363</sup> It is additionally likely given the Klan organization for Bowles in 1925 that they would have formed an organization in City Hall if elected, resulting in Bowles being faced with the political machine issues he experienced in 1930 five years earlier. It is also unlikely that he would have been able to handle conflicts with city officials in 1925 or 1926 better than he had with Harold Emmons and Frank Couzens in 1930, leading to a repeat of those issues. Overall, there is no evidence that Bowles would have been a better administrator in 1925 or 1926 than he had been in 1930, and the Klan would have been the same pressure behind the throne that Gillespie had been in 1930.

Finally, Bowles' policy stances were something that in office would have gotten him into trouble. In both 1924 and 1925, he was charged with being vague on policy, and either not stating how he stood on issues or engaging in platitudes. In office, Bowles would have had to take clear policy stances, and his later political career suggests that he could have simply ignored what he ran on and done as he pleased if he thought it would aid him. Even if he did sincerely stand for his platform in 1924 and 1925, various chances for disaster were present. For instance, it is hard to see Bowles as being effective on vice,

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<sup>1363</sup> *Saturday Night*, 9/12/1925, 1, certainly interprets this as being the likely condition.

as he either would have provoked the sort of backlash that doomed William Dever in Chicago or would have failed in fighting vice and alienated his original backers. Other stances suffer from similar issues: his pledge for a more humane government, for instance, would have had problems when faced with having to make clear policy choices that defined what he meant. That the parochial school amendment had failed would have been fortunate, as he never would have had to face the consequences of that legislation. Overall, at best, it appears that Bowles would have disappointed his backers in the ways that Klan-backed candidates had tended to during the period, and, at worst, the chaos that Detroit faced in 1930 may simply have come into being a half-decade earlier. In any event, it is likely that Bowles and the Klan would have been defeated overwhelmingly the next time they were up for a vote had they won in 1924 or 1925.

### **Lingering Resentments: The Impact of the Klan on the Future of Detroit**

While it is important to understand that the Klan did not take over Detroit and would have probably failed in administration if they had, it is misleading to consider them only in those terms. Just as important as the Klan's level of success in Detroit politics is what greater meaning they would hold in Detroit history.<sup>1364</sup> The rise of the Klan in 1920s Detroit was the first major sign that Detroit would be a city where the residents hated one another to heavy degrees, and where this animosity would have a substantial impact on the administration of the city. This animosity was not unique to Detroit: Chicago had similar issues involving ethnic and religious relations. However, the

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<sup>1364</sup> There are several works that in recent years have been considering the current conditions of Detroit. While still not perfect, Galster is the best of these, and seems to have done the best job at synthesizing previous research into Detroit to consider current conditions.

fact that the Klan came so close to organizing the local government in Detroit compared to other major cities, is of great importance. Some of this is tied to city history, and the ways in which political Protestantism had been established in Detroit by the Detroit Citizens League. However, the future impact of this was of greatest importance, as it was a sign that the politics of animosity, to a degree never engaged in by the Citizens League, would be of great importance in Detroit.

The politics of animosity emerged in several ways in Detroit during the following decades. Father Charles Coughlin, radio priest of the 1930s, had gotten his start as a public figure working in response to the Klan, demonstrating how the groups targeted by the Klan felt no need to engage in cooperation with one another after the fact.<sup>1365</sup> The explicitly terroristic Black Legion was stronger in Detroit than in any other major city during the 1930s, demonstrating that there were many in Detroit willing to go beyond the political mass mobilization that the Klan had engaged in and engage in violence.<sup>1366</sup> Even Gerald L. K. Smith would find his largest mass following when he was operating in Detroit in the late 1930s compared to any other place or time.<sup>1367</sup> These figures demonstrate that there was a large crowd in Detroit after the Klan who could be mobilized by those willing to bring up the issues that the Klan had. Moreover, while none of these forces engaged in mass mobilization like the Klan, they held various degrees of

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<sup>1365</sup> Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Vintage, 1982) has its limitations, but there still has not yet been a better general study of Coughlin. For a critical contemporary consideration of Coughlin, see Joseph Hansen, "Father Coughlin, Fascist Demagogue", nd, in Julius Bernstein Collection, Box 31, Folder 7, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

<sup>1366</sup> Weaver, 290-291, and Jackson, 142, interpret the Black Legion as a direct Klan offshoot.

<sup>1367</sup> The Gerald L.K. Smith Papers are held by the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

political significance: there were frequent charges of ties between politicians and the Black Legion, while Smith and especially Coughlin had political influence within Detroit.<sup>1368</sup> Moreover, softer forms of bigotry had strength in the Detroit area as well: the Grosse Pointe suburbs to the east of Detroit used a point system to keep Jews and Eastern and Southern Europeans out into the 1960s.<sup>1369</sup> In these ways, the rise of the Klan was demonstrative of a larger nexus of ethnic hatred that had continued importance in Detroit after the Klan had declined.

African-Americans ultimately experienced this atmosphere of ethnic hatred more than any other group in Detroit.<sup>1370</sup> To a degree, John W. Smith demonstrated this even when campaigning against the Klan in 1925 when he charged African-Americans moving into white neighborhoods with being agent provocateurs. This belief was one that many in 1925 Detroit seem to have shared, and reflects how even Klan foes seem to have been reluctant to fight as hard for African-Americans as they were for Catholics and Jews. This tendency became especially notable in the 1940s and 1950s, when the Jeffries and Cobo administration pandered to bigots and engaged in substantive policy decisions

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<sup>1368</sup> For Smith, see the Gerald L.K. Smith Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. For the Black Legion, see Maurice Sugar, "Memorandum on the Black Legion", Maurice Sugar Collection, Box 18, Folder 1, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University. There are multiple sources for Coughlin's influence: for one primary source, see Frank Murphy's acceptance of invitation to participate in a dedication for the Charity Crucifixion Tower of the Radio League of The Little Flower, 9/19/1931, Frank Murphy Papers, Wallet 2, Folder 1, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1369</sup> For the Grosse Pointe point system, see Kathy Cosseboom, *Grosse Pointe, Michigan: Race Against Race* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1972), 5.

<sup>1370</sup> While somewhat reductive as to the causes of this, Galster, Ch. 6, offers an interesting summary into these matters as it relates to housing, while the previously-cited Levine, Bates, Wolcott, Thomas, Sugrue, and Thompson books all concern different elements of it from the 1910s to the 1970s.

largely for the purposes of short-term political expediency and with indifference to long-term consequences.<sup>1371</sup> While poor race relations are clearly not unique to Detroit, they would in certain forms be more toxic than those in other major cities. Local politics intensely polarized around race beginning in the late 1960s, with racial lines creating stratification beyond that seen in many other cities.<sup>1372</sup> Moreover, the reaction to this would be strongest: “white flight” was stronger in Detroit than in any other major city, as virtually the entire white population of the city left in the quarter-century following 1965.<sup>1373</sup> This created a division between an African-American city and its white suburbs that had continued to show deep problems. Even on such issues as transportation, the metropolitan cooperation that has been found in many other areas has not been present, leading to separate bus systems for city and suburbs and in the failure of all efforts to come up with a metropolitan solution.<sup>1374</sup> Overall, a nasty climate of racial polarization has institutionalized itself in Detroit, with roots in the rise of the Klan in the 1920s.

Many other problems with contemporary Detroit are rooted in the climate of the 1920s and in the boom period before the Great Depression. In addition to racial animosities, the mass migration of whites out of Detroit is rooted to other elements of the city during the 1920s. Detroit then had a population largely of newcomers with no ties to

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<sup>1371</sup> For the most detailed consideration of the police impacts of these decisions, see Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>1372</sup> For a monograph considering these circumstances, see the Thompson work.

<sup>1373</sup> This white flight, and the polarization between city and suburb, is a major theme in Galster, and the charts and maps used in this work especially demonstrate this.

<sup>1374</sup> Galster, 266-267, a point that this author can confirm from his experiences as a bus commuter from suburb to city during May and June of 2013.

the area who were present largely to take advantage of the economic boom tied to the automotive industry. By the 1930s, it was noted that the ethnic communities of Detroit were not rooted to any spatial location, but tended to move around to a heavy degree. These sets of factors had long-term consequences: a population with no affinity for place tended to respond to problems by fleeing the city, compared to other cities where said populations tended to fight changes that threatened them to larger degrees.<sup>1375</sup> The purely economic elements that tied people to Detroit furthered this, as people found it easier to leave to chase economic opportunities elsewhere than in other cities. This issue, moreover, is not simply a racial matter, as middle-class African-Americans have been just as willing to bail from Detroit in recent times as whites were decades earlier.<sup>1376</sup> The ways in which the city was built as one of low-density single-family homes over a large area has also caused problems: the migration of people out has created areas depopulated in ways that would not have existed in a denser city and have created problems concerning city services that would not exist in a more spatially compact city. In these ways, the building of the city during the 1920s has created substantial problems ninety years later.

The economic development of Detroit, even more than the spatial development of Detroit, has led to long-term problems. Detroit between the early 1900s and the mid-1920s went from having a diversified industrial base to one in which the automotive

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<sup>1375</sup> Galster, Ch. 9, notes this sense of sprawl as a continuing issue. I differ from him, however, in regarding it as already fully apparent during the 1920s, whereas he treats it as a development of the 1950s (Galster, 217).

<sup>1376</sup> The continued collapse in Detroit's population since the 2000 US Census, for instance, has been largely the result of this movement, as African-American populations have become increasingly visible in areas (including the suburbs to Detroit's northeast) where they have historically not been present.



industry was key. Detroit's efforts to establish itself as an aviation center in the 1920s failed, and past experience with furnaces, marine engines, and adding machines did not lead to them being significant in heating and cooling systems, shipbuilding, or electronic devices. Even by the 1920s, it was clear that Detroit was a city where the slightest economic downturns could cause substantial problems: the political realignment of Detroit during the Great Depression was heavily connected with the collapse of the automotive industry during that time. The nature of the automotive industry also caused problems: it had been attracted to Detroit in order to obtain cheap industrial labor, tended to operate on the fringes of the city, and was by the 1920s dominated by two companies whose ownership was outside Detroit and one run by a man with no affinity for the city. This set of conditions explains later problems Detroit would have with the automotive industry, which left the state to get cheaper labor costs and continued to further suburbanize in metropolitan Detroit out of a lack of affinity for Detroit as a place. Overall, the set of issues that had made Detroit tempting to establish the automotive industry would serve to similarly motivate the industry to leave Detroit, further demonstrating the substantial consequences of a one-industry focus.

The roots for contemporary conditions in Detroit, then, have their roots in the boom of the 1920s, as decisions made then led to a harsh decline later. This is of importance to note given the tendency to attribute this decline to various other periods, including immediately after the Second World War, the 1960s, and the 1970s. These evolving social conditions are of importance in considering political practices in 1920s Detroit, as the political and the social were intertwined in ways that make it impossible to

consider them in isolation. Overall, the rise of the Detroit Ku Klux Klan can be considered as a demonstration of the darker elements of the boom during the first quarter of the twentieth century, demonstrating conditions that had been ignored by those focused on the economic boom. An interesting contrast can be made in terms of the visions of the future that the Board of Commerce and similar organizations had in Detroit, towards that implicit in the rise of the Klan. The former was an idealized vision of what was to come, while the latter pointed to how things actually were in Detroit. The Klan was itself looking for an improved Detroit, and was not expecting Detroit to undergo the deterioration that it has in the decades that have followed. However, without planning for this, the future of Detroit would resemble what was on display at the Arena Gardens far more than it would any address by Charles Bowles, as the lack of common affinity and desire to engage in mutual self-destruction would have more power than any amount of high-minded rhetoric.

## **Chapter 5: Prelude to a Splintering: The Shaping of Boston Irish Politics**

1925 demonstrated instability in Boston politics: dozens of people were proposed as candidates, suggested they might be candidates, or at some point ran for mayor, with ten of these candidates making it to the final ballot. On the surface, this surplus of candidates seems bewildering, particularly since many of the candidates ran on similar platforms and engaged in similar forms of political rhetoric. However, by reviewing the political evolution of Boston over the preceding fifty years and the life histories of various candidates and would-be candidates, order emerges from the chaos. In structural terms, Boston politics were shaped by the city's status as a stagnant city that was (by 1920s standards) disproportionately limited to its core, and was a city where state government had claimed a heavier hand on administration than in most other places, leading to strong resentments between city and state. The candidates, meanwhile, demonstrate the evolutions of the Boston Irish from the 1870s onward, as they went from being a new immigrant population to one making a majority, with a growing middle-class and set of institutions. The chaotic conditions of the 1925 election were the product of the breakdown of ethno-religious solidarity in Boston, which became a force in Boston due to political changes, but which had broken down due to changing social conditions. Ultimately, these conditions were the result of growing divisions among the Boston Irish, who differed too heavily in terms of class, spatial location, religiosity, and political loyalties to act as a unified group by 1925.

### **Rules of the Game: The Structure of Boston Society**

Boston was in many regards a stagnant city in 1925, and had been one for over half a century. Boston, as a city, had never had a major industrial boom: while places like Chicago and Detroit both attracted manufacturing, Massachusetts manufacturing tended to be scattered throughout the state rather than consolidated in Boston. Moreover, certain fields it had dominated were ones that were in longstanding decline. Its status as a center for trade and for shipbuilding had been deteriorating since the Civil War, while the textile and boot and shoe industries that dominated New England industry were in a depression by the mid-1920s, as those industries began relocating, particularly to the South.<sup>1377</sup> Even finance, where Boston had remained a powerhouse, demonstrated the stagnancy, as Boston was a city that tried to preserve assets already held rather than engage in economic expansion.<sup>1378</sup> This reflected itself in terms of population statistics; compared to most major cities, Boston had a very low rate of growth in the early twentieth century, and especially during the early 1920s.<sup>1379</sup> Moreover, while the issues connected to this stagnancy did not usually emerge directly in local politics, it helped influence the form of local politics, as the tone taken by various sides admitted to this stagnancy in ways that would have been incomprehensible in Detroit, and which in Chicago tended to be used

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<sup>1377</sup> Edward M. Hartwell, Edward W. McGlenen, and Edward O. Skelton, *Boston and Its Story, 1630-1915* (Boston: Printing Department, 1916), 142; Lawrence Elle, compiler, *Not So Long Ago: Oral Histories of Older Bostonians* (Boston: Mayor's Office of Community Schools, 1980), v.

<sup>1378</sup> For this sense of financial conservatism, see Charles H. Trout, *Boston, The Great Depression, and the New Deal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 7-8.

<sup>1379</sup> Stephan Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 10.

largely in moral terms.<sup>1380</sup> It also directly influenced the ethnic polarization that took place in Boston during the early 1900s. The New Immigration of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century largely missed Boston, resulting in it being far less multiethnic than most other major American cities. Even the lines of attack against the Brahmin elite was rooted in these issues: the elite families of Boston tended to be much older than similar elites elsewhere, and, because of the economic stagnation in Boston, did not incorporate new members frequently, giving it a much more static feeling than the elites in either Chicago or Detroit.

Another point of great importance concerns the nature of the development of the Boston metropolitan area. During the 1860s and 1870s, Boston had engaged in a wave of annexations that vastly expanded the city.<sup>1381</sup> After 1873, however, the wave stopped, with only one annexation coming after that.<sup>1382</sup> This became of importance due to the development that occurred during the latter half of the nineteenth century, as the streetcar suburbs of the city began to spring up.<sup>1383</sup> By the mid-1920s, more or less the entire area within city limits had been developed, leaving limited room for further development and limiting the growth of the population. Outside the city, on the other hand, major communities (such as Cambridge, Chelsea, Quincy, and Watertown) had not been annexed during the 1860s and 1870s, and rapidly grew in this period compared to the

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<sup>1380</sup> The tendency in the campaign rhetoric of the likes of John F. Fitzgerald and James Michael Curley to portray the Brahmin elite as decayed and decaying, for example, fits into this approach.

<sup>1381</sup> Thomas H. O'Connor, *Bibles, Brahmins, and Bosses: A Short History of Boston* (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1984), 85.

<sup>1382</sup> Hartwell, McGlenen, and Skelton, 191.

<sup>1383</sup> The seminal book on this development is Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

core of the city.<sup>1384</sup> As a result, Boston by the mid-1920s was in a situation now familiar for virtually every metropolitan area in the United States, as nearly twice as many people lived outside city limits within the metropolitan area than within city limits.<sup>1385</sup> This contrasted heavily with Chicago, which was still developing large sections of the city during the 1920s, and Detroit, which was just starting to end a massive annexation boom that had resulted in vast population and spatial growth during the 1910s and 1920s. Even more than other major cities, the issue of metropolitan governance was a pressing concern without any clear framework in place to establish one.<sup>1386</sup> It also affected politics within the city: while there were many areas (such as southern Brighton, Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, Hyde Park, and southernmost Dorchester) that were still clearly suburban in the 1920s, Boston was much more limited to the core of a city than either Chicago or Detroit were. This resulted in a Boston that was visibly poorer than its suburbs, and helped create a situation where the middle-class (and especially the Yankee and Jewish middle-class) tended to migrate out of the city earlier than took place in other major cities. It also resulted in a Boston that was on poor terms with its neighbors, who strongly fought any effort for Boston either to annex them or to have a say in their governmental practices, which helped to make city-state relationships toxic.

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<sup>1384</sup> For a contemporary discussion of this phenomenon, see Joseph H. Beale, "Metropolitan Boston", in Elisabeth Herlihy, *Fifty Years of Boston; A Memorial Volume Issued in Commemoration of the Tercentenary of 1930* (Boston: n.p., 1932), 117-126. A draft that in substance is the same as the one published is found in the Elisabeth Herlihy Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1385</sup> *The Boston Globe Data Book, 1925* (Boston: n.p., 1925), 2, for example, indicates 1,650,000 residents in metropolitan Boston, and 2,530,000 residents in the wider Boston Trading Area.

<sup>1386</sup> The previously cited Beale article notes various proposals in the preceding fifty years for a metropolitan government for Boston, and how far metropolitan government had been established by 1930.

Ethnicity in Boston was complicated by the division of ethnic groups in Boston in terms of relative percentages of the population. Chicago and Detroit were both multiethnic cities in which no ethnic group was anywhere near a majority of the population, and where external and internal migration since 1900 had resulted in substantial changes to the composition of the population as a whole. This was not really the case as far as Boston went: the Boston Irish made up a much larger percentage of the population than any ethnic group in either Chicago or Detroit, and, in terms of political participation, had made up a de facto majority since the 1890s.<sup>1387</sup> This meant that politics in Boston could, at least in theory, pivot around issues of ethno-religious solidarity in ways that could not happen in most major American cities. While candidates in most cities had to appeal across ethnic and religious lines in order to get support, Boston's population was relatively polarized between Irish Catholics and Protestant Yankees, making appeals solely to one of these groups more tempting. Migration had had a limited effect in altering these dynamics: only Russia, Italy, and Canada produced substantial immigrant populations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, African-American migration from the South was limited during this time, and the only area within the United States producing a substantial number of internal migrants was rural New

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<sup>1387</sup> Martin Marger, *The Force of Ethnicity: A Study of Urban Elites* (Detroit: University Studies and Weekend College, Wayne State University, 1974), 29n4, notes this as being the case in relationship to relative group immigration: Boston was one of only two cities in 1900 where the Irish made up the largest foreign-born population (Philadelphia was the other), and the relative dominance of the Irish over the Germans (who made up the largest group everywhere else) was much stronger in Boston than in Philadelphia. For a contemporary view of this dominance as it came into being, see M.A. DeWolfe Howe, *Boston: The Place and the People* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 381.

England.<sup>1388</sup> None of these groups could break the binary in terms of ethnic polarization: Canadians and rural New Englanders, other than perhaps them being more explicitly bigoted against Catholics, tended to be indistinguishable from longtime Brahmin in their political loyalties.<sup>1389</sup> Italian and Jewish immigrants largely did not vote, as the Irish ward leaders of the areas they lived found things politically easier for them if they did not, and, in the case of Boston's Italian-American community, would not in large numbers until the 1930s.<sup>1390</sup> The only group that did engage in political practices in number sizeable enough to be notable in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century were the middle-class Jews who had left immigrant neighborhoods and settled in Roxbury and Dorchester. Even they had a limited impact: they were not large enough to be an independent force in Boston politics, and their close affiliation with the Republican Party into the 1930s meant that they lacked any force as a swing vote that could depolarize the

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<sup>1388</sup> For the migration of populations to Boston at the turn of the century, see Frederick A. Bushee, *Ethnic Factors in the Population of Boston* (New York: Arno Press, 1970 reprint of 1903 original). Lance Carden, *Witness: An Oral History of Black Politics in Boston 1920-1960* (Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College, 1989), notes this in two ways, noting both that growth in the city's population was marginal in the 1920s relative to other cities (3), and that, at the end of the decade, they made up less than 3% of the population (14). Thernstrom's first chapter considers this in-migration.

<sup>1389</sup> Geoffrey Blodgett, *The Gentle Reformers: Massachusetts Democrats in The Cleveland Period* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 150, makes this charge concerning migrants from Canada. An examination of the legislative manuals for the Massachusetts legislature from the 1880s to the 1920s has demonstrated this fact: many of the Protestants holding elective office were migrants of this nature, suggesting that their status as migrant didn't bar them from participation.

<sup>1390</sup> For a discussion of this as it relates to Martin Lomasney, long ward leader of the heavily Jewish West End and with the heavily Italian North End among his domains from the 1910s onward, see James J. Connolly, "Beyond the Machine: Martin Lomasney and Ethnic Politics", in Reed Ueda and Conrad Edick Wright, editors, *Faces of Community: Immigrant Massachusetts, 1860-2000* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, distributed by Northeastern University Press, 2003), 189-214.



other ethnic groups.<sup>1391</sup> As a result, the polarization of politics along ethnic lines could be starker in Boston than in either Chicago or Detroit, because of the binary status of ethnicity in that city.

Just as notable as polarization between ethnic groups was the issue of internal divisions within an ethnic group. The Boston Irish had never really been a purely homogenous bloc, and were divided even on arrival in various regards, such as place of origin within Ireland.<sup>1392</sup> During the fifty years between the mid-1870s and the mid-1920s, however, these divisions grew in parallel with the rising status of the community.<sup>1393</sup> Perhaps the most important division was that of class: the Boston Irish had developed a middle-class and elite during this period, with various economic and social institutions emerging to symbolize this fact.<sup>1394</sup> However, this burgeoning middle-class was in no ways all encompassing, as there were many among the Boston Irish for whom conditions had remained unchanged since migration. This, as time passed, had a growing spatial impact: the Boston Irish middle-class moved from the core into the suburban areas of the city, while neighborhoods associated with working-class Irish, such as Charlestown, South Boston, and the South End, experienced either stagnant or outright

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<sup>1391</sup> John F. Stack Jr., *International Conflict in an American City: Boston's Irish, Italians, and Jews, 1935-1944* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 34, notes that the Democratic Party in the areas of Jewish suburbanization ran themselves as an Irish club, pushing Jews into the Republican Party.

<sup>1392</sup> Joseph F. Dinneen, *The Purple Shamrock; The Hon. James Michael Curley of Boston* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949), 15, while engaging in journalistic license, gives some impression as for how Irish from different parts of Ireland came into Boston and settled in different locations within the city.

<sup>1393</sup> For a sense of the evolution of the Boston Irish during this time, see Dennis P. Ryan, *Beyond The Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845-1917* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983).

<sup>1394</sup> Among these organizations are the Charitable Irish Society, whose papers, held by the Massachusetts Historical Society, offers some sense of these conditions.

deteriorating conditions during this time.<sup>1395</sup> As time grew, this divide in place paralleled growing divides between these sections of the community, as class tensions began to politically emerge. Working-class Irish considered the middle-class Irish to be ethnic traitors (the term “Castle Irish” became a common insult against them), while the middle-class Irish tended to regard their working-class brethren as dangerous demagogues. It even affected what these groups found of importance in municipal politics: the middle-class Irish increasingly turned to issues related to their residence in the suburban parts of the city (such as roads, sewers, and sidewalks), while working-class Irish tended to focus on larger public-works projects in the core of the city. This division, by itself, is one that was not unique either to the Irish or to 1920s Boston, as various other ethnic groups in other cities similarly split along class lines. However, the status of Boston as a Irish city meant that these divisions had a different political impact than would have been the case if Boston were a more multiethnic city. In other cities, the split between working-class and middle-class Irish would have resulted in their affiliating with other ethnic groups along class lines. In Boston, however, the heavy Irish predominance resulted in the split between working-class and middle-class Irish becoming the dividing force in Boston politics, particularly as, until the mid-1930s, neither of these groups were consistently effective at mobilizing other ethnic groups in their support.

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<sup>1395</sup> Alexander von Hoffman, *Local Attachments: The Making of an American Urban Neighborhood, 1850 to 1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), considers this using the example of Jamaica Plain. Albert J. Kennedy and Robert A. Woods, *The Zone of Emergence: Observations of the Lower, Middle, and Upper Working Class Communities of Boston, 1905-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), offers views on this process by contemporaries, albeit ones from outside the community.

## Commonwealth over the City on a Hill: The Structuring of Government

The structure of government in Boston was both shaped by and shaped the evolution of political affairs in Boston. The first way this came into being was the evolving structure of Boston politics during the period. Prior to the 1880s, Boston had had a weak mayor form of government, with power held by the two branches of the City Council.<sup>1396</sup> Over time, this evolved, as mayors progressively gained more and more powers at the expense of the City Council.<sup>1397</sup> This evolution peaked with the establishment of the Charter of 1909, which was largely still in effect in 1925.<sup>1398</sup> Under this charter, the mayor held all powers of appointment, and the City Council became a relatively minor branch of city government.<sup>1399</sup> On the one hand, these changes were part of a larger trend, as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a time when the shift towards stronger mayors was happening generally across the United States.<sup>1400</sup> However, this shift had a direct impact on Boston political life by creating a strong office which, when combined with the weak Council and the insignificance of county government in Massachusetts, came to dominate the political system of Boston. With one

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<sup>1396</sup> Nathan Matthews, *The City Government of Boston* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, city printers, 1895), 164-165. This was Matthews' farewell document as he left the office of Mayor, and as such holds some interest for how one actually running local government understood his work in the period.

<sup>1397</sup> Matthews, 168-169, 173n1.

<sup>1398</sup> For changes made to the Charter to 1924, see Boston Department of Statistics, *Boston Year Book 1924-1925* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1925), 11-23.

<sup>1399</sup> Document 118, 1909, Chapter 486, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, "An Act Relating To The Administration of the City of Boston and to amend the Charter of the Said City" generally establishes this, with 2-7 being the sections that most clearly gave the Mayor strong powers at the expense of the council (3, for instance, established that the Council couldn't appropriate more money than the Mayor asked for, while 6 gave the Mayor the ability to appoint officials without Council approval).

<sup>1400</sup> Jon C. Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City: Problem, Promise, and Reality* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

office holding much of the political power in the area, the need for coalition-building was diminished, encouraging the development of personality politics, in which one politician running on the basis of their own personal following could negate existing organizations, and use the patronage of the office as a means to entice support.

Relationships between Boston and the commonwealth of Massachusetts were strained in a form peculiar to Boston, which helped further shape local politics. In the half-century before 1925, a series of restrictions were placed on local government in Boston by the Massachusetts legislature. Some of these restrictions were ones applied by other states on major cities, such as a limitation on the total tax rate for Boston.<sup>1401</sup> What was less common were the many ways in which state government superseded local government in Boston. By 1925, police, licensing, water, sewerage, parks, and rapid transportation were all either directly administered or otherwise supervised by commissions and commissioners appointed by the Governor who were not responsive to local authorities.<sup>1402</sup> Beyond even this supplanting of control over affairs of government were two unique ways, both established by the Charter of 1909, in which state government held power over city affairs. The State Civil Service Commission had the right to approve all appointments made to head departments in Boston, resulting in many incidents when they used their powers to veto a mayoral appointee.<sup>1403</sup> Most notably, the

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<sup>1401</sup> Matthews, 36-37, notes his approval of this tax limit, feeling that increases would be a waste of money.

<sup>1402</sup> Boston Department of Statistics, *Boston Year Book 1923-1924* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1924).

<sup>1403</sup> Document 118, 1909, Chapter 486, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, "An Act Relating To The Administration of the City of Boston and to amend the Charter of the Said City", 6-7. The Candidate Files

Boston Finance Commission, established as a local ad hoc body in 1907, was institutionalized as a permanent state body (though financed by the city, which further hindered relations) with investigative powers over city government, resulting in that body being perpetually at war with the city officials of Boston for most of its early existence.<sup>1404</sup> These organizations reflected a substantial difference in the split of city-state divisions in Boston compared to other major cities and states. Many states had placed limitations on municipal governments by limiting home rule, or by having different divisions in terms of what rights cities had, but no other major city (excepting Washington, then under direct federal rule) had so many functions of government controlled at the state level. This reflected a divide between city and state: whereas Irish Democrats had politically dominated Boston from the 1880s onward, Yankee Republicans dominated the Commonwealth of Massachusetts into the early 1930s. This divide was further demonstrated by two trends during the first quarter of the twentieth century: as Boston grew more and more Democratic, more and more of these positions were created, and, starting in the late 1910s, these offices were increasingly dominated by Boston Republican politicians, making their status as a form of political patronage explicit.<sup>1405</sup> This resulting in striking symbolism, as City Hall lost powers to the State

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of the Good Government Association, held at the Massachusetts Historical Society, include many examples of appointees being rejected, with some positions being unfilled for months as a result.

<sup>1404</sup> Document 118, 1909, Chapter 486, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, "An Act Relating To The Administration of the City of Boston and to amend the Charter of the Said City", 8-9.

<sup>1405</sup> On Election Day of 1925, the Police Commissioner, Herbert A. Wilson, had been a former Buildings Commissioner for Boston and a former member of the Massachusetts House and Senate from Brighton. The Licensing Board chair, David T. Montague, had served the Back Bay in the Common Council, Massachusetts House, and Massachusetts Senate, and had been a former Register of Probate for Suffolk County. The Metropolitan District Commission chair (controlling water, sewerage, and parks), Davis T.

Capital, located only a five-minute walk away in the staunchly Republican neighborhood of Beacon Hill. Overall, this level of state control had two different political impacts. The powers of local government in Boston were limited either through their transfer to state authorities or through the creations of organization that explicitly served as a veto on city authorities. It also served to help create a toxic element to the city-state relationship between Boston and Massachusetts. Boston Democrats tended to campaign strongly for increased home rule and denounced state government, while Republicans within and without Boston used this threat in their campaign literature. It finally also served as a way to make ethnic polarization even worse, as the taking of power from Boston Irish by Massachusetts Yankees led to an increased explication of ethnic hostility on the campaign stump.

The roles of political parties in Boston politics was also one that evolved during the period. Prior to 1910, municipal elections in Boston were held along partisan lines, with elections contested by the Democratic and Republican parties.<sup>1406</sup> This did not result, however, in a political boss dominating the city through control of a political party.<sup>1407</sup> Among the Democrats, who dominated local politics by 1890, organization at a citywide level never went beyond coalitions of ward leaders, who even within their own

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Keniston, had been a member of the Massachusetts House from the Back Bay. The newly appointed chair of the Boston Finance Commission, Charles L. Carr, had been appointed directly from the Massachusetts House, where he was a member for West Roxbury.

<sup>1406</sup> Peter K. Eisinger, *The Politics of Displacement: Racial and Ethnic Transition in Three American Cities* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 46-47.

<sup>1407</sup> Richard M. Abrams, *Conservatism in a Progressive Era: Massachusetts Politics, 1900-1912* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 44-45.

wards were erratic at best at getting candidates they backed nominated and elected.<sup>1408</sup> Notably, this system sought to avoid ethnic strife; partisanship, rather than ethnicity, received emphasis as an organizing force in politics, with the Democrats continuing to back Yankees for Mayor into the 1890s.<sup>1409</sup> The Charter of 1909, however, eliminated ward organizations as a force by making all elective positions citywide, and eliminating political parties through a non-partisan ballot.<sup>1410</sup> These developments encouraged the rise of candidates running independent of party organizations. John F. Fitzgerald, the first mayor elected under the Charter of 1909, had originally become mayor by beating virtually every ward organization in the city in 1905, and James Michael Curley, the second mayor under the Charter of 1909, took great pride in holding ward and party organizations in contempt.<sup>1411</sup> This combination of circumstances led to the collapse of ward organizations as a force in local politics, with what ward organizations that remained (Martin Lomasney among Democrats, Charles Innes among Republicans)

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<sup>1408</sup> Paul Kleppner, "From Party to Factions", in Ronald P. Formisano and Constance K. Burns, editors, *Boston, 1700-1980: The Evolution of Urban Politics* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), offers an essay-length consideration of this factor, which is also summarized in the previous citation.

<sup>1409</sup> James J. Connolly, *The Triumph of Ethnic Progressivism: Urban Political Culture in Boston, 1900-1925* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), Ch. 1 *passim*, and especially 23-24, 28-29.

<sup>1410</sup> Document 118, 1909, Chapter 486, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, "An Act Relating to The Administration of the City of Boston and to amend the Charter of the Said City", 19, 23.

<sup>1411</sup> Leslie G. Ainsley, *Boston Mahatma* (Boston: B. Humphries, 1949), 95, notes that both the remnants of the "Board of Strategy" and Martin Lomasney had backed Fitzgerald's opponent. James Michael Curley, "The Voters of Boston Will Find This To Be The Most Remarkable Piece Of Political Literature Ever Issued In An American Municipal Campaign" (1921), copy held at Boston Athenaeum, quotes a *Boston Post* article from 10/20/1921 by Clifford Carberry (writing under the name "John Bantry"), in which he notes Curley's inability to form an organization around himself and his tendency to get into fights with other politicians.

surviving due to special circumstances.<sup>1412</sup> Perhaps the ultimate demonstration of the death of the political parties can be found in looking at the mayoral campaigns between 1910 and 1921, which in all four cases were fought between rival Democrats.<sup>1413</sup> Ultimately, this situation in Boston demonstrates the limitations of assuming that party organizations and political bosses were the sole forces in control of municipal politics. It turned out that their significance came largely due to a structure of government designed to favor parties; with that favoritism gone, the parties atrophied quickly locally.

The deterioration of partisan organization was a complicated one for Boston municipal politics, as it left a vacuum in terms of what groups and issues would manage to organize the electorate. There were efforts by several groups during the 1900s and 1910 to fill this gap. During this time, structural reformers (operating through the Good Government Association, known as the GGA to its friends and as “Goo-Goos” to its enemies), organized labor, and neighborhood civic associations organized in the United

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<sup>1412</sup> The one published autobiography of Lomasney, the previously-cited Ainsley work, is problematic in numerous regards, in spite of its advantage of being based on archival materials (the private papers of Martin Lomasney) that seem no longer to exist. James J. Connolly, “Beyond the Machine: Martin Lomasney and Ethnic Politics”, in Reed Ueda and Conrad Edick Wright, editors, *Faces of Community: Immigrant Massachusetts, 1860-2000* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, distributed by Northeastern University Press, 2003), 189-214, offers a better historical interpretation. For Lomasney in his own times, there are two newspaper autobiographical series of use, one published in the *Boston Post* during March and April of 1919 (copy in Boston Athenaeum collection), and one (with Lomasney’s direct participation) in the *Boston Herald* during December of 1925. Microfilm copies of his scrapbooks are held at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Lomasney’s continued political power in the North and West Ends seems to have been through his control of a narrow electorate in his ward, in which the Italian and Jewish residents did not vote and Irish from elsewhere (commonly called “mattress voters”) did. Innes’ surviving private papers are located at the Boston Public Library, but consist more of campaign materials than private documents. Useful are two newspaper profiles, both located in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 17, Massachusetts Historical Society: one taken from an unidentified newspaper sometime around 1922, and the other a strongly negative commentary in the *Boston Telegram* of 10/3/1925. Innes’ powers seem to have been largely through a combination of his skill as a lobbyist for various interests, connections made teaching night law school, and his ability to elect state representatives who were rewarded with patronage by Republican officials on the state level.

<sup>1413</sup> Eisinger, 31, demonstrates this.



Improvement Association all attempted to take the leading role in the organization of city government.<sup>1414</sup> Ultimately, however, none of these groups would manage to become the leading forces in organizing municipal politics in Boston, in many cases due to a disconnect, especially in class and ethnic terms, between those leading these groups and the population of Boston as a whole. Instead, the matter of ethno-religious solidarity, especially as it pertained to the Boston Irish, would become the dominating force in Boston politics. While he was not the first person to use this approach, the political career of James Michael Curley epitomized this style of politics.<sup>1415</sup> During a political career that lasted from the turn of the century to the 1950s, Curley would make a continued pattern of using this rhetoric, in an effort to make himself the tribune of the ordinary Irish against the Yankee elite.<sup>1416</sup> The GGA became a longstanding target for him and many other Irish politicians, who criticized the organization (not without cause) as being dominated by a limited elite audience and as being unrepresentative of the city of Boston as a whole.<sup>1417</sup> Moreover, Curley would use this tactic against any candidate; he

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<sup>1414</sup> For the Good Government Association, see their records, held by the Massachusetts Historical Society. In terms of organization labor, Connolly, 116, suggests that the Boston Central Labor Union, the central organization for organization labor in Boston, was of limited effectiveness due to its being closely tied to the Democratic Party. For the United Improvement Association, see Connolly, Ch. 4 *passim*, and 111-112 explicitly.

<sup>1415</sup> Connolly, Ch. 5 *passim*, and 135, 137, 141-142, 148-150, 159-160 specifically.

<sup>1416</sup> There is no one good source to understand Curley. The Dinneen work cited earlier had Curley's participation, but is bogged down by errors of fact. Curley's own autobiography, *I'd Do It Again: A Record of All My Uproarious Years* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1957), while not without interest, is patently self-serving and is not to be fully trusted without independent confirmation. The most recent work to focus completely on Curley is Jack Beatty, *The Rascal King: The Life and Times of James Michael Curley* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1992). It is of use for understanding Curley personally, but of limited value in understanding the larger context in which he operated.

<sup>1417</sup> There are numerous contemporary examples of this charge. For a historical assessment of this as being ultimately ruinous to the association, see Connolly, 184-188.

ultimately won four elections thirty-one years apart using these tactics, against four different Irish candidates.<sup>1418</sup> In this way, the ways in which Boston was a city that was polarized between Irish and Yankees becomes of relevance, as this meant that appeals to ethno-religious solidarity, which would have been self-defeating in a more multiethnic community, could be used effectively in Boston. This also served as a way to try to patch divisions among the Boston Irish: by focusing on a common Yankee foe, an effort was made to use this rhetoric as a way to create ethnic unity that in fact was no longer present.<sup>1419</sup> The 1910 mayoral election that was the first time this approach was taken is a major case in point: John F. Fitzgerald, having been rejected by the electorate along partisan lines in 1907, won largely by focusing on the character of his opponent, James J. Storrow, especially concerning his status as an upper-class Yankee. As a result, the politics of explicit ethnicity, other imagined as something more primordial in nature, came to be of chief importance in Boston politics relatively late, as a means to organize an electorate that could no longer be mobilized on partisan lines and for which no other alternative was found.<sup>1420</sup>

The late emergence of ethno-religious solidarity is further demonstrated by the role of the Boston Irish in local politics starting in the mid-1870s. Prior to 1890, there

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<sup>1418</sup> In his elections as Mayor, Curley defeated Thomas Kenny in 1914, John R. Murphy in 1921, Frederick W. Mansfield in 1929, and John E. Kerrigan in 1945.

<sup>1419</sup> Connolly, 160, notes this as being something necessary for Curley to do, and explaining his defeat in 1917 as being because of his failure to do so.

<sup>1420</sup> Constance K. Burns, "The Irony of Progressive Reform", in Ronald P. Formisano and Constance K. Burns, editors, *Boston, 1700-1980: The Evolution of Urban Politics* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 158-159, also notes this, and that this being of importance was by no means inevitable.

was a certain pioneering element to the Irish role in local politics, in which an effort was made to establish a foothold. At first, this involved giving support to Yankee Democrats (many of whom had been Whigs prior to the Civil War), but ultimately transformed into supporting their own candidates for office, with the election of Hugh O'Brien as the first Irish Mayor of the city in 1884 as a symbolic demonstration of this rising power.<sup>1421</sup> In this period, clear attempts were being made to position the Boston Irish as being respectable and as trustworthy in elective office. This seems to be a direct response to periodic outbreaks of ethnic and religious bigotry: through an image of respectability, the Boston Irish could win the support of the people of Boston, and gain a foothold in the political sphere. The 1890s and most of the 1900s, in contrast, was a time of consolidation, in which the position of the Boston Irish as being in control of both the Democratic Party and of Boston politics was made apparent.<sup>1422</sup> However, local support for Yankee Democrats (this time largely former Mugwumps) was still present, and the Irish politicians who came of age in this generation maintained a position of political respectability and of appealing to the wider community.<sup>1423</sup> The era after the Charter of 1909 came into force, on the other hand, was an era of Irish personality politics, in which

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<sup>1421</sup> Geoffrey Blodgett, "Yankee Leadership in A Divided City", in Ronald P. Formisano and Constance K. Burns, editors, *Boston, 1700-1980: The Evolution of Urban Politics* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 92-93, notes both the coalition and the presence of former Whigs in it. Arthur Mann, *Yankee Reformers in The Urban Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1954), 3, treats this election in this manner, while noting the limitations present to their power.

<sup>1422</sup> The Kleppner article previous cited notices this developing, through the figure of Patrick Maguire, party leader from the mid-1880s until his death in 1896 (119).

<sup>1423</sup> Francis Russell, "A Forgotten Poet: John Boyle O'Reilly", in his *The Knave of Boston and Other Ambiguous Massachusetts Characters* (Boston: Quinlan Press, 1987), 174-175, notes both the imagery around the figure of Patrick A. Collins, second Irish mayor of Boston, and its collapse in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

every candidate to some degree or another was running on their own merits rather than under partisan backing.<sup>1424</sup> Concerns about respectability were still apparent, but they began evolving to take on an explicitly middle-class basis, rather than being something vaguely aimed at the community as a whole. Moreover, the association of this strive for respectability with partisan political practices was destroyed when political parties lost their role in local politics. In this system, political followings were transient: Curley, the most successful Boston Irish politician of his generation, had an up-and-down electoral record, and tended to find it difficult to keep any individual supporters of prominence in the long term.<sup>1425</sup> Finally, while a multiethnic role would never fully go away, there was a greater sense of Boston Irish politicians aiming their pitches specifically at the Irish community, often finding it more useful to bait Yankees than to appeal to them. The political fate of the two Yankee Democrats to run for Mayor in the period, James Storrow in 1910 and Andrew J. Peters in 1917, demonstrates this ethnic polarization firsthand. Issues of ethnicity defeated Storrow, while Peters won in a race where the Irish electorate was split between three major candidates almost solely through the vote of fellow Yankees.<sup>1426</sup> In these respects, the ethnic polarization, compared to that of prior decades,

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<sup>1424</sup> Connolly, 135.

<sup>1425</sup> He would be elected Mayor in 1914, 1921, 1929, and 1945, defeated in 1917, 1937, 1941, 1949, 1951, and 1955, be elected Governor of Massachusetts in 1934, and lose races for Governor in 1924 and 1938 and for Senate in 1936. James Michael Curley, "The Voters of Boston Will Find This To Be The Most Remarkable Piece Of Political Literature Ever Issued In An American Municipal Campaign" (1921), copy held at Boston Athenaeum, notes Curley as being unable to make and keep friends, which may play a role in this matter.

<sup>1426</sup> For a perspective on the Storrow campaign sympathetic to Storrow, see Henry Greenleaf Pearson, *Son of New England: James Jackson Storrow, 1864-1926* (Boston: T. Todd, 1932), 84-95. Peters was the only GGA candidate prior to 1925 to be elected Mayor. The GGA, prior to 1925, had backed Louis Frothingham in 1905, Storrow in 1910, Thomas Kenny in 1914, Peters in 1917, and John R. Murphy in 1921. Ainsley,

is made apparent, as the Yankee Democrats who had won Irish support in the 1890s were unable to do so just a generation later.

A final point of note involving this evolution in politics is what happens to the Boston Republicans. While never as strong in municipal elections as the Whigs had been, the Republicans had managed to maintain a rough parity with the Democrats prior to the election of Nathan Matthews in 1890.<sup>1427</sup> After 1890, however, the Republicans began to deteriorate in electoral support: between 1890 and 1925, they only were able to elect Mayors in 1894, 1899, and 1907, and each time under special circumstances.<sup>1428</sup> This was paralleled in other races: the last consistent success Republicans had in statewide races came from the split of the Democrats on free silver in the 1890s, and their only success in twentieth century Presidential elections was in the 1920 and 1924 landslides, by lesser margins than in most of the major cities of the United States.<sup>1429</sup> Between 1910

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67, notes that Martin Lomasney had backed Peters in 1917, showing that Peters had an appeal to some Irish politicians, if not to the Irish electorate.

<sup>1427</sup> Their deterioration in other races, on the other hand, had begun decades earlier: *Globe*, 11/5/1924, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B12, Holy Cross College, notes that Boston had started voting Democratic for President starting with Tilden in 1876, and had since then only gone Republican in 1896, 1920, and 1924. Throughout this chapter and Chapters 6 and 7, all references to publications are to ones published in Boston unless otherwise cited.

<sup>1428</sup> There is differing opinion on the reasons why in 1894: *New York Times*, 12/24/1894, 5, makes a charge that corrupt practices were responsible, while Blodgett, 165-166, interprets this differently, suggesting that the nomination of a poor Democratic candidate was to blame. In 1899, the results were the product of a split after a rough Democratic primary between Patrick A. Collins and John R. Murphy. Abrams, 44-45, claiming Lomasney was responsible, which Ainsley, 93, denies. Eisinger, 38-39, considers 1899 to be key in the ethnic transformation of Boston, as the last time a Protestant candidate for Mayor received a majority of the vote. In 1907, the Republican candidate won by less than a majority, due to a combination of scandals surrounding John F. Fitzgerald and a strong campaign by the Independence League for Mayor (Francis Russell, *The Great Interlude: Neglected Events and Persons from the First World War to the Depression* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 178).

<sup>1429</sup> For free silver as something that splintered Democrats in Massachusetts in 1896, see Blodgett, Ch. 8 *passim* and 212-213, 216-218, 224-226, 232-238 specifically. *Boston Year Book, 1924-1925*, 453, notes that Calvin Coolidge won Boston with less than a majority (he received 92,076 votes, compared to John W.

and 1925, the Republican Party did not run their own candidates for Mayor of Boston, instead choosing to throw their support to candidates backed by the GGA.<sup>1430</sup> The aforementioned structural changes to Boston politics that took place over this time can be seen as ways to keep a voice in civic affairs that was becoming less tenable to maintain through the ballot box, particularly given how the expansion and politicization of state-level positions paralleled the decline of the party during the early twentieth century. During this time, Republican support was chiefly found among three groups: the Brahmin of the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, the Jews settled along Blue Hill Avenue in Roxbury and Dorchester, and middle-class Yankees in the streetcar suburbs of the city. This was a deteriorating strength: the streetcar suburbs were becoming more and more Democratic as more middle-class Yankees moved to suburbs north, south, and west of the city, and as the rising middle-class Irish population moved in.<sup>1431</sup> Boston still elected a substantial Republican minority to the Massachusetts legislature, and through that continued to play a role in state politics. However, it was clear that the Boston Republicans were very much a minority party, as Boston was regarded as being the most heavily Democratic major city in the United States. This led to the Boston Republicans becoming a party that no longer had any hopes of forming a majority, and left them reliant on either superseding

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Davis' 73,629 and Robert LaFollette's 33,234, while the list of wards he carried (Wards 1, 7, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25) corresponds largely to either the Back Bay (Wards 7 and 8), the Jewish areas of Boston (Wards 16 and 19), and the streetcar suburban areas of the city (Wards 1, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25).

<sup>1430</sup> *Herald*, 9/6/1925, Section C, 3.

<sup>1431</sup> Connolly, 113.

local authority (as with the appointed commissions) or with taking advantage of divisions among Boston Democrats if they wanted to have a say in municipal government.

### **The Boston Irish: A Political Evolution**

The backgrounds of the men (and one woman) who would be Mayor in 1925 reflect the ways in which the social and political climate of Boston had evolved over the preceding fifty years. Joseph Henry O’Neil was the oldest candidate for Mayor at 73 and the only candidate who came from the first generation of Boston Irish politicians. Like most of this generation, he came to Boston from elsewhere (in his case, Fall River), settled in an Irish section of central Boston (the “Cove” section of the South End, then being filled in), and started life engaged in blue-collar work as an apprentice cabinetmaker.<sup>1432</sup> In his twenties and early thirties, he rose rapidly in local politics, have served on the School Committee, in the State House, and on the Board of Directors of Public Institutions by the time he was 27. His status was clearly as a trailblazer, further demonstrated by his fighting Patrick A. Collins to become the first Irish-American Congressman from Boston in 1882. While this attempt was unsuccessful, he successfully ran for that post six years later, after stints as President of the Board of Directors of Public Institutions and as City Clerk.<sup>1433</sup> During his six years in Congress, he established himself as a political figure, rising to membership on the Appropriations Committee.<sup>1434</sup> He also established himself as being a distinctly conservative figure within the party,

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<sup>1432</sup> For accounts of O’Neil’s early life, see *Globe*, 8/27/1893, and *Globe*, 5/20/1901.

<sup>1433</sup> For his nomination, see *Globe*, 10/3/1888.

<sup>1434</sup> *Herald*, 10/11/1925, Section AA, 2.

becoming a noted supporter of Catholic temperance causes and opposing the free-silver wing in the party locally and nationally.<sup>1435</sup> This career in Congress, however, was cut short when he earned the enmity of Martin Lomasney and John F. Fitzgerald, whom united to defeat O'Neil for renomination in 1894.<sup>1436</sup>

O'Neil, continuing as a political pioneer, became Assistant Treasurer of the United States for Boston, then the most important local position held by the Boston Irish.<sup>1437</sup> After his term expired in 1899, his career took a different turn, as he established the Federal Trust Company.<sup>1438</sup> In establishing this bank, O'Neil was pioneering in the economic realm as he had earlier in the political realm, setting up a bank in Boston aimed at the Irish population of the city.<sup>1439</sup> This placed him on a trajectory towards appointments to respectable positions, particularly ones concerning funds: he became a Sinking-Fund Commissioner for Boston, a trustee of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and served as treasurer for the Belgian Relief Fund, the Massachusetts Committee for Relief in Ireland, and for Massachusetts National Guard regiments during the First World War.<sup>1440</sup> The rise in social status paralleled changes in his spatial location, as he moved to

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<sup>1435</sup> O'Neil's conservative reputation would continue after leaving office: *Globe*, 7/6/1906, references this. For a national reputation as a free silver critic, see *New York Times*, 6/8/1895, 4.

<sup>1436</sup> Untitled notes on Martin Lomasney, c.1901, 2A, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 20, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1437</sup> For his appointment, see *Globe*, 4/2/1905.

<sup>1438</sup> The charter for this bank is reproduced in *Bankers Magazine*, August 1904, 154.

<sup>1439</sup> This element of the matter is evident looking at the charter reproduced in the previous citation. Virtually every trustee listed appears to be of Irish heritage, in contrast with banking in Boston at that time, which was heavily dominated by Yankees.

<sup>1440</sup> For his resignation as Sinking Fund Commissioner, see *Globe*, 7/3/1909. For O'Neil as Massachusetts General Hospital Trustee (a post to which he was appointed by the Governor), see draft of biographical



a large estate in Roxbury, across from Franklin Park.<sup>1441</sup> In all of these respects, O'Neil represented the rising Boston Irish middle-class of his period, which similarly was entering the professions and moving out of the traditional neighborhoods.<sup>1442</sup> His career in electoral politics, on the other hand, essentially ended after the mid-1890s: an effort to draft him for Mayor in 1905 as a compromise candidate failed due to his being regarded as too old, and, other than an unsuccessful bid for Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 1918, he seems to have largely limited his political activities to committee work, including backing James Michael Curley in his first three bids for Mayor.<sup>1443</sup> In this way, he demonstrated the sidelining of his generation of Boston Irish politicians, leaving the political realm in exchange for the business and social realms.

The political model followed roughly by O'Neil was a general trajectory that was neither unique to him nor to his generation of Boston Irish politicians. John Austin Keliher and William T.A. Fitzgerald had careers that, in certain respects, matched up with that of O'Neil. Both of these men came from the South End, and both of them tried to escape their economic conditions through white-collar work, with Keliher entering the real-estate business and Fitzgerald becoming a lawyer. They started careers in elective office a year apart in the 1890s, and both served in the State House and in the State

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information for Joseph H. O'Neil, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society. For his Belgian Relief Fund work, see *Globe*, 3/4/1915. For his work for Irish relief, see *Globe*, 2/4/1921. For his work with the Massachusetts National Guard, see *Globe*, 9/4/1917.

<sup>1441</sup> *Globe*, 10/21/1903.

<sup>1442</sup> Geoffrey Blodgett, *The Gentle Reformers: Massachusetts Democrats In The Cleveland Period* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 261, identifies him as being one of the wealthiest among the Boston Irish by the 1920s.

<sup>1443</sup> For his refusal to run, see *Globe*, 10/13/1905; *Post*, 10/6/1925, 1, 25.

Senate, with Fitzgerald replacing Keliher in the Senate.<sup>1444</sup> In the 1900s, though, a split occurred in their career trajectories. Keliher formed a political alliance with Martin Lomasney, and, after a nomination battle so contentious and irresolvable that no one became the official Democratic nominee, was elected to the first of four terms in Congress in 1902.<sup>1445</sup> Fitzgerald, on the other hand, became a ward leader in the South End, and rose to become Chairman of the Democratic City Committee (still powerful symbolically, if not actually) in 1901 and Suffolk County Register of Deeds in 1906, defeating a long-serving Republican incumbent.<sup>1446</sup> In both of these men's cases, the realignment of Boston politics from the mid-1900s onward along the lines of ethno-religious solidarity disrupted their political career. In Keliher's case, it resulted directly in his political downfall, as he supported the GGA and James Storrow in the 1910 mayoral election, after barely defeated the combined opposition of Lomasney and John F. Fitzgerald in 1908.<sup>1447</sup> This seems to have settled his political fate: starting in 1910, he lost a string of Congressional elections, moved out of the South End, and ultimately politically recovered only when appointed (perhaps tellingly, by a Republican Governor torn between pressure from Republicans and organizational Democrats) Sheriff of

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<sup>1444</sup> *A Souvenir of Massachusetts Legislators, 1900* (Stoughton, MA: A.M. Bridgeman, 1900), 140; *A Souvenir of Massachusetts Legislators, 1901* (Stoughton, MA: A.M. Bridgeman, 1901), 140.

<sup>1445</sup> For Lomasney's perpetual wars with the Congressmen representing the West End, see Ainsley, 163. *Boston Herald*, 12/14/1925, 5, tells this story through the retrospective recollections of Lomasney.

<sup>1446</sup> *Globe*, 12/31/1901; *Globe*, 11/3/1906.

<sup>1447</sup> *Globe*, 9/23/1908; *Globe*, 12/21/1909, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 13, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Suffolk County in 1917.<sup>1448</sup> Fitzgerald, on the other hand, continued as Register of Deeds, but by the 1910s focused his energies on such social organizations as the Charitable Irish Society and the Boston City Club, staying largely apart from day-to-day politics.<sup>1449</sup> In these ways, it is clear that both Keliher and Fitzgerald had, in their career, kept to the model of political respectability that their predecessors in Boston Irish politics had followed. At the same time, however, Keliher's decline and Fitzgerald's sidelining in Boston politics starting in the 1910s demonstrates the ways in which this model fell apart in later years, as the calls for ethnic unity made respectability less relevant in the political sphere.

The declining importance of respectability in Boston Irish politics was reflected in the rise of Daniel Henry Coakley. Coakley came from the same generation as Keliher and Fitzgerald, chronologically and politically, but from a considerably different background: he was fired from a streetcar company for his role in organizing a strike (apparently training strikers in picket-line violence) and moved on to become a sports reporter and editor in New York and Boston.<sup>1450</sup> He began his political career in the 1890s, serving

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<sup>1448</sup> For his backing by James Michael Curley in 1914, see *Globe*, 9/23/1914. For some of the tensions around his appointment as Sheriff, see *Globe*, 4/22/1917, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1449</sup> For Fitzgerald as being out of politics, see *Transcript*, 12/1/1924, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 14, Massachusetts Historical Society. This was noted as a possibility as early as shortly after his election as Register of Deeds (*Globe*, 3/4/1907). For Fitzgerald active in the Charitable Irish Society (an organization where the Boston Irish middle-class and elite tended to play major roles), see *Globe*, 12/1/1924. For Fitzgerald involved with the City Club (in which he was one of the few Irish members playing significant roles in the work), see *Globe*, 11/8/1913.

<sup>1450</sup> "Daniel Henry Coakley, Sr.," biography written by unidentified author (1941?), Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, 2-3.

three terms in the Massachusetts House from East Cambridge.<sup>1451</sup> After an electoral defeat, he relocated into Boston (settling in the Brighton section of the city), and established himself as a lawyer.<sup>1452</sup> On the surface, Coakley established himself as a civil litigant, becoming especially notable for his work in lawsuits against the Boston Elevated.<sup>1453</sup> Other legal practices of his, on the other hand, were less savory: he had engaged in legal work for the notorious swindler Charles Ponzi, and was sued several times over his handling of client funds.<sup>1454</sup> Similarly, he engaged in little political work in the decades after his move to Boston of a public nature. The only elective office he held between the 1890s and 1930s was membership in the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1917 (where even he admitted to not being an important member), and his only appointive offices were positions on the Boston Parks Commission and as a Trustee of the Boston Public Library, neither of which were considered first-tier positions.<sup>1455</sup> Behind the scenes, however, he became a powerful organizational figure, playing

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<sup>1451</sup> *A Souvenir of Massachusetts Legislators, 1894* (Brockton, MA: A.M. Bridgeman, 1894), 149.

<sup>1452</sup> *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor* (Boston: n.p., 1925), 8.

<sup>1453</sup> “Daniel Henry Coakley, Sr.”, biography written by unidentified author (1941?), Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, 5.

<sup>1454</sup> For Coakley in association with Ponzi, see *Globe*, 11/28/1922, and *Globe*, 11/7/1924. For the lawsuits against Coakley, see “Daniel Henry Coakley, Sr.”, biography written by unidentified author (1941?), Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, 18.

<sup>1455</sup> For Coakley as failing to play a role in the Constitutional Convention, see “Coakley Impeachment”, Application-2 (which appears to be a copy of his application for reinstatement to the Bar), Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library. “Daniel Henry Coakley, Sr.”, biography written by unidentified author (1941?), Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, 8-9, describes his appointive positions.

significant roles in the Democratic Party of Boston and Massachusetts.<sup>1456</sup> In this regard, Coakley reflected a complication in the connection between power and office holding, as Coakley's powers came through his legal talents and legal work, independent of any offices that he held politically. This reflected change in terms of who held political power in Boston; while some, like Keliher, held political power only when holding office, and others, like Fitzgerald, lacked political power even when holding office, Coakley maintained power apart from formal positions.

Coakley's downfall as a lawyer came due to his role in a ring involving the District Attorneys of Middlesex and Suffolk Counties that engaged in sexually based extortion.<sup>1457</sup> After an investigation by the Watch and Ward Society that included Coakley's office being burglarized for his records (resulting in criminal proceedings), the District Attorneys of Middlesex and Suffolk Counties were disbarred and removed from office.<sup>1458</sup> Coakley himself managed to avoid a jail sentence for perjury related to this investigation, but was disbarred in 1922, after storming out of hearings when denied a trial on the charges against him.<sup>1459</sup> This disbarment, however, seems to have had limited effect on his behind-the-scenes political position, as he managed to be elected a delegate

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<sup>1456</sup> "Daniel Henry Coakley, Sr.", biography written by unidentified author (1941?), Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, 8.

<sup>1457</sup> For a detailed listing of the various charges in question, see "Coakley Impeachment", Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library.

<sup>1458</sup> For the burglary proceedings, see "Coakley Impeachment", Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, 454-455. For much of the detailed newspaper coverage of this as it related to Joseph A. Pelletier, District Attorney of Suffolk County, see Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1459</sup> For him walking out, see *Globe*, 4/18/1922. The actual disbarment is noted in "Coakley Impeachment", Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, 460.

to the Democratic National Convention of 1924 during his trial.<sup>1460</sup> Coakley's career was not one all of his peers approved of; Lomasney in particular despised him, and there appears to have been general disliking of Coakley and his style by the middle-class Irish of Boston.<sup>1461</sup> However, the fact that he had built such a powerful backroom political reputation in spite of his generally unsavoriness demonstrates the declining importance of respectability from the 1900s onward, as he engaged in political practices that the first two generations of Boston Irish politicians had tried hard to avoid. In this way, he reflected an overall change in the community and what it regarded as being of political importance.

While few were the politicians who had the career that Coakley had, others emerged in the political climate of the 1900s that similarly were not interested in the concept of political respectability. Theodore A. Glynn, in economic terms, actually resembled the respectable Irish of prior generations in terms of upward social mobility, having risen from work as a butcher to being the Boston manager for the Cudahy Packing Company.<sup>1462</sup> He had gotten his start in lower Roxbury during the 1900s as a political opponent of James Michael Curley, and served terms on the Common Council and in the

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<sup>1460</sup> For an example of the campaign material he used in his campaign for delegate, see Henry S. Rowan et al., "Presidential Primary, Tuesday, April 29, 1924: delegates and alternates to the Democratic National Convention in the thirteenth district: copy of a typescript", Manuscript Division, Boston Athenaeum.

<sup>1461</sup> Benjamin Loring Young, "Martin Lomasney As I Knew Him", Benjamin Loring Young Papers, Box 1, Folder 14, Massachusetts Historical Society, 57-59, notes Lomasney's behind-the-scenes work to thwart efforts by Coakley and Pelletier to indict judges in order to get out of their predicament, and the tone of his comments on Coakley in *Herald*, 11/2/1925, 1, 6, suggests a deep resentment, particularly as he (according to the source) took a harsher tone than he had concerning any of the other candidates.

<sup>1462</sup> *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor* (Boston: n.p., 1925), 10. A detailed account of Glynn's early life by R. L. Humphrey is found in *Post*, 8/27/1922, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B2, Holy Cross College.

State House as an anti-Curley candidate.<sup>1463</sup> This, superficially, would suggest that he started out trying to claim respectability, as Curley from the start of his career was regarded as a scoundrel. However, Glynn shifted into being one of Curley's few constant allies in Boston politics, serving as his campaign manager during his first three bids for mayor and serving as president of the Tammany Club, Curley's personal political organization.<sup>1464</sup> Glynn's own success as a candidate for elective office deteriorated during this time, as he lost bids for both the Governor's Council and the State House in Democratic primaries during the 1910s, in spite of Curley's support.<sup>1465</sup> Glynn ultimately managed to break from the pattern of being limited to behind-the-scenes work in 1922, when Curley, rewarding him for his political work, made him Fire Commissioner.<sup>1466</sup> On the one hand, this appointment automatically made Glynn a figure of note, as the office of Fire Commissioner was one of the most important ones that the Mayor had authority to fill in Boston. On the other hand, however, the nature of how he got the post demonstrated the limitation of his personal status: it was a reward for his service to Curley specifically rather than on any basis of merit, and even then only after the first choice chose to remain in Congress. In all, Glynn served as an example of the coattail

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<sup>1463</sup> *Globe*, 9/28/1905, offers some of his rhetoric against Curley.

<sup>1464</sup> *Globe*, 8/24/1922; *Post*, July 1922, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B2, Holy Cross College.

<sup>1465</sup> *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor* (Boston: n.p., 1925), 11 notes this generally, while *Globe*, 9/27/1916, notes Glynn as failing to be nominated for State House.

<sup>1466</sup> *Post*, July 1922, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B2, Holy Cross College notes the withdrawal of Peter F. Tague (Curley's first preferred candidate for the post) and Glynn now seeming to be the front-runner for the position, while *Globe*, 7/30/1922, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B2, Holy Cross College notes his nomination for the post, and an unidentified newspaper on 8/24/1922, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B2, Holy Cross College, his actual appointment.

politician who attempted to rise by hanging onto another rather than on their own merits. In a sense, he was anachronistic politically, as the Boston political climate after the Charter of 1909 increasingly favored personality politics, rather than the building of coalitions for the distribution of patronage. In another regard, however, he reflected how personality politics had changed political calculations, as Glynn's reward was one for personal loyalty of a sort that would not have been rewarded under the party system. In these ways, then, he demonstrates how rewarding followers for their political support continued, even in a system where political parties had lost their authority.

The brands of politics engaged in by Coakley and Glynn were not the only options available during the period for a younger politician. Thomas Charles O'Brien demonstrated how a politician could try to maintain the fight for political respectability after the political model that encouraged it, that of cross-ethnic partisan politics, had been supplanted by ethnic and personality politics. O'Brien, the youngest major candidate for Mayor of Boston, symbolized transitions among the Boston Irish in several ways. Like most of the others, he came from a working-class background, but one amongst the slaughterhouses of the northern section of Brighton, rather than the downtown neighborhoods that had traditionally been home to the Boston Irish.<sup>1467</sup> Like many of his political predecessors, he improved his status through the professions, in his case working his way through Harvard and Harvard Law while working as a brakeman for the Boston

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<sup>1467</sup> "The People's Candidate for District Attorney Thomas C. O'Brien- Let The Boys Read It" (n.p., 1922), Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society, 3-4.



and Albany Railroad.<sup>1468</sup> Unlike in previous generations, however, O'Brien used this experience to build continuing ties to the labor movement, becoming a legislative representative for various railroad brotherhoods.<sup>1469</sup> Efforts to establish himself in elective politics in Brighton (split between working-class Irish Democrats in the north and middle-class Yankee Republicans in the south) were unsuccessful, as he narrowly lost two bids for the State House and more decisively a bid for the State Senate.<sup>1470</sup> However, he began a career in appointive office related to prisons, becoming a member of the State Parole Board in 1913, Massachusetts Deputy Director of Prisons in 1916, Penal Institutions Commissioner for Boston in 1919, and Institutions Commissioner for Boston (with responsibility for hospitals and children's institutions as well) in 1920.<sup>1471</sup> In this string of posts, he demonstrated an emerging technocratic type in administration, whose service was independent of party politics in ways that often led to distrust from professional politicians, and gained a national reputation as an authority on prisons. However, he was in a distinctly weak political position, as he was reliant on the continued favor of elected officials in order to stay in office.

O'Brien broke from this system in 1922, when he was appointed to replace the disbarred (for his role in the Coakley scandals) Joseph C. Pelletier as District Attorney of

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<sup>1468</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1469</sup> *Globe*, 2/24/1922.

<sup>1470</sup> Notes on O'Brien background [n.d., but seems to date from before he became District Attorney in 1922], Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1471</sup> "The People's Candidate for District Attorney Thomas C. O'Brien- Let The Boys Read It" (n.p., 1922), Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society, 5; *Globe*, 2/23/1922; *Globe*, 12/4/1919; *Globe*, 8/24/1920.

Suffolk County.<sup>1472</sup> Pelletier, who had been National Counsel for the Knights of Columbus and involved in other Catholic organizations, ran for reelection, claiming to be a political and a religious martyr.<sup>1473</sup> In the Democratic primary, this rhetoric was highly effective: Pelletier won renomination by a two to one margin, with O'Brien successful only in the West End (through the backing of Martin Lomasney) and in Brighton.<sup>1474</sup> O'Brien, however, had received the Republican nomination, and in the general election (running as a foe of both political bosses and the Klan) was able to combine the Republican vote with enough dissident Democrats to win.<sup>1475</sup> The very fact that O'Brien managed to defeat Pelletier demonstrates how the image of reform still appealed to the electorate in 1922, and could result in victory in spite of a lack of a firm affiliation with political organizations.<sup>1476</sup> However, the limitations to this approach were similarly apparent: O'Brien, even against a disbarred opponent, had obtained little support from his fellow Boston Irish, and he relied on the kindness of Republicans, in originally getting

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<sup>1472</sup> See George H. McCaffrey to O'Brien, 2/23/1922, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society, for congratulations on him reaching office.

<sup>1473</sup> For examples of him using this approach in his 1922 campaign, see *Post*, 6/22/1922, *Post*, 8/2/1922, and *Traveler*, 11/6/1922, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society. He had been using such charges since late 1921, when he was running for Mayor: a flyer for a rally on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1921 (Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society) claims persecution from the Klan, the Loyal Coalition, and the Watch and Ward Society.

<sup>1474</sup> For the Lomasney support, see *Herald*, 9/11/1922, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 20, Massachusetts Historical Society. For the election results, see *Globe*, 9/14/1922.

<sup>1475</sup> *Traveler*, 11/8/1922, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1476</sup> For O'Brien against the bosses, see *Herald*, 8/24(?)1922, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society, with an attack focused chiefly on Coakley. For O'Brien against the Klan, see *Globe*, 10/21/1922.

the appointment, in receiving their nomination, and in getting their votes in the general election, in achieving this success.<sup>1477</sup> As a result, O'Brien shows the limitations of pure nonpartisanship in Boston politics at this time, as it meant more a fusion of differing political interests rather than actually independence from interests.

### **Representing The Minority: Boston's Republicans**

Boston's Republicans, like the Boston Irish, demonstrated several approaches to a long-term political career, with Alonzo B. Cook demonstrating how continual opposition to party leaders could establish a politician. Cook had worked as a bookkeeper before becoming an accountant and lawyer, and prior to 1914 had been on the fringes: he had filed once for bankruptcy, bounced between living in Boston and its suburbs, and had a minor political career in which his one bid for elective office (a bid for Register of Probate in Norfolk County in 1913) led to a landslide defeat.<sup>1478</sup> In 1914, however, he managed to rise to political importance by taking advantage of the Republican organization's decision to slate a Catholic for State Auditor. At that time, as Catholics gained in political power throughout Massachusetts, sectarianism had become a growing issue that would not be resolved in the political sphere until the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention.<sup>1479</sup> Taking advantage of this, Cook won both the Republican

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<sup>1477</sup> *Traveler*, 11/8/1922, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society, makes this especially clear: it notes that the only Democratic parts of the city O'Brien carried over Pelletier were, as in the primary, the West End and Brighton, and that his success came from gaining large majorities in the Republican sections of the city.

<sup>1478</sup> *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor* (Boston: n.p., 1925), 9; *Globe*, 9/23/1914.

<sup>1479</sup> *Herald*, 12/26/1925, 16, notes this perspective as being held by Martin Lomasney, who felt that his work in getting a constitutional amendment passed barring state aid to private institutions was what was necessary to end this sectarian conflict.

nomination (after a rough campaign that ended with him threatening to sue the state party chair for libel) and the general election, to the surprise of many political observers.<sup>1480</sup> From this point, Cook lived a peculiar political life. His service as State Auditor was regarded as a joke at best and an embarrassment at worst, as he was charged with inept, uncooperative, and frequently absentee administration, as well as with being prejudiced against Catholics, Jews, and veterans.<sup>1481</sup> As a politician, he was similarly unimpressive; he refused to engage in any campaigning on his behalf, and the Massachusetts Republican organization was continuously opposed to his career in public office.<sup>1482</sup> However, Cook had built a following among Prohibitionists and members of Protestant churches, and, through their support, managed to get reelected year after year in spite of these problems.<sup>1483</sup> While Cook had politically emerged several years before the Klan, his support can be seen as prototypical of that Klan politicians would receive during the 1920s. Overall, Cook service to demonstrate a way in which Republican politicians could maintain political success independent of party organizations within Massachusetts. However, the very nature of this success made it unlikely that he would have any political relevance in Boston, as it was reliant on the support of a group who by the 1920s had

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<sup>1480</sup> For the libel suit threat, see *Globe*, 9/23/1914. For his success in the primary as a surprise (and the belief that he'd lose the general election), see *Globe*, 9/24/1914.

<sup>1481</sup> For the opinion of State Treasurer James Jackson on his lack of competence, see *Globe*, 9/6/1922. For Cook being charged with bigotry, see *Globe*, 3/14/1924.

<sup>1482</sup> *Herald*, 10/1/1925, 1, 3; *Christian Science Monitor*, 8/26/1925, 2.

<sup>1483</sup> *Globe*, 7/27/1924.

largely left the city, and with the groups that did make up the majority of the Boston population regarding him as something of a boogieman.

In contrast, Charles L. Burrill was the epitome of a politician who rose with the backing of the Republican organization. Burrill grew up in the West End as it was transforming from a site of upper-class Yankees to one of immigrants, then moved (as did so many others in that area) into Beacon Hill.<sup>1484</sup> Burrill, in private life, mixed a career as a banker (including being a director for O'Neil's Federal Trust Company) with being the longtime secretary of the Boston Young Men's Christian Union.<sup>1485</sup> In local politics, he had a limited career, serving two terms as Beacon Hill's member of the School Committee, and working as a campaign manager for other candidates.<sup>1486</sup> His opportunity for an important political role came with the shakeup of state officeholders during the early 1910s: after losing a bid for State Treasurer to Frederick Mansfield (later an important figure in Boston politics) in 1913, he won a rematch in 1914, serving until being termed out in 1919. After finishing third in a close race for the nomination for Lt. Governor in 1920, Burrill in 1922 was elected to the first of two terms to the Massachusetts Governor's Council (which had authority over appointments and pardons) in a district containing the Back Bay and northern suburbs of the city.<sup>1487</sup> Burrill had managed to build a substantial career in state office without being significance in

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<sup>1484</sup> *Globe*, 9/15/1931.

<sup>1485</sup> For Burrill at the Federal Trust Company, see *Globe*, 1/1/1912. For Burrill as secretary of the Young Men's Christian Union, see *Globe*, 9/29/1925.

<sup>1486</sup> For Burrill on the School Committee, see *Globe*, 9/15/1931. For an example of his campaign work, see *Globe*, 9/21/1909.

<sup>1487</sup> For the announcement of his candidacy, see *Globe*, 7/12/1922.

municipal terms, demonstrating how the political structures around early twentieth-century Boston made such a career a possibility. At the same time, the very fact that his career had been apart from municipal politics meant that he would not be in a good position to adapt to a career in that field, demonstrating that this system did little in terms of aiding the Boston Republicans in local elections.

However, the career among Boston Republicans that epitomized how members of the minority party could become figures of political significance belonged to Malcolm Nichols. Nichols, like many Boston Yankees, came from elsewhere, moving into Boston from Maine to attend Harvard.<sup>1488</sup> His start in Boston politics came in the late 1890s and early 1900s, working as a political reporter for several Boston newspapers.<sup>1489</sup> His entry into political office came through interactions with Charles Innes, at this point establishing himself as the most successful Republican ward leader in Boston.<sup>1490</sup> After starting as a political rival to Innes, Nichols became an ally to him, resulting in his riding the political escalator from the Common Council to the State House to the State Senate.<sup>1491</sup> In this, he was typical, as the political system of Boston rapidly processed politicians through legislative bodies, creating a large pool of former state legislators. In legislative office, Nichols gained a reputation as an authority on tax matters, serving as Secretary of the Massachusetts Tax Association between stints in the State Senate, and

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<sup>1488</sup> *Post*, 11/4/1925, 12.

<sup>1489</sup> *Transcript*, 11/4/1925, 5.

<sup>1490</sup> For a couple of accounts of Innes' rise, a neutral one from an unidentified newspaper at some point in 1922 and a harshly negative one from the *Telegram* from October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1925, see Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 17, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1491</sup> *Herald*, 11/4/1925, 14.

qualified as an attorney under the personal direction of Innes.<sup>1492</sup> A turning point in Nichols' career came upon the election of Andrew J. Peters as Mayor of Boston in 1917. Nichols played important roles to Peters from the start, serving briefly as Peters' personal secretary before becoming his floor leader in the Massachusetts Senate and a member of the Schoolhouse Commission.<sup>1493</sup> In these appointments, the rise of ethno-religious solidarity as something practiced by more than the Irish is demonstrated, as Peters, in his administration, tended to give many of his appointments to administrative office to Yankee Republicans, suggesting how ethnic affinities had begun to trump partisan ones among Yankees as well. More important was a string of positions Nichols took, starting in 1919: over the course of a year, Nichols concurrently became chair of the Boston Transit Commission, chair of the Boston Rent and Housing Commission, and Boston Fuel Administrator.<sup>1494</sup> While none of these positions by themselves ranked as among the most important in Boston city government, Nichols' handling of all of them at once in the face of crises concerning both housing and fuel gave him a reputation as a skilled

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<sup>1492</sup> *Globe*, 7/31/1921; *Transcript*, 2/13/1915, Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Boston Public Library. For information on Innes as a trainer of lawyers, see *Globe*, 11/8/1925. The former students of Innes formed the Charles H. Innes Law Association (*Post*, unknown date in 1921, Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 1, Boston Public Library).

<sup>1493</sup> For Nichols as secretary, see *Post*, 2/4/1918, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society. For Nichols as floor leader, see *Herald*, 7/9/1919(?), Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 1, Boston Public Library. For Nichols as Schoolhouse Commissioner, see *Traveler*, 7/12/1919, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1494</sup> *Globe*, 12/4/1919, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 27, Massachusetts Historical Society; *Christian Science Monitor*, 11/4/1925, 2; *Globe*, 11/17/1920, Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 1, Boston Public Library.

administrator.<sup>1495</sup> This, when combined with both his organizational loyalty (he kept active in politics while engaged in administration) and his reputation as a tax authority, resulted in rewards from the Harding Administration.<sup>1496</sup> In 1921, Nichols became Collector of Internal Revenue for Massachusetts, thereby solidifying his position as a rising figure among Boston Republicans.<sup>1497</sup> While this specific rise was an extreme case, it demonstrated how an organization Republican could rise in early twentieth century Boston, even as Republican electoral fortunes declined, and without Nichols ever running for office outside the Republican bastion of the Back Bay.

### **The Status of Group Politics**

During the 1920s, women were still trying to establish a clear role for themselves in Boston politics. The Boston League of Women Voters had twice entered active electoral politics as a backer of candidates (something that the LWV generally did not do out of principle) in the early 1920s, supporting John R. Murphy and the GGA slate for the City Council in 1921 and civic worker Florence Luscomb for City Council in 1922.<sup>1498</sup> In

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<sup>1495</sup> “The Truth About Malcolm Nichols”, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society, 5, contains quotes praising him on his leaving office as Transit Commissioner and Rent and Housing Commissioner. While this is a campaign document, the fact that, as far as can be told, none of the claims made in it were contested implies some level of validity.

<sup>1496</sup> The Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 1, Boston Public Library, includes an August 5th, 1919 invitation to speak before the Garibaldi Republican Club of Massachusetts.

<sup>1497</sup> *Globe*, 9/7/1921, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society, suggests him as a possible candidate for Mayor of Boston, for instance.

<sup>1498</sup> “Yearbook of the National League of Women Voters and Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention and Pan-American Conference of Women Held at Baltimore, Maryland, April 20-29, 1922”, in Dorothy Kirchway Brown Papers, Folder 90, Schlesinger Library, 21-22, includes a discussion on the non-endorsement of candidates. Mrs. William Lowell Putnam Papers, Folder 574, Schlesinger Library, includes a flyer sent by the Boston League of Women Voters campaigning for Murphy, praising his record, and arguing that the 78,000 women voters of Boston could hold the balance of power politically. *Globe*, 12/3/1922, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 19, Massachusetts



both cases, the LWV-backed candidates lost by narrow margins, which seems to have encouraged the LWV to avoid electoral participation in local politics in later year.<sup>1499</sup> These failures also represented a demographic gap between the LWV, led in Boston by Yankees, and the heavily-Irish women of Boston more broadly. Similarly, the push for the federal Child Labor Amendment in Massachusetts, which was a major goal of Massachusetts women's organizations during the 1920s, fell apart in 1924, as opposition from both industrialists and the Catholic Church resulted in a landslide defeat at the polls.<sup>1500</sup> The limitation of the political space that was available for women in the 1920s was demonstrated by the career of Frances G. Curtis. Curtis was a Yankee, of distinct upper-class background and with an elite address in Beacon Hill.<sup>1501</sup> Curtis had not been active in most of the obvious causes for women: she was neither active in the Women's Trade Union League nor the suffrage movement, and she was so detached from partisan politics that it would be a surprise when she announced her political identity was as a Democrat in 1925.<sup>1502</sup> Ms. Curtis had begun her life in public service as a member of the

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Historical Society. The Florence Luscomb Papers are located at the Schlesinger Library, but with little of greater substance related to this campaign.

<sup>1499</sup> Notably, the vote to endorse Luscomb was accompanied by a 2 to 1 vote against backing any other candidates, which may have further encouraged the LWV not to be actively involved in politics afterwards. Certain, by 1925, the idea that they as an organization would stay out of local politics seems to have solidified (*Christian Science Monitor*, 10/7/1925, 2).

<sup>1500</sup> J. Joseph Huthmacher, *Massachusetts People and Politics, 1919-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959), 107, notes this conflict, specifically in terms of James Michael Curley taking an about face on the measure.

<sup>1501</sup> *Advertiser*, 9/17/1925, 2, 4, note her being headquartered on Mt. Vernon Street, and her having to deny running a Beacon Hill campaign.

<sup>1502</sup> *Herald*, 9/17/1925, 1, 8; Note, for instance, the mailer sent by Joseph A. Maynard, President of the Democratic City Committee, on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1913, which notes her association with organizations regarded

State Board of Charities, before being first elected to the School Committee in 1913.<sup>1503</sup>

Curtis spent the next twelve years on that body as the sole female member, obtaining reelection not through her own efforts (she was neither a personal campaigner nor a spender), but through the work of the Public School Association, which slated candidates for School Committee to keep the body out of partisan hands.<sup>1504</sup> In these ways, Curtis demonstrates the limitations political women had in this period, as she was active in spheres regarded as feminine, but irrelevant in other spheres.

Organized labor held a similarly unclear position in the Boston political scene of the 1920s. Unlike women, organized labor had been established as an electoral force in Boston, with a string of labor officials serving on the City Council after the enactment of the Charter of 1909. This electoral success, however, did not result in clear tangible successes.<sup>1505</sup> The Boston Police Strike of 1919 had left lingering resentments, with the Boston Social Union of police officers who struck in 1919 becoming a major political pressure group for decades afterwards, including slating members as candidates for the

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as antithetical to Democratic interests (Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 12, Massachusetts Historical Society).

<sup>1503</sup> *Journal*, 1/15/1913, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 31, Massachusetts Historical Society; *Advertiser*, 1/15/1913, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 10, Massachusetts Historical Society. The School Committee had been a body for which women had both the franchise and the eligibility to serve as members since the 1880.

<sup>1504</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 9/16/1925, 3. For her slating for the School Committee, and the disputes over it at first, see *Globe*, 11/8/1912. By 1925, the Public School Association was in declining shape (*Globe*, 4/2/1925), but it still managed to run a full slate of candidates for School Committee in 1925, and elected three of them.

<sup>1505</sup> For a contemporary consideration of recent labor history in Boston, see Ethel M. Johnson, "Labor Progress in Boston, 1880-1930", in Elisabeth Herlihy, *Fifty Years of Boston; A Memorial Volume Issued in Commemoration of the Tercentenary of 1930* (Boston: n.p., 1932), 198-224, as well as the draft copy housed in the Elisabeth Herlihy Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

City Council.<sup>1506</sup> Similarly, efforts to organize in the 1920s were complicated, with major difficulties surrounding efforts to organize telephone operators during the period.<sup>1507</sup> Overall, this led to a growing sense of stagnation, with the growth of prior generations having ended. Reflecting these issues was the career of James T. Moriarty, who had entered the labor force as a teenager, eventually becoming an apprentice sheet metal worker.<sup>1508</sup> In the 1900s, he became a major figure in Boston labor organization, serving as the business agent of the Sheet Metal Workers Union and as President of both the Allied Building-Trades Council and the Boston Central Labor Union.<sup>1509</sup> In 1917, Moriarty took an active turn into electoral politics, running successfully for both the Constitutional Convention and the City Council. On the City Council, he established himself as having a clear economic program (including strong support for municipal ownership) that set him apart from other Boston politicians of the period.<sup>1510</sup> Moriarty also gained a reputation as a leading defender of the Boston Police Strike, arguing that

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<sup>1506</sup> The *Telegram*, on an unknown date in 1921, noted that they were running George Ferriera for Council (Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 12, Massachusetts Historical Society), and Michael Lynch, president of that organization, ran for Council in 1922 and only dropped out of the 1923 race at the last moment (page proof for 1923 pamphlet, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 19, Massachusetts Historical Society). Robert T. Brady, in the *Post* of 12/17/1922 (Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 20, Massachusetts Historical Society), credits the Boston Social Union with playing a major role in the election of Thomas C. O'Brien as District Attorney.

<sup>1507</sup> For recollections of these difficulties, and of work in organizing women's labor more generally, see the Rose Norwood Papers, Folder 2, Schlesinger Library.

<sup>1508</sup> *Globe*, 10/10/1925.

<sup>1509</sup> GGA pamphlet concerning 1917 election, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 27, Massachusetts Historical Society, 20.

<sup>1510</sup> *Globe*, 10/10/1925, noted him as unique in that regard. For some idea of the stances this involved, see the John T. Hynes flyer for his candidacy (probably in 1917) in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 22, Massachusetts Historical Society.

the cause was not over after the strike, and being the only member of the City Council to oppose police appropriations after the strike.<sup>1511</sup> Sometimes, his labor activities crossed over to the City Council, as he fought with a fellow Councilor over connections to telephone workers organizing outside the Boston Central Labor Union.<sup>1512</sup> This activity resulted in his having a dicey relationship with the GGA: Moriarty gained a reputation as the leader of anti-GGA forces on the City Council, while the GGA blasted him in their reviews of his record.<sup>1513</sup> Entering 1925, Moriarty had risen to become President of the City Council, making him next in line to succeed James Michael Curley should he leave office as mayor.<sup>1514</sup> However, the political system that aided his rise was undercut by a charter amendment that had reintroduced ward elections to Boston.<sup>1515</sup> In these ways, Moriarty had risen politically by labor support, but had not been able to use this support to set policy (due to the limited powers of the City Council), and it was unclear if labor political successes would outlast his term in office. In these ways, organized labor in

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<sup>1511</sup> GGA pamphlet on 1923 election, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 22, Massachusetts Historical Society, 10, notes him as a defender of the police strike. For his thinking that the issues involved weren't over, see *Globe*, 2/19/1920. For his objections to appropriations, see *Globe*, 4/1/1921, with Moriarty arguing that his objection involved the increased militarization of the police force.

<sup>1512</sup> *Globe*, 3/20/1923.

<sup>1513</sup> For this status as a GGA foe as demonstrated in his election as President of the Boston City Council, see *Herald*, 12/3/1920, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 27, Massachusetts Historical Society. *Record*, 12/14/1920, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 22, Massachusetts Historical Society, notes his reelection as impressive due to this opposition, while GGA pamphlet on 1923 election, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 22, Massachusetts Historical Society, 10, gives some idea of the staunchness of the opposition of the GGA.

<sup>1514</sup> *Globe*, 12/3/1925.

<sup>1515</sup> For the revision of the Charter, see *American*, 6/5/1924, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B9, Holy Cross College.

1925 Boston was fighting a rearguard action of holding on to what status they had in politics, rather than clearly gaining in political power.

Entering the 1925 election, there were questions present about the ability to mobilize veterans as a political force. Veteran candidates had success in the years following the First World War, and, in a system of personality politics, veterans were seen as a potentially powerful force if they were to be mobilized as a bloc.<sup>1516</sup> Particularly of relevance was the fact that National Guard units in Massachusetts had traditionally elected their officers, making the leadership of regiments inherently political, and making soldiers political actors by the very status of their service.<sup>1517</sup> This was demonstrated by the careers of three veteran militia officers considered potential candidates in 1925. Edward L. Logan had had the most distinguished military career, rising to Major General in the Massachusetts National Guard and commanding a regiment in France during the First World War.<sup>1518</sup> He had also had a successful career in electoral politics in South Boston before becoming the District Court judge for the area.<sup>1519</sup> Charles H. Cole had been Logan's second-in-command in France, and had risen

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<sup>1516</sup> For instance, the example of David J. Brickley, originally elected to the City Council in 1919 with GGA supporter, and reelected in 1922 with their strong opposition.

<sup>1517</sup> *Traveler*, 12/19/1918, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 19, Massachusetts Historical Society, contains commentary by a military officer from outside Boston, noting how politicized one of the regiments for Boston (that of Edward L. Logan, interestingly enough) was.

<sup>1518</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1519</sup> Transcript of "Who's Who In New England" entry for Edward L. Logan, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 19, Massachusetts Historical Society. The District Court was a municipal court, which had separate branches for the various neighborhoods of Boston (the Boston Municipal Court, then and now, only covered the core of the city).

to Brigadier General.<sup>1520</sup> A Yankee Democrat resident in the Back Bay, Cole had served as Chairman of the Police Commission and as Fire Commissioner for Fitzgerald, and had gained political notoriety as a leading supporter of Al Smith as a presidential candidate.<sup>1521</sup> John H. Dunn, also a Brigadier General, had gained notoriety chiefly for work for veterans, serving as state and national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.<sup>1522</sup> He had been one of the last elected Street Commissioners before the Charter of 1909, and after a decade of service became Boston's Commissioner of Soldiers' Relief in 1922.<sup>1523</sup> Internal militia politics were of great relevance in their interactions: while Logan and Cole were apparently friendly, Dunn, a political rival of Logan's in South Boston during the 1900s, had lost a race for a regimental command to him in 1912, and maintained a grudge as a result.<sup>1524</sup> The careers of Logan, Cole, and Dunn demonstrate how politics in Boston expanded beyond the electoral under other aspects of everyday life, and how these activities mutually influenced one another. They also demonstrate that

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<sup>1520</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 9/1/1925, 3.

<sup>1521</sup> For Cole as Smith backer, see *Post*, 10/25/1925, 1, 13. For Cole's rapid rise in the military and politics, see the Cole materials in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society. Cole's service as Chairman of the Police Commission was before control of the Boston Police Department was consolidated under one Commissioner.

<sup>1522</sup> *Globe*, 6/26/1922 (for election as state commander), *Globe*, 9/7/1925 (on him retiring as national commander).

<sup>1523</sup> "Record of John H. Dunn Candidate for Mayor" (1925), Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 11, Massachusetts Historical Society. *Transcript*, 6/1/1922, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume A35, Holy Cross College, notes him as having turned down the post of Soldiers' Relief Commissioner in hopes of becoming Fire Commissioner, but he seems to have ended up in the post by late July at the latest, although originally in an acting role (*Globe*, 7/24/1922, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B2, Holy Cross College).

<sup>1524</sup> *Post*, 8/15/1925, 1, 6; *Globe*, 5/18/1912. It should be noted that Dunn, as Lt. Colonel, had outranked Logan, who was a major. *American*, 9/6/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 11, Massachusetts Historical Society, suggests that this grew worse during WWI, when Logan and Cole had Dunn sent home from France.

coalitions, feuds, and reputations were present in various types of politics, further serving to complicate the overall political climate.

In order to qualify for the ballot in 1925 Boston, all that was needed was to obtain 3000 valid signatures from resident voters in Boston. This ultimately did provide a limit for the number of candidates who could make the ballot, as signatures were only accepted for one candidate per person. However, because the signature drive only started in October, this meant that there was a very long season where anyone could claim status as a candidate. During late 1924 and 1925, a large number of people received some thought as being possible candidates for Mayor.<sup>1525</sup> Some of these candidates were clearly frivolous and not likely to actually make the ballot, such as City Hall elevator operator Thomas F. Coffey.<sup>1526</sup> Others, such as former Mayor John F. Fitzgerald, were speculated on as possibilities, but without much of an idea as to their actually running.<sup>1527</sup> Sometimes, both these conditions were present, as it was considered a strong possibility that James Michael Curley would try undermining the rules against running for reelection by running his wife or his brother John for the office of Mayor.<sup>1528</sup> There were others, however, were actually running, and who could not be considered frivolous. Among

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<sup>1525</sup> In late 1924, for example, the Good Government Association listed 41 people they thought might be candidates for Mayor (*Traveler*, 12/20/1924, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B11, Holy Cross College), and that number grew to 59 by August of 1925 (*Post*, 8/21/1925, 20).

<sup>1526</sup> *Herald*, 9/15/1925, 15.

<sup>1527</sup> *Telegram*, 7/1/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 13, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1528</sup> For Mrs. Curley, see *Globe*, 12/20/1924, James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B11, Holy Cross College. For John J. Curley, see *Post*, 8/21/1925, 20. Curley's wife had played no role in politics, but John J. Curley was the incumbent City Treasurer.

these were dentist and former School Committee candidate Walter G. McGauley, City Councilor and former Curley campaign treasurer James T. Purcell, and Clerk of the Superior Court for Civil Business Francis A. Campbell. As a collective whole, none of these candidates were in the position that the previously mentioned candidates were to have any particular relevance with this election. In fact, in many cases the question was more when these candidates would leave the race, rather than if they would. However, the very fact that so many were considering running is of great importance to understand the nature of Boston politics in 1925. With neither political parties nor any other force to serve as a gatekeeper controlling who could run for Mayor, anyone could be a candidate and stay in the race as long as it remained tenable. This resulted in the further complication of an already chaotic political sphere, as it was unclear who would run, who would last, and if anyone had the influence to shape the race. It also serves to demonstrate Boston as being disorganized in its politics in 1925, as this state of play was only tenable in a system in which there was no organizational control over those seeking public office.

Ultimately, the stage for 1925 was set by both the back history of the city of Boston and by the pasts of these candidates. A combination of the removal of parties from local politics and of the presence of an ethnic binary had created a system that encouraged the use of ethno-religious solidarity in political campaigning. However, the Boston Irish were too diverse by the mid-1920s, particularly in terms of class, spatial location, religiosity, and political loyalties, for this to be fully effective, as demonstrated by the pasts of these candidates. However, the inability of any other force to fill the gap



created by the removal of political parties from municipal politics guaranteed that candidates would continue to try to use that rhetoric in an attempt to unite a fractured community. Suburbanization and changing demographics, similarly, had reduced the political strength of the Boston Republicans over this time, but, as the cases of Cook, Burrill, and Nichols demonstrate, the structure of Boston politics had guaranteed that party a continuing role of importance even as the party became a permanent minority locally. The lack of a clear party organization also guaranteed two other elements to city politics: they would focus heavily on personalities, with ideology often a secondary concern, and there were no mechanisms in play to substantially limit who could run for office. In 1925, this structure would come to a political climax.

## **Chapter 6: The Rising Tide of Hysteria: The Breakdown of Ethno-Religious Solidarity in 1925 Boston**

In 1925, the various divisions present within the Boston Irish community came to the fore. While a large number of candidates ran for mayor, they ultimately fit into one of two molds. One group ran essentially middle-class campaigns, often focusing on issues concerning outlying areas and on having a moral tone in governance. In contrast to this were candidates who aimed at the working-class Irish of Boston, using a mixture of pledges for improvements and resentment of the Irish middle-class as a way to obtain votes. Much of the campaign involved efforts to try to unite Boston's Democrats, under the concern that Republican Malcolm Nichols (who ran a campaign generally aimed at middle-class homeowners across ethnic lines) would be elected otherwise. This unity did not come to be, resulting in the election of Nichols, who fused support from the Brahmin of Back Bay, Jews, African-Americans, and the residents of the streetcar suburbs on the fringes of Boston. Ultimately, the election results also demonstrate that the failure to obtain political unity among the Boston Irish was a result of divisions within the community: the desires of the working-class voters who supported Daniel Coakley and a vague sense of redemption against their foes and the middle-class voters who wanted Joseph O'Neil and suburban improvements could not be reconciled, as they reflected substantive differences in outlook concerning the nature of Boston governance.

### **The Campaign Begins**

Entering 1925, the Boston political situation was in flux. James Michael Curley was ineligible to run for Mayor due to a rule that barred mayors from running for

reelection.<sup>1529</sup> This threatened the binary that had been in place in Boston since 1910, in which a candidate appealing to ethno-religious solidarity amongst the Irish ran against one with backing from the Good Government Association and the Yankees of the city. With Curley not running, it was not clear who could fill his role in mobilizing the Boston Irish. Just as important was a switch in the way the City Council was elected: in an election decided on ethnic lines, Boston voters in 1924 approved a return to a ward-based City Council.<sup>1530</sup> This change aided some groups, particularly Boston's Republicans and ethnic and religious minorities.<sup>1531</sup> However, it also meant a breakdown in terms of the ways in which City Councilors would be elected, as it meant that the forces which had been important in electing Councilors citywide, such as the GGA, organized labor, and improvement groups, were to be replaced by groups important on the ward level. This meant an end for most members of the current City Council, who tended to have weak ties with their wards- ultimately, only one of the nine members was reelected.<sup>1532</sup> In these ways, it was clear that 1925 would represent a break from recent political practices.

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<sup>1529</sup> *Boston Year Book 1923-1924* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1924), 17n. This rule had been enacted specifically against Curley in the late 1910s, and replaced an earlier provision allowing for recall.

<sup>1530</sup> *Globe*, 10/27/1925, clipping in Martin Lomasney Scrapbooks, Volume 31, Massachusetts Historical Society, reflects political divisions, while *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1924* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1925), 238, contains the actual results, which correspond roughly with partisan and ethnic divides within Boston.

<sup>1531</sup> Entering 1925, only one City Councilor (Daniel W. Lane) was a Republican, a partisan balance that had been in place since the late 1910s. No Jews or Italians had been elected to the City Council under the Charter of 1909.

<sup>1532</sup> The reelected City Councilor was George Gilbody, who won in Ward 16. Of the others, John W. Dooghue chose not to run for public office, Daniel W. Lane chose to retire after toying with a run for Mayor, David J. Brickley chose to retire after toying with running for reelection in Ward 3, James T. Purcell and James T. Moriarty chose to run for Mayor, and James A. Watson, William C.S. Healey, and William J. Walsh lost bids in Wards 9, 1, and 22.

These conditions of flux became apparent even before 1925 had started. When the GGA prepared its first preliminary list of potential candidates for Mayor, they noted forty-one possible candidates, including a majority of the membership of the Boston City Council and Boston School Committee, five holders of countywide elective office, and former Mayors John F. Fitzgerald and Andrew J. Peters.<sup>1533</sup> In these circumstances, it plausible that some effort would be made to clear the field: prior to 1925, no more than four candidates had ever made the final ballot, and only in 1917 were more than two seen as having a chance at winning.<sup>1534</sup> One of the people who was seen as having the political clout to clear this situation was James Michael Curley. Curley had run unsuccessfully for Governor in 1924, and had then tried to get the law prohibiting his candidacy revoked as class legislation.<sup>1535</sup> On the one hand, Curley was seen as being able to make any candidate he backed a front-runner, due to his success as a politician and due to his strong influence over the votes of city employees. However, there were two complications present limiting his ability to select a candidate. Chief among these was that there was no real Curley political organization: throughout his career, he was dependent upon how well he appealed to the electorate through personality politics. The limitations to this as a means of support was demonstrated in 1924, when he was seen as

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<sup>1533</sup> *Traveler*, 12/20/1924, in James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B11, Holy Cross College.

<sup>1534</sup> This comment is based on a reading of the Annual Reports of the Board of Election Commissioners for 1909, 1913, 1917, and 1921, each of which lists the candidates on the ballot.

<sup>1535</sup> *Telegram*, 6/24/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society.

having lost due to a worse-than-expected showing in Boston.<sup>1536</sup> Even if he had a clear organization, he did not have a clear successor: at least eight candidates were identified in the press as being plausible recipients of his backing.<sup>1537</sup> None of these candidates had a political record that could either unite the Tammany Club, which was as close as Curley had to a grassroots political organization, around them, or force the others out of the field. Familial ties further complicated matters, as one of the leading candidates for Curley's support was his brother John, the City Treasurer. Overall, Curley was in a position where he seemed to have a great deal of influence in selecting the next mayor, but where this strength was more nominal than real.

Similar limitations were present in three other groups in Boston politics that for varying reasons had been opposed to Curley since the 1910s. The Democratic City Committee had been struggling since the mid-1900s, as Boston had been run by a string of mayors who at best had no connections to it, and at worse resembled Curley in making a point out of ignoring ward leaders in distributing patronage.<sup>1538</sup> When combined with a decidedly mixed record at electing officials within Boston, they were seen as irrelevant to both local government and the local political scene.<sup>1539</sup> In 1925, the Democratic City Committee was largely influenced by two figures, longtime West End political leader

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<sup>1536</sup> *Dorchester Beacon*, 11/8/1924, 1, 8.

<sup>1537</sup> *Herald*, 9/12/1925, 1, 2, provides one of the most detailed considerations of this, and many other references appear in the Boston press during late 1924 and the first nine months of 1925.

<sup>1538</sup> For a contemporary understanding of the Democratic City Committee's impotent political position, see *Transcript*, 10/3/1925, 5. For Curley's personal opposition to the City Committee, see *Post*, 9/14/1925, 1, 11.

<sup>1539</sup> In the last City Council election prior to 1925, however, a reversal of fortunes was apparent: the Democratic City Committee elected two of its three candidates in 1923, in spite of spending less than 5% of what the Good Government Association spent (*Globe*, 1/19/1924).

Martin Lomasney and former Mayor John F. Fitzgerald, who had long been opposed to Curley politically.<sup>1540</sup> On the one hand, they had a clear opportunity to take advantage of the non-presence of Curley as a candidate to select their own candidate and make the Democratic City Committee a force again in Boston politics. In order for this to work, however, there was a need to find a candidate who could unite the opposition to Curley. Fitzgerald was toying too much with running himself to back another candidate, while Lomasney had limited political strength outside the West End. Moreover, the two had been opposed to each other more often than not, further complicating cooperation.<sup>1541</sup> This meant that any effort by the Democratic City Committee to play a unifying role would have to bypass both internal divisions and a recent history of irrelevance, a set of circumstances that would be problematic for any organization.

The Boston Republican Party was in a position where different complications were present. After the enactment of the Charter of 1909, the Republicans had not run a candidate of their own for Mayor, instead backing candidates endorsed by the GGA.<sup>1542</sup> There were signs that this approach was breaking down: it had taken a great deal of struggle in 1921 to keep important Republicans out of the race for Mayor, and the defeat of the GGA-backed John R. Murphy in this election seems to have encouraged the

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<sup>1540</sup> For an understanding of the Democratic City Committee as being dominated by Lomasney, see *Globe*, 9/9/1925. There are numerous references to the City Committee planning to back John F. Fitzgerald that only make sense if he similarly had such influence.

<sup>1541</sup> *Herald*, 12/15/1925, 14, notes the Lomasney opposition in a biographical series written with at least some cooperation from Lomasney. Most notably, Lomasney backed the Republican candidate for Mayor in 1905 rather than support Fitzgerald.

<sup>1542</sup> *Herald*, 9/16/1925, Section C, 3.

Republicans to run their own candidate in 1925.<sup>1543</sup> On the one hand, it was clear from early in the race that if enough disunity was present among the Boston Irish a Republican candidate would have a chance to win, following the ethnic breakdown that had elected Yankee Democrat and GGA candidate Andrew Peters in 1917.<sup>1544</sup> However, this approach required a united Republican party in order to be put in effect. Charles H. Innes, through a combination of a strong political organization in the South End and Back Bay and work as a corporate lawyer and lobbyist, had become the de facto leader of the Boston Republican Party by 1925.<sup>1545</sup> As such, he would clearly be important in candidate selection, as it was unlikely that the Republicans could run any candidate that he did not approve of. However, he had made a large number of enemies over his political career, who charged him with being a boss, as having dubious legal ethics, as monopolizing the patronage resources of the Boston Republicans, and for his opposition to Prohibition.<sup>1546</sup> This set of circumstances meant that it would be necessary to find a candidate whom both Innes and his foes could approve of that could win a citywide election, a pool that was very narrow indeed by 1925.

The final group that had a decision to make involving the 1925 election was the Good Government Association. While they were experienced in terms of running

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<sup>1543</sup> *American*, 10/25/1921, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1544</sup> *Globe*, 8/28/1925.

<sup>1545</sup> *Post*, 10/10/1925, 1, 6, went as far as to claim him as the most influential politician in Boston overall.

<sup>1546</sup> For some of these criticisms, see Solon W. Bingham mailer, 1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society; *Telegram*, 10/3/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 17, Massachusetts Historical Society.

candidates, they were faced with several challenges. The GGA had, since the enactment of the Charter of 1909, always backed Democratic candidates for Mayor, often cooperating with figures such as Lomasney.<sup>1547</sup> In 1925, they would have to decide if they were to continue backing Democratic candidates, or, faced with the first strong Republican candidate since the Charter of 1909, back the Republican. The nature of Boston factionalism served to complicate matters, as the GGA seems to have been faced with risk of being seen as a tool of either Innes or the Democratic City Committee.<sup>1548</sup> They had tended to announce their endorsements early in the election, but, faced with a large number of potential candidates in 1925, had pressures in place to wait before backing a candidate, in order to know with precision who would be on the final ballot.<sup>1549</sup> Internal complications were also present: the GGA was essentially run by a small Executive Committee whose membership chiefly consisted of Yankee Republicans from the Back Bay and the suburbs of Boston.<sup>1550</sup> The GGA had long been charged with political exclusivity, resulting in the GGA trying to adapt by admitting its first Jewish and Irish members to the Executive Committee. At the same time, the organization was perpetually strapped for cash, and was therefore in a position where it could not afford to alienate its financial backers. Overall, the GGA was in a risky position in 1925, as, with the wrong move, the organization could destroy itself.

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<sup>1547</sup> *Post*, 9/14/1925, 1, 11, notes the irony of how frequently Lomasney had supported GGA candidates.

<sup>1548</sup> *Globe*, 10/26/1925.

<sup>1549</sup> *Herald*, 8/28/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1550</sup> *Post*, 10/26/1925, 18, gives partisan enrollments, while the various Good Government Association publications of the period indicate where the members of the Executive Committee lived.



### **Enter The Candidates**

The potential for a flood of candidates was one that in practice was delayed in coming. W.T.A. Fitzgerald entered the race in December of 1924, trying through an early start to take advantage of his isolation from the last twenty years of Democratic to become a unity candidate.<sup>1551</sup> By the summer of 1925, this tactic was seen as a failure, as he had not established enough strength as a candidate in order to clear the field.<sup>1552</sup> However, no other major candidate entered the race until late August, when Malcolm Nichols announced his resignation as Collector of Internal Revenue to enter the race for Mayor.<sup>1553</sup> In running, he immediately became a leading Republican candidate, as he was an Innes protégé with a strong record in administration who could possibly both unite the Republicans and have citywide appeal. In entering the race, Nichols focused on his experience, promising to bring a high standard to city administration, and pledging cooperation between city, state, and federal government, claiming that responsible government would aid in obtaining home rule.<sup>1554</sup> In this, Nichols contrasted with the tendency for city politicians to campaign against violations of home rule, and to regard city-state relationships as inherently toxic.<sup>1555</sup> Finally, he established for himself the slogan “Me For Mal- Elect Nichols And Save Dollars”. While this slogan became the

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<sup>1551</sup> *Transcript*, 12/1/1924, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 14, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1552</sup> *Herald*, 8/16/1925, Section C, 3.

<sup>1553</sup> *Advertiser*, 8/28/1925, 2, 6.

<sup>1554</sup> *Globe*, 8/28/1925.

<sup>1555</sup> For a more traditional understanding of this topic in the campaign, see the comments of Theodore Glynn in *Globe*, 9/26/1925.

figure of some jokes due to its ungrammatical nature, it did indicate how Nichols would appeal in his campaign.<sup>1556</sup> By using this slogan, Nichols was focusing on charges that James Michael Curley had engaged in financial mismanagement that would require large tax raises without making a direct attack on Curley.<sup>1557</sup> This appeal chiefly mattered to homeowners, who would be affected by property tax increases, and was especially relevant in the streetcar suburbs of Boston, which were then in political flux due to the growing Irish population in such places as Jamaica Plain and southern Dorchester. If Nichols could appeal to these areas, he would win as long as his opposition remained split. In this way, Nichols tried to consolidate the vote in areas of Boston likely to support a Yankee Republican, while hoping that a similar vote would not consolidate against him.

Nichols' efforts were challenged, however, by the threat of a Republican challenger. While the most threatening of these, Register of Motor Vehicles Frank A. Goodwin, had decided not to run months earlier, others remained who could challenge his position.<sup>1558</sup> Former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Elliot Wadsworth, for instance, had the image of being the preferred candidate of the GGA, challenging his efforts to gain their support.<sup>1559</sup> Alonzo Cook had tried to pick up his nomination papers

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<sup>1556</sup> *Herald*, 9/1/1925, 14, made particular points out of noting Nichols' status as a Harvard alumnus.

<sup>1557</sup> *Post*, 8/28/1925, 1, 10, makes this connection, while *Herald*, 8/6/1925, 4, notes an anticipated increase in the tax rate.

<sup>1558</sup> *Globe*, 5/10/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1559</sup> *South End Sun*, 8/1/1925, 1.

before Nichols had, and had literature sent out on his behalf.<sup>1560</sup> He was not seen as a viable candidate to actually be elected mayor, but his following from Prohibitionists and Protestant churchgoers (and, according to rumor, the Klan) could defeat Nichols by drawing votes from him.<sup>1561</sup> Charles Burrill, meanwhile, entered the race the same day Nichols did. He was charged with running out of spite, and of using his candidacy to try to get an appointment to relieve financial strains.<sup>1562</sup> The presence of Cook and Burrill added a complication to the race, as it meant that Nichols and his backers would need either to get them out of the race, or to find some way to keep their support to a minimum.

For the Boston Irish, meanwhile, August was a month of political rumor. W.T.A. Fitzgerald had failed to establish himself as the unity candidate, even as he started making the argument that his early entry into the race entitled him to party backing. Walter G. McGauley, meanwhile, was similarly unable to gain backing when he entered the race in July. His style of campaign, in which he compared the GGA to the Ku Klux Klan and demanded that the Democratic leadership of Boston retire, was rather clearly that of the independent running without major backing.<sup>1563</sup> He received favorable press coverage from the *Boston Telegram* and had independent wealth to finance his campaign,

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<sup>1560</sup> *Globe*, 8/26/1925; Alonzo B. Cook handout in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1561</sup> *Transcript*, 10/3/1925, 5.

<sup>1562</sup> *American*, 7/2/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 21, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1563</sup> Walter G. McGauley campaign materials in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 21, Massachusetts Historical Society. The comparison to the KKK was in *Telegram*, 10/3/1925.

but he had no shot of getting any organizational backing and was not seen as being able to keep others from entering the race. The largest rumors in August involved the possibility of a return of the political style of respectability. Edward L. Logan and Charles H. Cole were proposed as possible unity candidates who could receive the united support of both the Democratic City Committee and the GGA.<sup>1564</sup> Both of these men had strong reputations as both politicians and soldiers, with Logan's judicial record and Cole's status as a Yankee Democrat for Al Smith seen as additionally aiding them. Both of these men were questioned as candidates: Logan was seen as being unwilling to resign his judicial and military positions to run unless guaranteed support, while Cole was not willing to make a move as long as Logan was a possible candidate.<sup>1565</sup> However, their joint consideration indicates how respectability was still seen as a positive in 1925, and as a way to unite the Boston Irish long after it had faded in day-to-day practice.

The limitations to the rhetoric of both respectability and of unity were found in the figure of James Michael Curley. Logan and Cole's discussion as unity candidates had been made without Curley being considered for discussion, and involved the uniting of two organizations that had long opposed Curley. Moreover, Curley was uncertain in terms of whom he would support. His brother had backing from the Tammany Club rank-and-file and was important in fraternal organizations.<sup>1566</sup> However, Curley seems to have been sensitive to the suggestion that he would use family as fronts for his continued stay

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<sup>1564</sup> *Post*, 8/15/1925, 1, 6.

<sup>1565</sup> *Herald*, 8/27/1925, 4.

<sup>1566</sup> *Advertiser*, 8/30/1925, 8; *Post*, 8/21/1925, 20.

in office, limiting his willingness to back his brother.<sup>1567</sup> Of the various other candidates claiming his support, most difficult to handle was Theodore Glynn, who had the image of having been campaigning for the post since becoming Fire Commissioner, particularly through his participation in many civic functions.<sup>1568</sup> There was a chance that Glynn would run regardless of Curley's decision, making the splintering of Curley's following a very real possibility. This was made further apparent when John H. Dunn entered the race in early September; he was seen as being in part a spite candidate against his old foe Logan, but also as a candidate who had long been associated with Curley, and therefore could divide Curley's followers.<sup>1569</sup> With this situation in place, Curley seems to have tried to delay making a decision as long as he could in order to prevent political fracture.

Others began entering the race as August turned into September. Thomas C. O'Brien had a miserable summer in 1925, which he spent arguing with the Police Commissioner over crime and with strong questions raised concerning his effectiveness as a prosecutor.<sup>1570</sup> However, he was regarded as having a personal following due to his stances against political corruption, and was a frontrunner for GGA support.<sup>1571</sup> John A. Keliher, meanwhile, had announced his candidacy in Washington in May, and then been

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<sup>1567</sup> *Globe*, 12/20/1924, clipping in James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B11, Holy Cross College.

<sup>1568</sup> *Herald*, 11/5/1925, 1, 20.

<sup>1569</sup> *Post*, 9/18/1925, 1, 20, notes that both comments could be applied to Dunn as a candidate.

<sup>1570</sup> *Post*, 8/11/1925, 1, 14; *Herald*, 8/16/1925, Section C, 3.

<sup>1571</sup> *Post*, 9/14/1925, 1, 11.

hazier with his plans.<sup>1572</sup> Keliher, like Logan and Cole, was seen as a possibility to receive backing from both the Democratic City Committee and from the GGA, though his ability to work well with others was questions.<sup>1573</sup> James T. Moriarty ran a different sort of campaign, in which he used the Boston Central Labor Union to try to mobilize organized labor politically.<sup>1574</sup> James T. Purcell also campaigned for working-class support, claiming that he would only leave the race if the GGA were to back him.<sup>1575</sup> Finally, there was the question of John F. Fitzgerald. He was seen as a possible unity candidate whose personal popularity, augmented with Democratic City Committee backing, would be enough to bridge over divides among the Boston Irish.<sup>1576</sup> Overall, it was clear that a hunt was still being made for unity, even as the variety of candidates was reflecting a splintered community.

In late September, the question for party unity began to break down. After spending a month as a candidate seen as entering the race any day now, Logan on September 25<sup>th</sup> announced that he would not be a candidate for mayor, noting that the large number of candidates running made him feel that he would not be a viable

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<sup>1572</sup> *Traveler*, 5/12/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1573</sup> *Post*, 9/14/1925, 1, 11, identified him as the only candidate then in the race who could make that claim.

<sup>1574</sup> *Transcript*, 9/28/1925, 1, 6.

<sup>1575</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 9/21/1925, 1, 4. All citations to the *Christian Science Monitor* are for the local edition for the Boston area, which contained substantial more material on Boston matters generally than other editions.

<sup>1576</sup> *Globe*, 9/22/1925.

candidate.<sup>1577</sup> This factor demonstrated the difficulties of obtaining party unity, as even the candidate seen as able to bring party unity doubted it could come to be in practice. Almost simultaneously, the Democratic City Committee voted their disapproval of W.T.A. Fitzgerald, McGauley, O'Brien, Moriarty, Glynn, and Purcell as candidates for mayor.<sup>1578</sup> This decision further guaranteed that party unity would be difficult, as Curley had already endorsed Glynn and would have to abandon him in order to obtain unity.<sup>1579</sup> This also left Keliher and Dunn as the only candidates not condemned, making it likely that more candidates would enter the race. At first, this seemed to be a move meant to clear the field for John F. Fitzgerald. In the days after the announcement, he made statements that suggested he was a candidate, charging Nichols with being a tool of Innes and claiming that advertising executive Ernest J. Goulston, a major Nichols backer, was spending large amounts of money to split the Democrats and guarantee a Nichols victory.<sup>1580</sup> This charge began a rhetorical turn, in which seemingly every candidate for Mayor was charged with being in the race only to secure the election of another candidate. This rhetoric is of greatest note in terms of understanding how political divisions were understood at the time: even when faced with fragmentation, many among the Boston Irish were unwilling to admit to divisions within the community. By charging conspiracy, an effort was made to image a community unity that was no longer actually

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<sup>1577</sup> *Post*, 8/15/1925, 1, 6 has the earliest prediction of him entering shortly, while *Herald*, 9/20/1925, 1, 2, has speculation about him not running. *Post*, 9/26/1925, 1, 7.

<sup>1578</sup> For the entry of Glynn into the race at a Faneuil Hall rally, see *Transcript*, 9/15/1925, 1, 8. For the Democratic City Committee's decision, see *Globe*, 9/27/1925.

<sup>1579</sup> For this endorsement, see *Post*, 9/18/1925, 1, 20.

<sup>1580</sup> *Globe*, 9/27/1925.

present, by imagining that divides were the creation of outsiders rather than within the community. Through this belief, efforts could continue in order to claim a unified party and community, even as these claims were demonstrated as being dubious.

Fitzgerald's appeals failed to make an impact: O'Brien charged Fitzgerald and Curley with monopolizing the mayor's office, W.T.A. Fitzgerald claimed John F. Fitzgerald was splitting the anti-Nichols vote, and Moriarty felt his labor backing was sufficient for election.<sup>1581</sup> Perhaps most notable was Keliher's response: Keliher, a long-term Fitzgerald foe, noted that Fitzgerald had not won an election since 1910, including losing two statewide races that were winnable for Democrats, and in this move challenged his claims to electoral popularity.<sup>1582</sup> Other candidates continued to enter the race: Francis J. Campbell went as far as proposing a convention of officeholders to nominate a candidate, in a clear challenge to Fitzgerald as a unifier.<sup>1583</sup> On September 29<sup>th</sup>, Fitzgerald announced he would not be a candidate, surprising observers who felt his candidacy was inevitable.<sup>1584</sup> With candidate filing beginning on the 30<sup>th</sup> and only two weeks to gather signatures, the Democratic City Committee was left without a candidate, as Keliher's comments seem to have guaranteed opposition from Fitzgerald. An effort was made to turn to Cole, but this fell apart when Cole requested backing from Curley,

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<sup>1581</sup> *Post*, 9/27/1925, 11; *Post*, 9/28/1925, 5; *Transcript*, 9/28/1925, 1, 6.

<sup>1582</sup> *Post*, 9/29/1925, 3.

<sup>1583</sup> *Herald*, 9/29/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1584</sup> *Post*, 9/30/1925, 1, 2.



John F. Fitzgerald, and Lomasney before he could enter the race.<sup>1585</sup> By this point, party unity seemed impossible: Curley was unwilling to back a candidate other than Glynn, who the Democratic City Committee had already ruled out.<sup>1586</sup> This indicated that a clear scramble would take place in order to find candidates before the filing deadline passed.

### **Filing Time, Or, The Race Begins in Earnest**

In the first five minutes that paperwork was available for candidates for Mayor on September 30<sup>th</sup>, twelve people filed, a number that grew to sixteen by the end of the day.<sup>1587</sup> No candidates of political significance withdrew, and they had a new addition to their ranks. Daniel H. Coakley had arrived in Boston from Florida in late September, at first claiming to be working for party unity.<sup>1588</sup> However, he also noted a goal in defending the reputation of Joseph C. Pelletier, who had died in 1924 in what was suspected to be a suicide. Coakley noted that he would leave the race once a unity candidate was chosen, but that no one who had opposed Pelletier in 1922 would do in this role.<sup>1589</sup> This complicated matters, as, other than O'Brien (who was not going to be a unity candidate in any event), Coakley was vague both as to who he objected to as a candidate and about his stances on other matters. At this point, he seemed to be in the race more to play a role in negotiations over a candidate, rather than run in his own right. However, his presence does serve to indicate how both party unity and party organization

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<sup>1585</sup> *Transcript*, 10/2/1925, 1, 4.

<sup>1586</sup> *Post*, 10/3/1925, 1, 7.

<sup>1587</sup> *Globe*, 9/30/1925.

<sup>1588</sup> *Herald*, 9/16/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1589</sup> *Post*, 10/1/1925, 14.

were non-existent in 1925 Boston, as his negotiation stance would have been impossible if a strong party organization had existed.

Other than gather signatures, little political activity took place in the first days of October. Nichols announced an All-Party Committee that would serve his campaign, led by Elliott Wadsworth.<sup>1590</sup> While this committee was heavily Republican, a clear effort was made to draw votes from political independents and disaffected Democrats, in the hope that his record and the messy political situation would aid in his appeal.<sup>1591</sup>

Otherwise, candidates worked to gain support, even as the press began increasingly to joke about the difficulty of finding anyone who was not a candidate for mayor.<sup>1592</sup> This placidity was shaken on October 5<sup>th</sup>, when John F. Fitzgerald proposed Joseph H. O'Neil as a unity candidate for mayor.<sup>1593</sup> He was seen as working as a unity candidate in several regards: he had developed a strongly respectable reputation as a politician and banker, he was a friend of Keliher and W.T.A. Fitzgerald, and he was seen as possibly gaining Curley's support due to his work as a fundraiser for him.<sup>1594</sup> Lomasney and Cole immediately endorsed him as a candidate, while Campbell and Coakley both suggested they would withdraw for him.<sup>1595</sup> However, he had some limitations as a candidate: he

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<sup>1590</sup> *Transcript*, 10/1/1925, 1, 12.

<sup>1591</sup> "The Truth About Malcolm Nichols" (1925), clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society, 31.

<sup>1592</sup> For an early example of these jokes, see *Herald*, 9/18/1925, 1. These jokes only grew by early October: see *Transcript*, 10/2/1925, 14.

<sup>1593</sup> *Globe*, 10/5/1925.

<sup>1594</sup> *Transcript*, 10/5/1925, 1, 7.

<sup>1595</sup> *Globe*, 10/6/1925.

was over a decade older than any other candidate was at 72, and had not held elective office since 1894 or major appointive office since 1899. This gave him the image of being a candidate out of the past: free from recent factional disputes, but also one who had been away from day-to-day affairs long enough that his fitness to run was at question.<sup>1596</sup> Overall, O'Neil came across as a compromise candidate, and demonstrated both the strengths and the weaknesses of such a candidate.

O'Neil's entry into the race was not enough to bring any sort of unity. W.T.A. Fitzgerald was notably harsh, suggested that he had rejected O'Neil as being too old to run for mayor when chairing the Democratic City Committee in 1905.<sup>1597</sup> No candidates dropped out for him, and, while he picked up the backing of other figures within the party with the image of respectability, Curley associates did not join his campaign.<sup>1598</sup> It was clear that, in order to successfully unify the Boston Irish, O'Neil would need the aid of his backers, as he personally was not able to do so. This disunity was made even more apparent when the Women's Democratic Club of Boston had a candidate meeting on October 9<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1599</sup> Claims of political conspiracy were in the air: McGauley charged O'Brien, Keliher, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald with running to elect Malcolm Nichols, while Moriarty made the same claim about Glynn, O'Brien, and Keliher. In this way, a divide between respectable and non-respectable candidates was present, as the respectability of

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<sup>1596</sup> For this argument as made by Glynn, see *Transcript*, 10/8/1925, 5.

<sup>1597</sup> *Post*, 10/11/1925, 5.

<sup>1598</sup> *Globe*, 10/10/1925, notes backing by such figures as former Governor Eugene Foss and longtime party leader William Gaston

<sup>1599</sup> *Globe*, 10/10/1925; *Post*, 10/10/1925, 3; *Herald*, 10/10/1925, 4.

O'Brien, Keliher, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald was challenged by these charges. Meanwhile, O'Brien's lack of support from the Democratic rank-and-file was clearly apparent: his speech received strong support from people who entered with him, but not from those who were already attending.<sup>1600</sup> This demonstrated that, unless the GGA backed him, O'Brien would be a marginal candidate, with only his personal following backing him. Overall, this meeting demonstrated that there was no ethnic or party unity present, and that the divisions that did exist were not ones that were going to be easy to paper over.

In response to the machinations of the Democratic City Committee, James Michael Curley came up with his own approach for party unity. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, Curley proposed sending ballots by mail to the enrolled Democrats of Boston to vote for a preferred candidate, after which the candidate with the most votes would get official party backing and all others would withdraw.<sup>1601</sup> In doing this, Curley continued his war with the Democratic City Committee, appealing to the electorate of Boston as a means to undermine them.<sup>1602</sup> This also responded to efforts to ignore him in obtaining party unity, by making his interest a high priority. However, the response he received for his proposal demonstrated how little trust his peers had in him. Campbell charged him with insincerity, Moriarty noted he would have trusted it if it came from someone else, Keliher felt the electorate would be for him, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald claimed it was too late to be a

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<sup>1600</sup> *Post*, 10/10/1925, 3.

<sup>1601</sup> *Advertiser*, 10/14/1925, 3, 8.

<sup>1602</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/17/1925, 2, contained a direct interpretation of this action as his being a fight with the City Committee.

workable proposal.<sup>1603</sup> Ultimately, the only candidates willing to participate were O’Neil, Coakley, and Purcell, and even O’Neil was interested only if other candidates agreed. The press was even more cynical, noting the possibility that ballot theft could result in a rigged vote, and that the numbering of the ballots would make it possible for Curley to pressure voters into backing Glynn.<sup>1604</sup> Overall, this demonstrates a general lack of good faith in Curley as a politician, which made his ideas for party unity automatic non-starters.

The lack of any sense of partisan or ethnic unity became increasingly apparent as October wore on. Eleven of the candidates appeared at the City Club on the 15<sup>th</sup>, making a mixture of pro-business and anti-boss pledges, but with two of the candidates most clearly appealing to working-class voters, Coakley and Purcell, not in attendance.<sup>1605</sup> The next day, the Democratic City Committee, as expected, chose to endorse O’Neil for mayor, but with less than a majority of its members voting for him.<sup>1606</sup> In this vote, it became apparent that the Democratic City Committee could not unify itself, as well as the fact that there were Democrats who were uncomfortable with either Curley or Fitzgerald and Lomasney as leader. Martin Lomasney’s endorsement of O’Neil surprised no one, even though it was a far earlier endorsement than Lomasney usually made, and a

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<sup>1603</sup> *Herald*, 10/15/1925, 1, 3.

<sup>1604</sup> *Herald*, 10/15/1925, 26. *American*, 10/16/1925, clipping in James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B13, Holy Cross College.

<sup>1605</sup> *Globe*, 10/16/1925; *Transcript*, 10/16/1925, 12; *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/16/1925, 3.

<sup>1606</sup> *Herald*, 10/17/1925, 1, 3. Of the twenty-six members of the Democratic City Committee, twelve voted for O’Neil, four for Glynn, two for Coakley, one for O’Brien, and seven did not attend the meeting.

similar lack of surprise came when the Tammany Club backed Glynn.<sup>1607</sup> Curley, meanwhile, got into trouble for his campaign tactics: Moriarty charged him with offering an appointment if he would leave the race, while Campbell attempted to get a bill of equity to block the preferential primary.<sup>1608</sup> These conditions overall demonstrate the lack of any desire for cooperation, making unity seem less and less plausible.

As this fighting continued, the candidates began to campaign in earnest. O'Brien used automobile tours of the city to attract voters, often mobilizing hundreds of women.<sup>1609</sup> Nichols started introducing himself to voters by attending house parties in the streetcar suburbs, rather than mass events.<sup>1610</sup> Moriarty received more endorsements from organized labor, while Glynn received the backing of organizations consisting of former residents of various counties in Ireland.<sup>1611</sup> Keliher was unable to publically campaign due to an injury received in September, limiting him to radio broadcasting to appeal to voters.<sup>1612</sup> O'Neil, meanwhile, relied heavily on others for stump speaking, including having Lomasney campaign outside the West End in a municipal campaign for the first time in many years, while questions emerged about his ability to campaign on his own

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<sup>1607</sup> *Post*, 10/17/1925, 1, 6, contains both announcements.

<sup>1608</sup> *Post*, 10/19/1925, 7; *Globe*, 10/18/1925.

<sup>1609</sup> *Globe*, 10/14/1925; *Transcript*, 10/17/1925, 14.

<sup>1610</sup> *Globe*, 10/20/1925.

<sup>1611</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/12/1925, 4; *Post*, 10/19/1925, 7.

<sup>1612</sup> *Advertiser*, 10/19/1925, 10. The descriptions of the precise injury are confused, making it hard to determine what had happened to him, other than that it seems to have started with him hitting a knee against a car door.

behalf.<sup>1613</sup> The issues engaged in varied as much as the approaches to campaign. Coakley made appeals along ethnic and religious lines, and, when criticized for this, responded by claiming that he was merely stating openly issues that were already present.<sup>1614</sup> O'Brien ran on anti-boss lines, making the ties of Charles Innes to Nichols one of his major issues.<sup>1615</sup> Divisions were present concerning the merits of Curley: while Glynn promised to continue his policies in office, Moriarty promised to fire all political officeholders in city employment and Campbell asked O'Brien to have Curley prosecuted in connection with his preferential primary.<sup>1616</sup> These differences in style and substance further demonstrate a fractured audience, pointing to the ways in which the breakdown of ethnoreligious solidarity had roots in greater divisions among the Boston Irish.

### **The Final Failure of Unity**

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, the race for mayor was cut to twelve candidates, as Charles L. Burrill, Francis G. Curtis, and James T. Moriarty all failed to qualify for the ballot.<sup>1617</sup> The failure of Burrill and Curtis to qualify was not seen as much of a surprise: Burrill's campaigning had been largely limited to attending other people's events, while Curtis was running her campaign from her home with women volunteers.<sup>1618</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>1613</sup> *Herald*, 10/20/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1614</sup> *Globe*, 10/20/1925.

<sup>1615</sup> *Post*, 10/20/1925, 1, 10.

<sup>1616</sup> *Telegram*, 9/22/1925, clipping in James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B13, Holy Cross College; *Post*, 10/20/1925, 1, 10; *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/20/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1617</sup> *Herald*, 10/21/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1618</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 9/16/1925, 3; *Transcript*, 10/2/1925, 1, 4.

their failure to qualify was seen as being advantageous to the Nichols campaign, as both Burrill and Curtis had tried to get the vote of anti-Innes Republicans, with Curtis in particular claiming that Nichols' backers held Boston voters in contempt by denying the partisanship of their campaign.<sup>1619</sup> Moriarty's failure to qualify, however, was of greater significance. He had been running with the endorsement of the Boston Central Labor Union and the American Federation of Labor, and had positioned himself as an explicitly working-class candidate.<sup>1620</sup> His failure to qualify meant that there would be no candidate running on an explicitly economic platform in the general election.<sup>1621</sup> Moreover, most of the other Irish candidates in the running, such as O'Neil, Keliher, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald, were running campaigns aimed at middle-class voters, making it less likely that they would receive this support, while O'Brien, the one candidate with union credentials, had demonstrated in 1922 weakness in gaining working-class voter support. Moriarty also did not attempt to give his support to other candidates, staying out of the race after failing to get his name returned to the ballot.<sup>1622</sup> As a result, his absence from the ballot left an opening for any candidate who could appeal to working-class Irish voters.

This gap in terms of a working-class candidate was filled in mid-October, when Daniel Coakley began actively campaigning.<sup>1623</sup> His general reputation resulted in

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<sup>1619</sup> *Globe*, 10/11/1925; *Transcript*, 10/10/1925, 5.

<sup>1620</sup> *Post*, 10/21/1925, 1, 12.

<sup>1621</sup> *Globe*, 10/10/1925.

<sup>1622</sup> *Herald*, 10/27/1925, 1, 8.

<sup>1623</sup> *Telegram*, 10/17/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society.



strongly negative press treatment, with the *Boston Post*, voice of the middle-class Irish of Boston, showing open repulsion with having to acknowledge him as a candidate.<sup>1624</sup> However, he immediately received strong backing from the *Boston Telegraph*, the only daily newspaper in Boston that explicitly aimed itself at the working-class of the city.<sup>1625</sup> The *Telegraph's* editor/owner, Frederick Enwright, had played a role in brokering the deal that helped elect Curley in 1921, only to sharply turn against him in office, denouncing him as corrupt and as betraying Boston's working-class.<sup>1626</sup> Coakley also obtained backing from a large number of former and current elected officials in Boston, largely from such parts of the city as South Boston, Charlestown, and East Boston.<sup>1627</sup> Between his press and political backing, Coakley was rapidly establishing himself as being the candidate supported by working-class leadership that neither could support Curley nor was willing to accept the judgment of the Democratic City Committee. This political backing connected strongly to Coakley's own rhetoric. He campaigned on the grounds of personal redemption for himself and Joseph C. Pelletier, claiming that the

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<sup>1624</sup> *Post*, 10/18/1925, 1, 26, makes this quite apparent in its commentary on his opening his campaigning (regarding it as narrowly racial and religious, and as rather vitriolic), and this treatment continued until after the election.

<sup>1625</sup> The *Telegraph* has been an elusive newspaper to find in its original form- my commentary is based on clippings found in the Good Government Association Records and the Martin Lomasney Scrapbooks at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the James Michael Curley Scrapbooks at Holy Cross College, with the full knowledge that this undoubtedly is only fragments of the political coverage this publication gave in 1925.

<sup>1626</sup> *Traveler*, 12/3/1921, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society. The earliest known anti-Curley materials in the *Telegram* date to 4/11/1923 (clipping in James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B5, Holy Cross College), with the tone growing more and more severe over time.

<sup>1627</sup> *Telegram*, 11/1/1925, clipping in Martin Lomasney Scrapbooks, Volume 32, Massachusetts Historical Society.

charges made against them were due to religion and ethnicity.<sup>1628</sup> While appeals to ethno-religious solidarity were nothing new, Coakley's were aimed specifically at those amongst the Boston Irish who felt left out, to the point where the *Telegram* charged middle-class Irish with being "Castle Irish" and ethnic traitors.<sup>1629</sup> This rhetoric heavily offended many of his fellow candidate and many press observers, but seem to have struck a chord with audiences, as Coakley quickly became the largest speaking draw of any candidate.<sup>1630</sup> In these regards, Coakley quickly became the candidate for disaffected Irish voters, and especially those in the working-class for whom Glynn did not appeal and who found the middle-class Irish candidates as having nothing to offer.

Various candidates for mayor used a joint appearance at the Women's City Club on October 21<sup>st</sup> to state their stances for office.<sup>1631</sup> Nichols denied that he would be a tool of Innes if elected and that he has engaged in partisan administration as Collector of Internal Revenue. W.T.A. Fitzgerald charged the Charter of 1909 with causing the current campaign to be such a mess, while McGauley accused county officeholders (and especially Keliher, who was still ill) with secretly backing Nichols. Dunn spoke on his military record, Glynn on his life story, and O'Neil on the need to have a positive program for Boston. O'Brien spoke on issues of morality, noting his campaigns as District Attorney against drugs and pornography. In these stances, a mix of approaches

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<sup>1628</sup> *Globe*, 10/22/1925.

<sup>1629</sup> *Telegram*, 10/21/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society. Coakley himself is known to have dismissed such foes as "nice Irish" (*Post*, 10/28/1925, 1, 10).

<sup>1630</sup> *Herald*, 10/25/1925, Section C, 7.

<sup>1631</sup> *Globe*, 10/22/1925; *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/22/1925, 5; *Post*, 10/22/1925, 5; *Herald*, 10/22/1925, 1, 4. All claims not cited come from these reports.

was in play. Nichols seems to have been further trying to negate the use of his partisanship as a weapon against him by coming across as a candidate for all Bostonians. McGauley continued to demonstrate his independence by further denouncing the Democratic leadership of Boston, while O'Brien's moral focus seems aimed at gaining support from cultural conservatives in what was then a notoriously censorious city. The others, meanwhile, largely campaigned on their own merits, demonstrating either a lack of willingness to campaign on issues or a lack of clear stances on issues. This helped explain the continued muddle of this race, as these candidates largely were not taking stances that could encourage voters to polarize around a single candidate.

The results of the Curley preferential primary were announced on October 22nd.<sup>1632</sup> On the surface, Glynn seemed to be the front-runner: he received two-thirds of the total vote, compared to 9% for O'Neil, 6% for O'Brien and Keliher, and 5% for Coakley.<sup>1633</sup> This claim, however, was made questionable by a closer examination of the vote. Around 32,000 people submitted ballots, totaling only roughly a third of the 95,000 enrolled in the Boston Democratic Party, and a fifth of the 150,000 regarded as potential Democratic voters in Boston.<sup>1634</sup> Moreover, many who voted demonstrated some defiance: over five hundred of the submitted ballots were either blank or unclear, while another hundred supported Malcolm Nichols.<sup>1635</sup> Some ballots had the identifying

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<sup>1632</sup> *Advertiser*, 10/23/1925, 2.

<sup>1633</sup> *Globe*, 10/23/1925.

<sup>1634</sup> For these numbers, see *Traveler*, 10/16/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1635</sup> *Globe*, 10/23/1925.

numbers cut from them, making them impossible to trace.<sup>1636</sup> Just as notable, however, was what some voters wrote on the ballots.<sup>1637</sup> Some used obscenities, while others made claims that were unprintable due to libel laws.<sup>1638</sup> Still others dismissed candidates as vagrants, noted that the Democratic confusion would result in a Nichols victory, asked for city employment, or used the list of candidates to create a football team.<sup>1639</sup> Overall, these sorts of responses suggest that many took this as an opportunity to indicate contempt for both Curley specifically and the nature of the campaign generally, in addition to the many who did not vote at all. The press and other candidates dismissed these results: it was claimed that around half the total vote were city employees supporting Glynn so that they were not fired.<sup>1640</sup> The counting of the ballots turned into a Glynn rally, confirming the belief in other candidates that this was not an objective task and that they were right in not participating.<sup>1641</sup> Finally, it failed in having any sort of effect: no major candidate announced a change in plans as a result, with O'Brien going as far as calling it a burlesque primary.<sup>1642</sup> Overall, the Curley preferential primary had

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<sup>1636</sup> *Post*, 10/23/1925, 22.

<sup>1637</sup> *Herald*, 10/23/1925, 1, 4, claims that exactly 491 people wrote comments on ballots.

<sup>1638</sup> *Transcript*, 10/22/1925, 1, 10.

<sup>1639</sup> *Traveler*, 10/23/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society; *Herald*, 10/23/1925, 1, 4.

<sup>1640</sup> *Post*, 10/23/1925, 22.

<sup>1641</sup> *Advertiser*, 10/23/1925, 1, demonstrates this fact with photographic evidence.

<sup>1642</sup> *Herald*, 10/23/1925, 1, 4.

failed to serve its intended goals, and only served to show how the antics of the election had irritated many in the electorate.

When the withdrawal deadline came the next day, there was still a hope that consolidation around one candidate could take place. James Michael Curley, for instance, had only secured his election shortly before the deadline in 1921, when he managed to arrange for Pelletier's withdrawal.<sup>1643</sup> With that in mind, James T. Purcell organized a conference at Young's Hotel to try to pick a unity candidate.<sup>1644</sup> However, this conference was a failure: Glynn felt the candidates should withdraw for him, Keliher claimed he was in a position to win, and O'Brien had no interest in making any move for party unity.<sup>1645</sup> Ultimately, the only candidates to withdraw as a result were Purcell himself, John H. Dunn, and Francis A. Campbell.<sup>1646</sup> None of them had had much traction as candidates: Purcell had hoped for Curley support that never came, Dunn's campaign lost its purpose when Logan failed to enter the race, and Campbell's interest had been to negotiate a compromise that failed to gain traction, and this served to make their withdrawal irrelevant to the campaign overall. Efforts by the campaign committees of Dunn and Purcell to influence the race by getting Curtis and Burrill back in it also backfired. Curtis rejected outright the efforts to use Dunn's papers to put her back on the ballot, while Burrill's acceptance of Purcell's papers resulted in strong press criticism, as even the Democratic *Boston Post* regarded this as being motivated purely out of spite,

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<sup>1643</sup> Beatty, 223.

<sup>1644</sup> *Transcript*, 10/23/1925, 1, 7; *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/23/1925, 7.

<sup>1645</sup> *Post*, 10/24/1925, 1, 7.

<sup>1646</sup> *Globe*, 10/24/1925.

going as far as suggesting that Burrill should resign from public office.<sup>1647</sup> Ultimately, these withdrawals failed to have any political impact, as none of these candidates were strong enough to make their leaving the race that significant, and the reentry of Burrill only served to make his spoiler status explicit.

### **The GGA Takes A Stand**

While the various candidates entered and exited the race, the Good Government Association engaged in political machinations. Their endorsement was anticipated since August, and, as time passed without them selecting a candidate, various explanations were made, from them waiting for the right time for an announcement to it being the product of internal divisions.<sup>1648</sup> As part of this process, almost every serious candidate for mayor had engaged in interviews with the Executive Committee.<sup>1649</sup> Internally, the GGA was faced with a complicated situation. The rank-and-file tended to prefer for both Malcolm Nichols and Thomas O'Brien, but both of these candidates had objections made to their candidacy.<sup>1650</sup> Nichols was praised for his experience and damned for his Innes ties and opposition to Prohibition, while O'Brien was praised for his independence and dismissed as an ineffective showboat. The Executive Secretary of the GGA, George H.

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<sup>1647</sup> *Herald*, 10/25/1925, 1, 4; *Post*, 10/26/1925, 18.

<sup>1648</sup> *Globe*, 9/9/1925; *Transcript*, 10/8/1925, 5; *Post*, 10/12/1925, 18.

<sup>1649</sup> The only candidates not to speak to the GGA were Glynn and Cook, who both refused to do so. For Glynn's refusal, see Glynn to George H. McCaffrey, Jr, 10/2/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society, and Glynn to William Minot, 10/5/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society. For Cook's refusal, see Cook to George B. McCaffrey, 10/8/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1650</sup> These questionnaires are still held in the Good Government Association Records at Massachusetts Historical Society.

McCaffrey, backed O'Brien, as did many Protestant ministers, while the Executive Committee was seen as favoring Nichols.<sup>1651</sup> Other candidates also had followings: former Executive Secretary Edmund Billings and longtime GGA favorite James Storrow backed Keliher, while O'Neil also had a lobby pushing for his support.<sup>1652</sup> In these ways, the GGA was left with a political situation where it was unclear whom they would support for mayor, as, even after ruling out such candidates as Coakley who had no chance for their support, there were a surplus of plausible candidates.

Further complicating matters for the GGA were several pressures present upon them as an organization. While they had not backed a Republican since 1905, they had consistently backed Yankee candidates when they had been running against Irish candidates.<sup>1653</sup> The GGA was aware of their image as being an organization of the Protestant elite, and had tried to break from that image, but it was unclear if they were willing to go as far as to not back Nichols.<sup>1654</sup> Another form of pressure affected this: both the GGA rank and file and their financial backers were seen as Republican, and trying to avoid alienating either of them was seen as limiting their possibilities.<sup>1655</sup> An even more substantial issue was the survival of the GGA. Prior to 1925, the GGA had only backed a winning candidate for mayor in 1917, and in the years following 1917,

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<sup>1651</sup> *Globe*, 10/26/1925.

<sup>1652</sup> *Globe*, 8/30/1925; *Post*, 10/10/1925, 6; *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/23/1925, 7.

<sup>1653</sup> In the two times when this sort of ethnic divide was present, the GGA backed James Storrow over John F. Fitzgerald in 1910, and Andrew Peters over James Michael Curley and John Gallivan in 1917.

<sup>1654</sup> Connolly, 184-186.

<sup>1655</sup> *Herald*, 9/6/1925, Section C, 3.

their ability to elect City Councilors had declined to the point where only two supported the GGA program by 1925.<sup>1656</sup> The shift to a ward-based Council further damaged the organization's influence; while the GGA gathered information on all candidates for City Council, it ultimately chose to back none of them.<sup>1657</sup> This set of circumstances increased the pressure on the organization, as the choice they made in terms of who to back for Mayor was seen as something that could have long-term consequences for the organization.

The GGA formally endorsed Malcolm Nichols for Mayor of Boston on October 25th, praising his administrative record and dismissing charges of his being at risk for factional domination.<sup>1658</sup> In contrast, they treated the fight between Glynn and O'Neil as nothing more than a fight for spoils between Curley and anti-Curley Democrats, regarding Glynn as a danger to the city and O'Neil as too old and too long out of public life to be likely to give good service.<sup>1659</sup> Coakley was denounced for his disbarment and McGauley for his lack of experience, while the other candidates were regarded as wasted votes or as good candidates with no chance of election.<sup>1660</sup> This analysis is notably telling

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<sup>1656</sup> *Globe*, 8/28/1925. *Globe*, 10/28/1924, clipping in James Michael Curley Scrapbooks, Volume B12, Holy Cross College. These remaining GGA City Councilors were William C.S. Healey and Daniel W. Lane.

<sup>1657</sup> The Candidate Files of the Good Government Association Records at Massachusetts Historical Society contain many copies of the pamphlets sent out with candidate information, and these demonstrate no endorsement by the GGA in any of these races.

<sup>1658</sup> *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor* (Boston: The Good Government Association, 1925), 1, 4, 5, 12, 13. Substantially the same materials were sent out to the Boston newspapers on the same date, and can be found in them in a different form.

<sup>1659</sup> *Ibid*, 3, 10, 11, 15, 16.

<sup>1660</sup> *Ibid*, 4-14 *passim*. Burrill and Cook were regarded as being wasted votes, while W.T.A. Fitzgerald, Keliher, and O'Brien were seen as having no chance of election.



in several regards. The GGA viewed urban politics solely through the lens of action against corrupt politics, and seemed to lack any concept of a positive urban program.<sup>1661</sup> The commentary also read in certain regards like it had been made after choosing Nichols as a candidate, as most of the candidates were reviewed in direct comparison with Nichols<sup>1662</sup> It even reflected a sense of siege mentality in which all that needed to be said to dismiss Glynn was that Curley was backing him.<sup>1663</sup> Overall, the GGA statement on the candidates suggests that they were as inclined to look at politics in just as binary a manner as their foes in the Boston Irish community, in which the forces of good fought those of evil.

This decision to back Nichols resulted in backlash within the Executive Committee, which for the first time refused to unanimously support a candidate for mayor. Theodore R. Kelley and Thomas J. Giblin, the Irish members of the Executive Committee, refused to back Nichols, and resigned from the organization when they endorsed him.<sup>1664</sup> Kelley commented that he felt that multiple candidates were violating the Charter of 1909 by campaigning on partisan lines, and that, by backing Nichols, the GGA had joined them by allowing partisan considerations to result in the selection of a

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<sup>1661</sup> The statement in favor of Nichols, for instance, mentions nothing in terms of policy.

<sup>1662</sup> *Ibid*, 8-10, 12, 15.

<sup>1663</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>1664</sup> *Post*, 10/26/1925, 1, 10.

machine candidate.<sup>1665</sup> While Kelley supported no candidate directly, his statement matched the rhetoric of O'Brien, both in the plea for non-partisanship and in the specific charges against Nichols. Giblin, on the other hand, charged the other members of the GGA with acting in bad faith, accusing the organization with being insincere in its claims and that they had allowed financial considerations influence candidate selection.<sup>1666</sup> Unlike Kelley, Giblin directly challenged the policy stances of the organization, claiming they were infringing on Bostonian rights by supporting the denial of home rule. Finally, Giblin directly noted acceptable candidates, suggesting all Irish candidates expect Coakley and McGauley as being acceptable to the GGA. In these statements, it is clear that the GGA ultimately could not fully managed issues of ethnicity, and that their decision to back Nichols had resulted in backlash indicating a failure to appeal to the Boston Irish.

The other candidates had mixed reactions to the GGA's endorsement of Nichols. Glynn noted that the GGA had identified him as the leading Democratic candidate, and used this to try to press for unity around his candidacy, while his chief backer Curley charged the GGA with being dominated by banks, trust companies, and utility companies.<sup>1667</sup> Keliher, back to public campaigning, stated that he was disappointed with the decision, while W.T.A. Fitzgerald felt it confirmed his belief that the GGA lacked

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<sup>1665</sup> Theodore A. Kelley to the Members of the Executive Committee of the Good Government Association, 10/25/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1666</sup> Thomas J. Giblin to the Members of the Executive Committee of the Good Government Association, 10/25/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1667</sup> *Post*, 10/27/1925, 1, 13; *Herald*, 10/27/1925, 1, 8.

courage.<sup>1668</sup> Coakley, meanwhile, used the GGA endorsement as a way to taunt both O'Brien specifically and lace-curtain Irish generally.<sup>1669</sup> Most notable was the reaction of O'Brien, who had been mostly campaigning on non-partisan and good government issues and as a foe to Democratic leadership. He charged the GGA with having destroyed itself as an organization by selling itself out to Innes, following a general line of campaign rhetoric in which he charged Innes, Curley, and Coakley with working together to elect Nichols.<sup>1670</sup> Ultimately, the GGA's support of Nichols affected his campaign the most, as it left him without any organizational support, relying on his own personal following to gain votes, and resulted in him going from a frontrunner to a possible spoiler for Nichols.<sup>1671</sup> These reactions also reflect class divides among the Boston Irish: the candidates who were concerned about respectability and who aimed their campaigns at a middle-class audience tended to show regrets, while those aimed at a working-class audience had no such regrets and were willing to show pure contempt for the organization.

Boston's press similarly had a mixed set of responses reflecting the political sympathies of the newspapers in question. The *Advertiser*, which remained neutral in this race, made no comment one way or another, while the *Christian Science Monitor*, which had a bias towards good-government organizations and rhetoric, praised the GGA for

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<sup>1668</sup> *Post*, 10/26/1925, 1, 10; *Globe*, 10/26/1925.

<sup>1669</sup> *Transcript*, 10/27/1925, 1, 5.

<sup>1670</sup> *American*, 10/27/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1671</sup> For an interpretation of this as likely just before the event, see *Herald*, 10/25/1925, Section C, 7.

their work without commenting on Nichols' specific merits.<sup>1672</sup> The *Herald* and the *Transcript*, both Republican newspapers that were backing Nichols, praised the GGA for their choice, with the *Transcript* engaging in acidic editorial one-liners towards the critics of the GGA's decision.<sup>1673</sup> The Democratic press of Boston, however, strongly disapproved of the GGA's decision. The working-class *Telegram* charged the GGA with being anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic and as plotting to permanently establish Yankee rule over Boston.<sup>1674</sup> The middle-class *Post*, on the other hand, questioned the sincerity of the GGA, charging them with claiming to Irish candidates a reluctance to back Nichols before the filing deadline in order to keep them in the race.<sup>1675</sup> They noted that seven of the eight members of the Executive Committee to back Nichols were registered Republicans, and argued that the endorsement was a betrayal of the GGA's past, leaving the GGA with neither principles nor a mission and dooming them as an organization. Once again, differences in political approaches among the Boston Irish by class are apparent in noting the stances of the *Post* relative to the *Telegram*. However, the essentially political lens in which this was viewed is of ultimate significance, as no newspaper chose to view it in a way that did not conform to what they already believed before the GGA made its endorsement.

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<sup>1672</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 11/2/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1673</sup> *Herald*, 10/26/1925, 10; *Transcript*, 10/27/1925, 14.

<sup>1674</sup> *Telegram*, 10/26/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1675</sup> *Post*, 10/26/1925, 18.

## The Last Week

During the last week of the campaign, the remaining candidates used a variety of tactics in order to reach a wider electorate. One of the most important of these was nightly speaking tours in which candidates would make multiple short speeches throughout Boston.<sup>1676</sup> Often, there was an expectation of some active participation from the public: auto tours were frequently used to mobilize supporters, as were such devices as bonfires and fireworks.<sup>1677</sup> Notably, there was limited specialization as for where the candidates went: the candidates went to the same set of public facilities and private halls, resulting in such paradoxes as Coakley waging his working-class Irish campaign in upper-class Yankee West Roxbury.<sup>1678</sup> The radio was also heavily used: Nichols and McGauley were speaking nightly, and seemingly every other candidate spoke over either WNAC or WEEI (the two major radio stations in 1925 Boston) at least once in the last week of the campaign.<sup>1679</sup> From the limited evidence surviving, it appears that the candidates in general engaged in typical stump speeches of between five and fifteen minutes in length, almost solely in broadcasting studios.<sup>1680</sup> In part, this reflects

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<sup>1676</sup> Editions of the *Globe* for the last few days before the election are particularly useful in terms of seeing where candidates were scheduled to speak, as were the political advertisements run by most of the candidates.

<sup>1677</sup> *Herald*, 11/2/1925, 1, 6, notes this as a common practice for all candidates, and there are multiple references to individual candidates using automobile touring.

<sup>1678</sup> *Globe*, 10/29/1925.

<sup>1679</sup> The daily radio listings of the *Transcript*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Post*, and *Herald* have been of great use in demonstrating this, as well as reports involving specific speeches.

<sup>1680</sup> This point, admittedly, is based on deductive logic, noting the time slots given to political speeches and making calculations from there.

uncertainties about the differences that radio would make for campaign work: even the planned election night coverage from WNAC was their typical programming of music and radio bridge interrupted by bulletins of the results.<sup>1681</sup> Most important, however, is that these methods of campaigning reflected how candidates, in a situation where institutions had proved ineffective in organizing the political landscape, were relying on their personal popularity in order to draw votes. As a result, this led to all candidates scrounging for votes wherever they could, in a climate where nothing was guaranteed and with no clear idea as for what would mobilize voters.

Just as notable as the methods used by campaigning candidates were the stances taken as the campaign wound down. Chief among these was the presence of conspiracy rhetoric, charging various candidates with plotting with one another. Coakley accused Keliher, O'Brien, O'Neil, and Nichols with all having the backing of Martin Lomasney; Keliher called Glynn a Curley front and accused Curley, Lomasney, John F. Fitzgerald, and Coakley with plotting with Innes to make Nichols mayor; O'Brien charged Innes with orchestrating a letter-writing campaign to ministers on Nichols' behalf; and even the *Post* charged Coakley and McGauley with being spoiler candidates, as well as claiming that Alonzo Cook was in the race solely due to financing from Democratic candidates.<sup>1682</sup> Tied to these charges were claims concerning problems that would occur if Nichols was elected; some charged him with planning a partisan administration in office, while others

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<sup>1681</sup> *Advertiser*, 11/1/1925, 23.

<sup>1682</sup> *Post*, 10/27/1925, 1, 13; *Post*, 10/29/1925, 1, 12; *Advertiser*, 10/23/1925, 2; *Herald*, 10/31/1925, 1, 10; *Post*, 10/31/1925, 1, 8; *Post*, 10/28/1925, 18.

used his record in the state legislature to charge him with being a political reactionary.<sup>1683</sup> Ultimately, this rhetoric further serves to demonstrate how the Irish candidates, faced with the breakdown of ethno-religious solidarity, were unwilling to publically admit that it had an origin in growing community divisions, instead claiming that it was solely produced by corrupt means. It also demonstrates that the temptation to use anti-boss rhetoric was still strong, even in a Boston political climate where political organizations had long lost a role in local politics. Finally, it demonstrates a strong paranoid streak in Boston politics, with this paranoia being used as an effort to claim a political unity otherwise lacking.

Other approaches to gaining votes become apparent when observing specific candidates. Coakley focused his rhetorical fire on foes among the Boston Irish, with him taking a particular joy in baiting the middle-class Irish of the city.<sup>1684</sup> This gave his campaign a nasty tone that led to some backlash: the *Post* was very reluctant to admit to his candidacy, the *Transcript* felt it newsworthy when other candidates began to resemble him in their use of rhetoric, and Martin Lomasney used his customary speech at the Hendricks Club on the Sunday before the election to denounce Coakley.<sup>1685</sup> This tone even affected crowd behavior: when a heckler in the Allston section of Boston accused Coakley of having essentially killed Pelletier, several members of the crowd attacked

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<sup>1683</sup> *Globe*, 10/30/1925; *American*, 10/28/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1684</sup> *Transcript*, 10/24/1925, 1, 12; *Post*, 10/28/1925, 1, 10.

<sup>1685</sup> *Post*, 10/28/1925, 18 (which seems to denounce him without using his name); *Transcript*, 10/28/1925, Part 2, 2; *Globe*, 11/2/1925.

him, and he might have died had the police not intervened.<sup>1686</sup> This incident also reflected the strength of the following Coakley had: 10,000 attended a speech he gave at Mechanics Hall, allegedly the largest crowd at a Boston political rally since Wilson.<sup>1687</sup> Moreover, the reaction of the crowd suggests that his following, was one that was loyal to him specifically, rather than being the political equivalent of a freak show as suggested at other points in the campaign.<sup>1688</sup> Overall, Coakley seemed to be surging as the campaign ended, with his rhetoric serving to repulse many voters, but drawing many others to his fold.

Malcolm Nichols took a conciliatory approach in his campaign rhetoric, in which he focused less on playing to his base and more at appealing to those concerned with his activities in office. He denied that he would be under the influence of political leaders and that he had ambitions with regards to other races, in response to both the charge of Innes dominance and charges that his election would affect David Walsh's plans to return to the United States Senate in 1926.<sup>1689</sup> He also denied that he would violate civil service laws, stating that he had no plans either to fire any city employees for their political views or to attempt to influence their political beliefs.<sup>1690</sup> In this stance, he was clearly responding to charges made of his activities as Collector of Internal Revenue, but also to

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<sup>1686</sup> *Post*, 10/31/1925, 1, 10; *Herald*, 10/31/1925, 1.

<sup>1687</sup> *Transcript*, 11/3/1925, 1, 7.

<sup>1688</sup> *Globe*, 11/1/1925; *Herald*, 10/25/1925, Section C, 7; *Advertiser*, 11/2/1925, 3, 6.

<sup>1689</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/31/1925, 1, 2. For the charge used against him, see the ad for O'Neil in *Globe*, 10/23/1925.

<sup>1690</sup> *Herald*, 10/30/1925, 1, 10; *American*, 10/30/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society.



the charges that James Michael Curley and his political associates had placed pressure on city employees to back Glynn, thereby differentiating himself from his closest opponent.<sup>1691</sup> He used his All-Party Committee to try to appeal to voters beyond the stalwart Republicans of Boston, and promoted endorsements received by Irish voters and Democratic politicians.<sup>1692</sup> He also continued to appeal to his record, stating that his experience as an administrator qualified him for the office of mayor and that he would arrange for better cooperation between city and state government than had existed for half a century.<sup>1693</sup> Notably, while campaigning for good government, he essentially avoided baiting Curley and John F. Fitzgerald, differentiating himself from most good-government backers over the previous twenty years.<sup>1694</sup> Finally, he stood for improved city services in ways aimed largely at outlying areas of Boston and the middle-class of the city.<sup>1695</sup> Overall, Nichols responded to the political situation around himself by trying to run above it and to obtain an image as a non-partisan candidate.

Towards the end of the campaign, there was a general assumption that the lack of a unity candidate among the Democrats made this Nichols' election to lose. However, this relied on Nichols consolidating the Republican vote; should there be any significant

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<sup>1691</sup> For the charge against Nichols, see *Transcript*, 10/30/1925, 18. For the charge against Curley, see *Telegram*, 9/21/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1692</sup> *Herald*, 10/12/1925, 9; *Transcript*, 10/29/1925, 1, 13; *Post*, 11/4/1925, 12.

<sup>1693</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 10/26/1925, 1.

<sup>1694</sup> *Transcript*, 11/2/1925, 14.

<sup>1695</sup> *Traveler*, 10/20/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society.

splintering among the Republicans, a Democratic candidate might still win in spite of their splits. Of the two other Republicans remaining in the race, Charles Burrill had hurt his candidacy badly by accepting Purcell's nomination papers, as his denunciations of Innes as a political boss were undermined by his being more or less openly a spoiler candidate.<sup>1696</sup> Alonzo Cook continued with his longstanding refusal to engage in public speaking, instead relying on the issuance of campaign literature to appeal to voters.<sup>1697</sup> This literature positioned Cook as a foe to political bosses and as a staunch supporter of Prohibition, thereby challenging Nichols on the issues of bossism and wetness.<sup>1698</sup> He also tried appealing to both sides on matters of ethnicity: he issued some campaign literature clearly intended to disprove his image as a bigot, while at the same time emphasizing his status as an "American" candidate in ways that seemed designed for Klansmen and their sympathizers.<sup>1699</sup> Previous election results indicated that Cook had no chance of winning, as he consistently fared worst in Boston out of the statewide Republican candidates.<sup>1700</sup> However, there was a belief that if he could mobilize enough voters he could possibly deny victory to Nichols.<sup>1701</sup> The Irish response to him reflects

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<sup>1696</sup> For an example of his campaign ads, see *Transcript*, 11/2/1925, 4.

<sup>1697</sup> *Transcript*, 11/2/1925, 1, 4.

<sup>1698</sup> For an example tying this together, see Alonzo B. Cook handout, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1699</sup> For the denial, see *Globe*, 10/25/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society; for the use of "American" rhetoric, see *Transcript*, 10/28/1925, 10.

<sup>1700</sup> For example, the *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1924* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1925), 177, shows him as winning only 61,412 votes in Boston, the worse showing of any Republican candidate in that election.

<sup>1701</sup> *Transcript*, 10/31/1925, 1, 10, offers some analysis along these lines.

these complications: James Michael Curley attempted to make the Klan the chief issue in the last days of the campaign and at one point claimed Cook as Glynn's strongest foe, while at the same time was charged with financing the Cook campaign.<sup>1702</sup> Overall, it was unclear if Republicans were completely unified, something that Democratic candidates tried to take advantage of in their campaigns.

Thomas O'Brien was a threat to the Nichols vote in another direction. In his campaigning, O'Brien portrayed himself as being the only candidate present that could break the political bosses of Boston, who he portrayed as having infested Boston politics thoroughly, including such organizations as the GGA.<sup>1703</sup> He used his record heavily in his campaigning, noting both his rise from working-class origins and the ways in which he had improved the administration of justice through a series of positions in state and local government.<sup>1704</sup> He also emphasized his work for the railroad brotherhoods in an attempt to gain working-class support and to take advantage of the lack of a clear labor candidate on the ballot.<sup>1705</sup> However, he was still for the most part a candidate who aimed his appeals to a middle-class audience, using the rhetoric of the home heavily in his

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<sup>1702</sup> *Globe*, 11/2/1925; *Traveler*, 9/25/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society; *Post*, 10/31/1925, 1, 8.

<sup>1703</sup> For this approach in pamphlet form, see "The People's Candidate for Mayor Thomas C. O'Brien- Let The Boys Read It!", 1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1704</sup> Perhaps tellingly, much of the material in this pamphlet was originally published in 1922, when he was running for District Attorney ("The People's Candidate for District Attorney Thomas C. O'Brien- Let The Boys Read It!", 1922, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society).

<sup>1705</sup> *Transcript*, 10/21/1925, 1, 11.

statements, and campaigning heavily in the streetcar suburbs as the campaign closed.<sup>1706</sup> He also made strong efforts to appeal to women, including running special headquarters for women voters.<sup>1707</sup> His rhetoric of corruption occasionally backfired: his charges that Glynn has sold rotten meat to city institutions backfired when Glynn demonstrated that he had never held any city contracts, and several commentators noted that he had trouble naming specific corrupt acts in his charges.<sup>1708</sup> However, he was still in a strong position to cut Nichols' vote among Republicans, particularly since his refusal to use ethnicity, religion, and partisan politics as campaign issues made him less offensive than other candidates among the Boston Irish.<sup>1709</sup> At the same time, however, it was clear that he had limited appeal to his fellow Boston Irish, making his own election more difficult.

Other candidates among the Boston Irish were struggling in the last days of the campaign. Walter McGauley spent a large amount of money and engaged in frequent radio broadcasts denouncing the political leadership among the Boston Irish.<sup>1710</sup> However, he had very little traction, receiving almost as much press when he was shot at coming home one night than he had during the rest of the last weeks of the campaign combined.<sup>1711</sup> Keliher continued charging a large conspiracy with planning to elect

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<sup>1706</sup> *Globe*, 9/19/1925; *Herald*, 11/1/1925, 1, 8 (perhaps tellingly, used in this instance against Coakley); *Post*, 10/30/1925, 1, 22.

<sup>1707</sup> *Globe*, 10/10/1925; *Herald*, 9/12/1925, 2.

<sup>1708</sup> *Transcript*, 10/24/1925, p.12; *Transcript*, 10/29/1925, 1, 13.

<sup>1709</sup> *Post*, 11/1/1925, 1, 26, went as far as to suggest that O'Brien's following was solely among anti-Nichols Republicans at that point in the race.

<sup>1710</sup> *Globe*, 10/22/1925; *Advertiser*, 11/1/1925, 1, 2.

<sup>1711</sup> *Globe*, 10/30/1925; *Post*, 10/30/1925, 1.

Nichols as mayor.<sup>1712</sup> However, this had a limited impact in terms of drawing votes: he seems to have been regarded as an almost purely negative candidate, and he had fallen behind many of the other candidates due to his long break from campaigning.<sup>1713</sup> W.T.A. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, engaged in an upbeat campaign, in which he largely avoided mudslinging.<sup>1714</sup> However, he was unable to articulate clear reasons as for his merits for being mayor, tending to use a combination of his being first in the race and praise from the long-dead Patrick Collins as the chief reasons for his election.<sup>1715</sup> He acknowledged this failure in campaigning late in the race, deciding to use a booking for Mechanics' Hall on Halloween to throw a victory party rather than for actual campaigning.<sup>1716</sup> Overall, McGauley, Keliher, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald had collectively failed to gain any clear support because of a failure to articulate any clear reason for their election, leaving them reliant on personal popularity rather than on any group mobilized around a cause.

Theodore Glynn ended the campaign by running heavily as the candidate of James Michael Curley. Curley's speeches on Glynn's behalf received more publicity than Glynn's own, and his last newspaper advertisements claimed that he would be able to win

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<sup>1712</sup> *Herald*, 10/30/1925, 1, 10.

<sup>1713</sup> For Keliher's image of acidity, see *Herald*, 10/27/1925, 14.

<sup>1714</sup> *Post*, 11/4/1925, 12.

<sup>1715</sup> *Post*, 10/24/1925, 6.

<sup>1716</sup> *Herald*, 10/30/1925, 34.

by uniting the Curley vote against a divided anti-Curley vote.<sup>1717</sup> Other pro-Curley politicians similarly campaigned heavily for him, including Dunn and Purcell after they withdrew as candidates.<sup>1718</sup> He pledged that he would continue to follow Curley's model of administration, with a heavy focus on increased expenditures in public works.<sup>1719</sup> He also heavily used the rhetoric of business administration, using his rise from butcher boy to packing executive heavily in his speeches.<sup>1720</sup> While appealing to working-class Irish like Coakley, his approach differed by offering the promise of advancement and a brighter future, compared to the siege mentality present in Coakley's campaigning. Finally, he ran a heavily negative campaign against Nichols, using his record in office to portray him as a danger to have as mayor.<sup>1721</sup> There were limitations to these approaches: some commentators noted that there was no way every public works project backed by Glynn could be funded, while his use of Curley's coattails resulted in accusations of him being a Curley flunky.<sup>1722</sup> Overall Glynn tried to secure his own election by using a combination of a positive association to Curley and a negative portrayal of Nichols as a way to try to unite the divided electorate.

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<sup>1717</sup> *Post*, 11/2/1925, 1; *Herald*, 11/2/1925, 10.

<sup>1718</sup> *Herald*, 11/3/1925, 1, 8; *Post*, 10/24/1925, 6.

<sup>1719</sup> *Globe*, 9/30/1925; *Traveler*, 10/6/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1720</sup> *Globe*, 10/30/1925; *Transcript*, 10/29/1925, 12.

<sup>1721</sup> *Herald*, 11/3/1925, 8.

<sup>1722</sup> *Traveler*, 10/5/1925, clipping in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society; *Globe*, 10/10/1925.

Joseph H. O'Neil's campaign resembled Glynn's in certain regards: he heavily used other people for his stump speeches, with John F. Fitzgerald, Lomasney, Logan, Cole, and several others touring Boston with him while speaking.<sup>1723</sup> In this way, he also was running on positive associations with the Democratic City Committee and prominent anti-Curley voices among the Boston Irish. This also led to charges of O'Neil being the tool of others: Coakley portrayed Lomasney as Svengali to O'Neil, while Glynn claimed his campaign was an example of a political exhumation.<sup>1724</sup> He also ran in praise of his own record and against Nichols, in the way that all other Boston Irish candidates had. However, he differed from his peers in one substantial way, as, more than any other candidate for mayor, O'Neil ran with a clear political platform, aimed at the middle-class in the streetcar suburbs of Boston.<sup>1725</sup> Some of these stances reflected a fiscally conservative vision: he criticized Glynn's public works proposals by noting what they would mean for the tax rate, and made his opposition to the construction of a central highway in Boston unless the state paid a major part of the cost a key part of his campaign.<sup>1726</sup> Other stances reflected a neighborhood focus: O'Neil stood for complete layout of streets and sidewalks and better garbage removal in the outlying sections of Boston, using his personal experiences as a resident of Roxbury in his speeches.<sup>1727</sup> A

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<sup>1723</sup> This element of his campaign is very well demonstrated in the numerous campaign ads for him in Boston newspapers, which, more than any other candidate, list the others speaking for him.

<sup>1724</sup> *Globe*, 10/28/1925; *Globe*, 10/30/1925.

<sup>1725</sup> *Herald*, 10/29/1925, 10; *Post*, 11/1/1925, 1.

<sup>1726</sup> *Post*, 11/2/1925, 7.

<sup>1727</sup> *Post*, 10/31/1925, 8.

heavy focus on transportation was evident; in addition to his central highway stance, he also stood for replacing elevated structures with subways, a central railroad terminal, and a bridge to East Boston.<sup>1728</sup> Finally, he campaigned strongly in terms of respectability, including running a campaign that was openly repelled by Coakley's campaign tactics. In all of these ways, O'Neil established himself as a candidate for the middle-class of Boston, and especially the growing middle-class Irish of the city. At the same time, there were limitations in his stances, as he had nothing in his platform with a clear appeal to either working-class Bostonians or to residents of the core of Boston, meaning that any appeal he had would have to come through other means.

### **A View from The Wards: The Final Results**

In order to understand both Malcolm Nichols' election with a plurality of the vote, and the relative performance of the various candidates, there is a need to break down the election results and look at candidate performance among ethnic and class groups in Boston (Table 1).<sup>1729</sup> These divisions become particularly clear when considering a ward map of 1925 Boston.<sup>1730</sup> The Boston Irish, by 1925, had established two main zones of settlement: wards in the core of the city settled during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and by 1925 chiefly settled by working-class Irish, and more outlying ones settled by

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<sup>1728</sup> *Globe*, 11/1/1925; *Globe*, 10/30/1925; *Transcript*, 11/2/1925, 4.

<sup>1729</sup> All references to the 1925 election results are to Boston Election Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1926), 26-28, unless otherwise cited in the text.

<sup>1730</sup> Rather notably, there has been no redistricting of the wards of Boston since 1925, so the current map is still applicable for the ward layouts. All references to geographic locations in this essay can, therefore, be determined by following along with a current ward map.



middle-class Irish in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A third zone, the set of middle-class and upper-middle-class wards located on the southern and western boundaries of the city that were the chief “streetcar suburb” wards within the city, was becoming a zone of settlement for middle-class Irish during this time, but was still ethnically mixed in 1925. A large Jewish community had been established in Roxbury and Dorchester, roughly along Blue Hill Avenue, and had become the dominant population in two wards. The Back Bay, was the home of two wards populated chiefly by upper-class Yankees, or “Brahmin” in the local vernacular. Finally, there are four wards in Boston that do not fit neatly into this pattern, either due to different ethnic groups or due to difference from their geographic peers. By looking at the results within these wards, we can understand in particular how the Boston Irish politically fractured in 1925, and to what degrees the campaign rhetoric corresponded with political behavior.

The Irish working-class in 1925 Boston was predominant in five wards, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in Charlestown, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in South Boston, and the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> in Roxbury (Table 2). These areas became zones of Irish settlement in the years following the Civil War, as the Boston Irish moved from their original centers in the North, West, and South Ends.<sup>1731</sup> By 1925, these areas were all in physical decline, with a chiefly working-class population left behind as their middle-class peers moved out.<sup>1732</sup> These wards had all transitioned to

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<sup>1731</sup> For a discussion of this in social terms, see Ryan. The specific history of this in South Boston is found in Thomas H. O’Connor’s *South Boston, My Home Town: The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994), while O’Connor’s *The Boston Irish: A Political History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995) considers the political impact of this.

<sup>1732</sup> The *City of Boston Municipal Register for 1921* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1921), 229, notes a decline in population in all of these areas between 1915 and 1920, and that South Boston and Charlestown had had similar declines between 1910 and 1915. Roughly contemporary studies of

the Democratic Party between the mid-1870s and the mid-1890s, and by 1925 were Democratic strongholds, opposing Harding and Coolidge even as the city gave them majorities of the vote.<sup>1733</sup> In these wards, several general contours of the 1925 mayoral election begin to take shape. Theodore Glynn carried all of these wards, reflecting the popularity of his political patron Curley among working-class Irish voters. At the same time, however, he only received a majority of the total vote in the 8<sup>th</sup>, which was his home ward and where Curley had established his political career. Joseph O'Neil finished second across this section of Boston, combining the anti-Curley vote of 1921 with voters who backed Curley in 1921 but would not back Glynn in 1925. Most notable was the strong vote received by Daniel Coakley, who finished a strong third in spite of only beginning his campaign in mid-October. This vote in part reflects the strong backing he received from many politicians in these wards.<sup>1734</sup> However, it also reflects the appeal of Coakley's campaign rhetoric, aimed at the ethnic pride of the Irish working-class. Ultimately, Coakley became the default candidate for working-class voters who could not stomach Glynn, would never vote for a Republican, and for whom the other Irish candidates had largely ignored in their appeals to the middle-class. In this way, Coakley

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Charlestown and South Boston are found in the Miriam Van Waters Papers, Box 2, Harvard Law Library Special Collections.

<sup>1733</sup>All commentary on the political history of the wards in Boston has been taken from an examination of two sources of election results. Prior to 1895, the election results reported in the *Boston Evening Transcript* have been my chief source of information, while, starting in 1895, the final results published in the Annual Reports of the Election Commissioners of Boston have been used. Double-checking using other existing sources have confirmed their accuracy, and any comment made that is not otherwise cited in the text can be assumed to be from these sources.

<sup>1734</sup>For a listing of Coakley backers, see *Boston Telegram*, 11/1/1925, clipping in Martin M. Lomasney Scrapbooks, Volume 32, Massachusetts Historical Society.

managed to draw many voters who had backed Curley in 1921 but would not follow his political advice in 1925.

The performance of the other candidates in these wards further demonstrates the ways in which class influenced divisions among the Boston Irish. Nichols finished fourth, his worst performance in the city, receiving largely the generic Republican vote in these wards. Here, the nature of his campaign appeals are of relevance, as a campaign aimed at middle-class homeowners ran aground when faced with voters who were neither. John Keliher had some personal following in these wards, but the combination of his lack of organizational backing and his illness during much of the campaign seems to have hurt him greatly. Thomas O'Brien had never been politically popular here, losing badly to Pelletier twice in 1922, and continued to demonstrate a lack of any appeal in 1925.<sup>1735</sup> The other candidates were non-entities: W.T.A. Fitzgerald found his appeal to his personality falling on death ears, this was not an electorate that would back a Prohibitionist like Alonzo Cook, and neither Walter McGauley nor Charles Burrill came up with any reason for the voters of this area to support them.

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> wards collectively made up the Back Bay of Boston, bastion of the city's elite since its development from the 1870s onward (Table 3). These wards were the most heavily Yankee wards in the city, as the well-to-do Irish tended to settle in the

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<sup>1735</sup> For O'Brien's prior performances, see Boston Election Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1922* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1923), 56 (Democratic primary), 176 (general election). All comments concerning his showing in 1922 are taken from this source.

streetcar suburbs of the city rather than the Back Bay.<sup>1736</sup> They were also the most consistently Republican wards in the city, as this lack of demographic change had resulted in continued Republican dominance while other wards had grown more competitive as Irish residents moved in. This was represented in party conditions in 1925: Charles H. Innes, leader in Ward 4, was the strongest Republican leader in Boston, his protégé Channing Cox had just ended four years of service as Governor, and many of the Republicans holding important appointive positions in state government over Boston had represented the Back Bay in the state legislature. While the majority of Republican voters still lived elsewhere, these wards had become synonymous with Boston Republicanism, resulting in their being used heavily against Nichols and other Republican candidates citywide.

Nichols, who had represented this area in the state legislature, swept these wards, receiving a vote total similar to that Republican candidates received in partisan races. O'Neil polled ahead of Glynn here, reflecting his image as a conservative banker and that he had made some efforts to get votes in this area, including being the only Irish candidate to buy ads in the very Brahmin *Boston Transcript*.<sup>1737</sup> The performance of O'Brien reflected the failure of his campaign: he had carried these wards in 1922, and his campaign had made a strong effort to obtain support from anti-Innes Republicans. These

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<sup>1736</sup> All comments on ethnicity in the wards of Boston are based on the data found in the 1920 Census, as reproduced in the *City of Boston Municipal Register for 1921* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1921), 230-232, and from the 1910 Census, as reproduced in the *City of Boston Municipal Register for 1916* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1916), 246-248. Because of redistricting and limitations in the Census materials (such as the listing of ethnicity only for immigrants and the children of immigrants), all material of this nature will remain imprecise, but this material should hold value in terms of a general understanding of the topic.

<sup>1737</sup> *Transcript*, 10/31/1925, 1

appeals, however, were not effective: he polled behind even Coakley, whose campaign had denounced the Back Bay and Brahmin heavily. Similarly, Cook and Burrill were ineffective in terms of splitting the Republican vote. Cook had lost these wards in 1924 and had a stance on Prohibition that was not popular in the back pay, while Burrill's taking of James T. Purcell's nomination papers had given him the image of being a spite candidate. Overall, the chance to elect one of their own as mayor seems to have encouraged party unity among Republicans in 1925, making the bid for dissident votes unsuccessful here. A final point of note involves Keliher's performance: he was a former resident of the Back Bay, and had been elected to the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention in 1917 from the Back Bay Congressional district.<sup>1738</sup> His performance in 1925, then, reflects how transitory that backing was, and serves as one example to demonstrate how voters in Boston were willing to change support rapidly from election to election, especially in races where the merits of specific candidates were at issue

The Irish middle-class had settled in two areas, separated by space and by history (Table 4). The 11<sup>th</sup> was located in Roxbury, between Franklin Park and Jamaica Plain, and from the time it was developed had been settled by middle-class Irish leaving other sections of Roxbury. The 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>, on the other hand, were sections of Dorchester, progressively going south from the South Boston-bordering 13<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1739</sup> These

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<sup>1738</sup> Keliher's status as a former resident of the Back Bay is noted in *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor* (Boston: The Good Government Association, 1925), 11, while his election to the Constitutional Convention is in Boston Election Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1917* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1918), 14.

<sup>1739</sup> A consideration of conditions in Dorchester from roughly contemporaneous is found in "Dorchester District Study", 1929, Miriam Van Waters Papers, Box 2, Folder 2, Harvard Law Library Special Collections.

wards had once been Yankee Republican bastions, but had politically transitioned in the 1890s and 1900s as middle-class Irish leaving South Boston and neighboring sections of the city moved progressively farther and farther south. Under normal circumstances, these wards were strongly Democratic, and were solidly so in terms of representation to the state legislature. However, Democratic success in these areas was not as monolithic as it was in the working-class Irish sections of the city: Harding swept these wards in 1920 and Coolidge carried the Dorchester wards in 1924, demonstrating that these wards were not immune to Republican landslides.<sup>1740</sup> Glynn and Nichols received roughly equal shares of the vote in these areas. In Glynn's case, the limitations of his appeal compared to Curley became apparent, as thousands of voters who had supported Curley in 1921 voted against Glynn in 1925. In this respect, the failure of the Glynn campaign becomes quite clear, as it was presuming a coattails vote that did not take place. At the same time, however, Glynn's performance here indicates that he had been able to become the leading candidate among the Boston Irish, even as his total vote declined relative to working-class Irish wards. Nichols' performance, meanwhile, suggests that his campaign had succeeded in holding onto the votes of enough of the homeowners in this portion of the city for him to remain viable, though he did not receive quite the crossover of either Harding or Coolidge. Unlike in other parts of the city, support for Nichols did not equate Republican support, as no Republican candidates were particularly strong for City

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<sup>1740</sup> Boston Election Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1924* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1925), 152-153; *City of Boston Municipal Register for 1921*, 271. All comments about the Harding and Coolidge votes in 1920 and 1924 are taken from these sources.

Council here.<sup>1741</sup> Overall, this suggests that efforts to make his partisan loyalties an issue had failed, as issues trumped partisanship in this area.

O'Neil's third-place performance demonstrates several points. On the one hand, his stronger showing relative to Glynn demonstrates how his campaigning on suburban issues like traffic and streets had some appeal there, with his support in Dorchester visibly growing with distance away from the core of Boston. At the same time, his inability to outpoll Glynn in this area demonstrates limitations to his candidacy, especially given the strong campaign that Dorchester resident John F. Fitzgerald had made for him.<sup>1742</sup> His appeal seems to have had a negative element to it, with voters voting for him out of opposition to Curley and Glynn rather than out of support for himself.<sup>1743</sup> While O'Neil's showing here confirms the ways in which his campaign reflected class divides among the Boston Irish, his failure to carry these wards indicates how he had failed to monopolize the vote of the Irish middle-class. Coakley's performance declined in these wards compared to working-class Irish portions of the city, but was still relatively strong in spite of his baiting of the Irish middle-class, paralleling the strong showing Pelletier had in these areas in 1922 and demonstrating that the Irish middle-class was not immune to ethnic and religious appeals.<sup>1744</sup> O'Brien, meanwhile,

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<sup>1741</sup> The results for City Council are found in *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 49-61, while *Globe*, 11/4/1925, is one of several newspaper sources to identify the City Councilors elected in partisan terms.

<sup>1742</sup> For Fitzgerald as popular in Dorchester, see *Globe*, 9/22/1925.

<sup>1743</sup> *Post*, 11/3/1925, 1; *Post*, 11/2/1925, 18; *Post*, 11/1/1925, B-2, serve to convey this rather well.

<sup>1744</sup> The sources previously cited in connection with O'Brien's electoral showing in 1922 also serve to demonstrate that for Pelletier, and are references when no other citation is offered.

finished sixth, as the middle-class Irish voters who had backed him over Pelletier in 1922 seem to have deserted him for Nichols and O’Neil. Keliher’s vote declined relative to his working-class performance by roughly the same amount that Fitzgerald had improved, suggesting that there was a constant but small pool of voters citywide for whom appeals based on record existed. Cook’s relatively strong showing in the 16<sup>th</sup> reflects the relative strength of the Prohibition vote present here in liquor licensing votes.<sup>1745</sup> Finally, the showing of McGauley is of interest: his campaign focus on economy in government and opposition to current Democratic leadership in Boston, combined with his rising economic status, would suggest that he could have had an appeal to middle-class Irish voters. However, in spite of substantial radio broadcasting, massive publicity after an assassination attempt, and the rumored expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars, he did not have such an appeal, narrowly avoiding finishing dead last among these voters.<sup>1746</sup> McGauley’s lack of any civic experience seems to have sunk him as a candidate, as his expenditure of funds failed to aid him in any section of Boston.

In the thirty years preceding 1925, the Jewish population of Boston progressively migrated out of the West End, East Boston, and Chelsea, largely settling by 1925 in two wards along Blue Hill Avenue: the 12<sup>th</sup>, which contained the section of Roxbury immediately north of Franklin Park, and the 14<sup>th</sup>, which contained a long ribbon of

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<sup>1745</sup> The voting for liquor licenses in Boston took place annually, and the results are found in the same Board of Election Commissioners reports cited previously. All references to liquor license votes in this section have these election reports as an ultimate authority.

<sup>1746</sup> McGauley’s heavy use of radio campaigning can be demonstrated by looking at the radio listings for any Boston newspaper in October and early November of 1925, while the rumors of his expenditures are found in *Post*, 10/28/1925, 18.



central Dorchester stretching towards Mattapan (Table 5).<sup>1747</sup> Neither of these wards were monolithically Jewish: the 12<sup>th</sup> in particular had substantial Yankee and German communities still resident within it in 1925, and both of these wards had resident Irish populations. While individual Jewish politicians had been having success in these wards since the 1890s, they only fully emerged as a constant political force in the decade preceding 1925, as a combination of in-migration and an increased level of Jews who were citizens and eligible to vote made them a strong force locally.<sup>1748</sup> What hadn't changed in connection with this shift were voting patterns in these wards: the 12<sup>th</sup> had been one of the most Republican sections of Boston since the mid-1890s, and the areas in the 14th, which were still split into different wards prior to 1925, quickly joined it in having this status, as even weak Republican candidates like Charles Evans Hughes tended to carry these wards.

Given the Republican strength in these wards, it is not much of a surprise that Nichols carried both of the Jewish wards of Boston by wide margins. There is, however, a bit of interpretative significance in this showing, as Nichols' ability to appeal to the Jews of Boston almost as strongly as he was able to appeal to Yankees demonstrates that he was not seen as a strictly Yankee candidate. O'Brien's performance is similarly

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<sup>1747</sup> For some of the early Jewish history, see Arnold A. Wieder, *The Early Jewish Community of Boston's North End: A Sociologically Oriented Study of an Eastern European Jewish Immigrant Community in an American Big-City Neighborhood Between 1870 and 1900* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 1962), while Jonathan D. Sarna and Ellen Smith, editors, *The Jews of Boston: Essays on the Occasion of the Centenary (1895-1995) of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston* (Boston: The Philanthropies, 1995) offer a general summary of the topic overall.

<sup>1748</sup> To determine this, I have examined the legislative manuals for Massachusetts from the mid-1880s onward, paying attention to the identifications present in terms of the religious or ethnic backgrounds of elected officials.

notable: by finishing second in the 14<sup>th</sup> and a close fourth in the 12<sup>th</sup>, he had by far his best performance in any section of Boston other than his home ward of Brighton. This reflects his campaign, where he downplayed ethnicity as something of political importance, ran as a non-partisan, and continued the outreach to Jewish voters he had engaged in since becoming District Attorney.<sup>1749</sup> In these ways, O'Brien was able to obtain the vote of Jews who would not back Nichols, taking advantage of the failure of almost every other Boston Irish candidate to make any such appeal. This is demonstrated by the performance of other Irish candidates: Coakley's distant fifth in both wards reflects the ways in which his appeals to Irish ethnicity and Catholic religion were irrelevant to Jewish votes, while the Glynn and O'Neil totals appear to reflect, respectively, the votes cast in this ward by working-class and middle-class Irish voters. O'Neil did not get much of a boost for being resident in this section of the city: in his home ward of the 12<sup>th</sup>, he finished a distant third and barely outpolled O'Brien.<sup>1750</sup> Finally, Cook's poor showing in the 14th seems to reflect how the charges of his being anti-Semitic stuck, in spite of some efforts to rebuff that charge, though he did surprisingly well in the 12<sup>th</sup>.

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<sup>1749</sup> *Post*, 10/26/1925, 1, 10, identifies O'Brien as having given a rally for 3,000 Jews at Symphony Hall, *Advertiser*, 10/27/1925, 2, notes him speaking to the Temple Israel Council of Jewish Women, and *Herald*, 11/4/1925, 1, 16, suggests that O'Brien had failed in his effort to appeal to Jewish Republicans in this area. The *Jewish Leader*, a biweekly publication that at that point claimed to be the only such publication aimed at the Jewish community, gives a hint as for how hard he campaigned, as, between September 25<sup>th</sup> and October 30<sup>th</sup>, he ran at least nine ads (most of them full-page ads) in that publication, sponsored by future Republican State Senator Max Ulin. In contrast, only one other ad is known to have been purchased by any other candidate for mayor (W.T.A. Fitzgerald, on the fifth page of the 10/30/1925 edition), which may reflect either neglect or confidence by the other candidates.

<sup>1750</sup> For O'Neil as a Ward 12 resident, see *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor*, 15.

In Boston, suburbanization both within the city and outside of it came in connection with the development of a streetcar system (Table 6).<sup>1751</sup> In some cases, ethnic and class transformation came after this development: Roxbury, for instance, had been a middle-class area when streetcars were originally installed. Many of the streetcar suburbs of 1925 Boston were outside city limits, such as Brookline, Milton, and Newton. However, there were still some portions of the city that still functioned as streetcar suburbs in 1925. The 17<sup>th</sup> contained the southernmost section of Dorchester bordering Milton, the 18<sup>th</sup> the recently-annexed Hyde Park and Mattapan, the 19<sup>th</sup> Jamaica Plain, the 20<sup>th</sup> West Roxbury, and the 21<sup>st</sup> the southern section of Brighton. These wards were all largely middle-class portions of the city, with sections of Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, and Brighton containing upper-class residents as well.<sup>1752</sup> Ethnically, these were places where the Yankee majorities of the past were gone by 1925, with Germans in Jamaica Plain and West Roxbury, Jews in Mattapan and Brighton, Italians in Hyde Park, and Irish everywhere. West Roxbury and southern Brighton tended to be as heavily Republican as the Back Bay, and were even slightly more so than Jewish Boston. However, the other wards were far more competitive: Hyde Park and Jamaica Plain had both backed Wilson for President in 1916, for example, and, in state legislative races, Republican performance in the streetcar suburbs deteriorated in the years following 1920.

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<sup>1751</sup> The leading source on this subject, after over fifty years, is still Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

<sup>1752</sup> For a study of the development of Jamaica Plain that in certain regards represents this process more generally, see Alexander von Hoffman, *Local Attachments: The Making of an American Urban Neighborhood, 1850 to 1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). Roughly contemporary studies of Brighton, Dorchester, Hyde Park, and West Roxbury are found in the Miriam Van Waters Papers, Box 2, Harvard Law Library Special Collections.

Overall, these were areas that in 1925 were undergoing ethnic transitions similar to those that had taken place in middle-class Irish areas thirty years earlier.

Nichols swept the streetcar suburbs, receiving at least two and a half times the vote of his closest opponent in each ward in this area. In certain regards, this performance overall reflects the ways in which these portions of the city were generally Republican. However, there are elements to his performance that also reflect the differences in the Republicanism of these wards. He received the most votes in the 20<sup>th</sup> and his greatest margin in the 21<sup>st</sup>, and did somewhat better in the 17<sup>th</sup> than in either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>, reflecting differences in relative levels of Republican support. Notably, Nichols' residence in the 19<sup>th</sup> seems to have had a minimal impact in terms of his performance with the voters, suggesting that residency was not a major motivator of political action.<sup>1753</sup> The performance of Glynn and O'Neil demonstrated a paradox: Glynn beat O'Neil in Hyde Park and Jamaica Plain, the two areas where local Democrats had any strength, with O'Neil ahead in the rest of this area. This further demonstrates how income made one less likely to back Glynn and more likely to back O'Neil, but also demonstrated the limitations of Democratic City Committee support, given the lack of correlation between local party strength and O'Neil support. Coakley's poor showings reflects how his appeal was based around class and ethnicity, as working-class Irish appeals meant nothing in this area. O'Brien once again failed to gain any support from dissident Republicans, and far from being a threat to Nichols, was outpolled by the openly-contemptuous Coakley in four of these wards, suggesting that his strong backing

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<sup>1753</sup> Nichols' residence in Ward 19 is indicated in *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor*, 12-13.

here in 1922 was almost solely as an anti-Pelletier candidate. Cook's strong performance (particularly in southernmost Dorchester and Hyde Park) reflects how the streetcar suburbs were the portion of the city most sympathetic to Prohibition a decade earlier, while Burrill's performance further demonstrates how his image as a spite candidate sank any chance of him being able to have an impact on the race.

The four wards that do not fit the five groupings indicated above each had a different story in terms of ethnic settlement (Table 7). The 1<sup>st</sup> was newly created in 1925, merging together two very different sections of East Boston.<sup>1754</sup> The northern end of the ward was the Orient Heights streetcar suburb, which by 1925 had largely transitioned from Yankees to middle-class Irish. The southern end was a working-class area that similarly had largely transitioned from Irish and Jewish to Italian by 1925, though this had a delayed impact in terms of the ethnicity of officeholders.<sup>1755</sup> These areas also had different political traditions: the northern end had been transitioning from the Republicans since the mid-1900s, while the southern end had been Democratic since the 1870s. The 3<sup>rd</sup> was also a new ward in 1925, combining the Jewish West End, Italian North End, and part of the polyglot South End into one ward. Its political story was that of Martin Lomasney, who had controlled the West End politically since the late 1880s, and who had expanded his political dominance into other areas as they were redistricted

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<sup>1754</sup> A consideration of the mixed status of East Boston from roughly this time is in "East Boston District Study", 1929, Miriam Van Waters Papers, Box 2, Folder 2, Harvard Law Library Special Collections.

<sup>1755</sup> For example, this area was still represented in the Massachusetts House by Irish politicians into 1925, and it was not until the 1930s that this ward started regularly electing Italians to public office.

into his ward.<sup>1756</sup> Lomasney had the ability to deliver between 2000 and 3000 votes to any candidate he backed, including being able to carry the area for a Republican when he did not back the Democratic candidate, as happened in the 1920 presidential election.<sup>1757</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup>, which contained parts of the South End and Roxbury, combined the bulk of Boston's African-American population with a large working-class Irish population. This led to a split political dynamic: Irish Democrats dominated state legislative races, sometimes via race-baiting, while African-American Republicans carried this ward for Harding and Coolidge.<sup>1758</sup> Finally, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, in northern Brighton, was a bit of an oddity as a ward. In geographical terms, it was a streetcar suburb that was largely developed starting in the 1880s. Unlike the other streetcar suburbs, it was a working-class area with a large Irish population, economically resembling working-class sections of Cambridge more than it did any of the other areas surrounding it.<sup>1759</sup> This area had made Brighton politically marginal when it was all located in one ward, and, when the southern portions became their own ward in 1915, this became a Democratic stronghold, with the exception of a narrow victory for Harding in 1920. Overall, these wards must be considered

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<sup>1756</sup> Indeed, several scholars, such as Stack, 39, suggest that it was precisely this expansion of his domain into more and more areas of new immigration that played a key role in his lasting power.

<sup>1757</sup> Huthmacher, 41-42.

<sup>1758</sup> For an example of the use of these sets of tactics in 1920, see the circular by Frank J. Burke and Timothy J. Driscoll against Matthew Washington Bullock and Andrew Berkeley Lattimore, in Good Government Association Records, Series I Candidate Files, Reel 3, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1759</sup> A consideration of the ways in which the northern section of Brighton differed from southern Brighton is found in "Brighton District Study", 1929, in Miriam Van Waters Papers, Box 2, Folder 1, Harvard Law Library Special Collections.

separate from the rest of Boston, as they had developed political practices unique to themselves due to their unique social histories.

The election results further demonstrate the presence of independent dynamics in these wards. The 1<sup>st</sup> in many regards resembled working-class Irish wards of the city in its vote: Glynn in the lead but with Coakley taking many former Curley votes from him, O'Neil largely getting his support from those who had backed Murphy in 1921, Keliher trailing, and Fitzgerald a non-factor. However, there was one substantial difference: Nichols finished a strong second in this ward, in a way that reflected the class bifurcation in this ward. While an exact precinct map is unavailable, he seems to have carried the Orient Heights precincts in the ward, while losing in the working-class Italian areas in East Boston.<sup>1760</sup> O'Brien performed much better here than he did in the working-class Irish wards of Boston, reflecting a combination of support from the local weekly newspaper and the presence of a better-off electorate in Orient Heights.<sup>1761</sup> Finally, Cook's performance in this ward also has an origin in the recent history of Orient Heights: liquor licensing had been controversial in this part of the city, which seems to have resulted in voters being more inclined to back a Prohibitionist than in similar portions of the city.

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<sup>1760</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 26, shows Nichols as carrying the 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Precincts, while tending to finish a distant second at best and fourth at worst in the west of the ward. Unfortunately, my inability to find precinct maps for the 1925 election has made it impossible for me to comment in any greater detail about the meaning of this.

<sup>1761</sup> For his East Boston press support, see *East Boston Free Press*, 10/19/1925, and *East Boston Free Press*, 10/24/1925, clippings in Good Government Association Records, Series I Candidate Files, Reel 25, Massachusetts Historical Society.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> held a unique status as the only ward which supported Joseph O'Neil's bid for mayor. His success here reflects the political clout of Lomasney, who was one of his chief backers in the mayoral campaign and had stumped for him in other sections of Boston, roughly matching the vote total that Lomasney delivered to prior and future candidates. Nichols' second place finish received some press speculation about Lomasney betrayal of O'Neil immediately after the election, but seems instead to be a combination of Nichols receiving the generic Republican vote around Beacon Hill and Lomasney being able to monopolize the Democratic vote for O'Neil.<sup>1762</sup> While Glynn was swamped, the performance of Coakley demonstrates a limitation to Lomasney's political skills. While Lomasney could deliver about 3,000 votes, he seems to have had no influence over the other voters in the area, resulting in Coakley doing fairly well in spite of a strong campaign against him by Lomasney. The poor performance of Keliher in the ward he was resident in seems to reflect longstanding animosity by Lomasney, while the strong vote for O'Brien seems to be a remnant of the strong campaigning Lomasney did for O'Brien in 1922, which may have left loyalists not present elsewhere.

The 9<sup>th</sup> had two elements present of importance in understanding the election results for this area. The first of these is that, like the 1<sup>st</sup>, the vote splintered along lines that seem to reflect ethnic divisions: Nichols' winning the ward, based on the precinct results, seems to have relied on his success in gaining the votes of the ward's African-

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<sup>1762</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 28, demonstrates the bulk of the Nichols vote as being in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Precincts, which would correspond to his getting support from a particular electorate cluster.



Americans while failing miserably in gaining support from working-class Irish.<sup>1763</sup> In this way, a correlation is again demonstrated between the vote for Nichols and the presence of a large number of non-Irish voters within a particular ward. The rest of the vote reflects the regional strength of Glynn, who lived in an adjoining ward, and had more decisive success over O'Neil and Coakley than elsewhere in the city. The only mysteries here involve the performance of Cook and McGauley: this ward had never been supportive of Prohibition, making the relatively high Cook vote a surprise, and it is not clear why McGauley did almost twice as well here as he did in any other ward in the city.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> was the ward in which candidate residency had the greatest influence. In general, candidates did not gain in support by living in a particular ward: O'Neil finished third in the 12<sup>th</sup>, Keliher sixth in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Fitzgerald seventh in the 21<sup>st</sup>, and Cook, McGauley, and Burrill were non-factors in their home wards.<sup>1764</sup> Coakley, however, finished a close second to Nichols here, making this his best performance in any ward in the city. In addition to his local ties, Coakley had a combination of strong local political baking and the fact that his brand of political rhetoric had general done fairly well in working-class Irish wards, as his vote total is similar to that he received in Charlestown and South Boston. O'Brien's third-place finish, meanwhile, reflects his personal popularity in this area: this had been one of the few areas he had carried in the 1922

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<sup>1763</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 34, has Nichols carry the first nine precincts in Ward 9, while losing the remaining six, in some cases quite badly.

<sup>1764</sup> In addition to the previous citations, all commentary on the residences of the candidates for Mayor in 1925 is taken from *The Good Government Association Records of Candidates for Mayor*, which indicates the current residences of the candidates for Mayor, as well as where they had lived prior to that, which is of use given that Nichols, O'Neil, Coakley, Keliher, W.T.A. Fitzgerald, and Cook had all left the neighborhoods they had started their career in electoral politics in.

Democratic primary for District Attorney, and he had carried the ward running as a Republican in the general election. The strong performance of Coakley and O'Brien came at the expense of Glynn and O'Neil, as their respective performances of fourth and fifth were their worst performances in any ward in Boston, suggesting that Coakley and O'Brien gained votes that in other wards would have gone to them. The vote for Nichols reflects the strength of Republicans in ordinary elections in this ward, as the Democratic split was enough for him to carry the ward. The poor showing of Keliher and Fitzgerald seems to parallel O'Neil in the ways in which O'Brien gained votes that in other wards would have gone to them, while the Cook vote is connected to this ward's reticence in supporting liquor licenses in the mid-1910s.

### **So, What Does This All Mean?**

When looking at these neighborhood results in aggregate, two differences become apparent compared to previous elections in Boston. The first of these is that the pattern that had existed in previous elections of a GGA-backed candidate fighting with James Michael Curley on the surface seems to have lasted, given the GGA-backed Nichols' victory and the second-place showing of Glynn. However, this model falls apart for two separate reasons. First, it is quite apparent that large numbers of voters who backed Curley in 1921 did not vote for Glynn in 1925, with both the working-class Irish and the streetcar suburbs demonstrating this phenomenon.<sup>1765</sup> Nor can this collapse be attributed solely to the presence of Coakley on the ballot, as some of the worst performances for

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<sup>1765</sup> For the mayoral election results in 1921, see *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1921* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1922), 22-30. All comparisons between 1921 and 1925 are using this as the source of reference.

Glynn were in streetcar suburbs where Coakley was a non-factor. Similarly, while Nichols' vote totals were close to those received by John R. Murphy in 1921 and they carried many of the same wards, there were substantial differences in their bases of support: Nichols drew thousands of votes in Republican areas that Murphy did not, while thousands of working-class Irish voters who backed Murphy refused to support Nichols. Overall, many who had been against Curley were not willing to follow the GGA to back a Yankee Republican, while many who were willing to vote for Curley were not willing to back a candidate simply because he had Curley's support.

Similarly, the split that occurred in 1917, when Curley was opposed was defeated by a GGA and Lomasney-backed Andrew Peters while a John F. Fitzgerald-backed James Gallivan won thousands of votes, is not applicable as a way to understand these results.<sup>1766</sup> In 1917, Gallivan had received nearly a quarter of his support in South Boston, and was a non-factor in the streetcar suburbs of Boston.<sup>1767</sup> This indicates that the backing given to Gallivan did not equal that given to O'Neil eight years later, as many Gallivan voters did not back O'Neil and many O'Neil voters did not back Gallivan. More important, however, is what it suggests about voter motivations in 1917 and 1925. In 1917, divisions among the Boston Irish took a distinctly spatial characteristic, with the Irish opponents to Curley gaining their best votes in the sections of the city they lived in. In 1925, on the other hand, class had become far more important: O'Neil did better at getting votes among the middle-class Irish and in the streetcar suburbs than he did among

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<sup>1766</sup> For the splits in backing, see Connolly, 159-160.

<sup>1767</sup> All references voting results from 1917 are taken from Boston Election Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1917* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1918), 143-151.

his Ward 12 neighbors, while Coakley gained votes among the working-class of South Boston and Charlestown without living anywhere near them. Even the Nichols vote cannot be equated to the Peters vote, as, even when accounting for the difference caused by a lack of Lomasney support, Peters did better among middle-class Irish voters while Nichols did better among the Brahmin. Overall, 1925 demonstrated divisions among the Boston Irish in terms of class that had not been fully reflected in previous elections, while Nichols' victory by mobilizing Boston's Yankees and Jews similarly differed from the approaches seen since the Charter of 1909 had gone into effect.

Nichols only received 35% of the vote in his winning the 1925 election, whereas the seven Irish candidates for Mayor combined for 63% of the vote. The question as for how Nichols would have done in a one-on-one race, however, is a complicated matter to determine. First, it is very hard to see how the Boston Irish could have united on an anti-Nichols candidate. Curley, Lomasney, Fitzgerald, and the Democratic City Committee had not agreed on the same candidate for Mayor since Fitzgerald himself was a candidate in 1910, and their behavior during 1925 does not suggest a sincere interest in negotiating.<sup>1768</sup> O'Brien and McGauley's campaigns, in their shared contempt of party leadership, suggest that they would never have agreed to anything for the sake of party unity. The other candidates similarly were unlikely to budget: even if we assume that Coakley was sincere about his pledge to withdraw for a sufficient unity candidate, he never set a clear situation where he would do so, while Keliher and W.T.A. Fitzgerald

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<sup>1768</sup> In addition to the already-noted divisions in 1917, Fitzgerald and the Democratic City Committee had backed Thomas Kenny against Curley in 1914, while Fitzgerald and Lomasney had backed John R. Murphy in his campaign against Curley in 1921.

both considered themselves unity candidates and were not close enough with party rivals to consider withdrawing for them. Finally, the entry into the race of a different candidate seems unlikely to make a difference: Logan openly admitted to seeing unity as impossible when he refused to run, and even John F. Fitzgerald would have had to run against a Curley candidate and Keliher. Ultimately, there was no force present that could have forced ethnic unity in 1925.

This still leaves the question as for how Nichols would have fared if he had to participate in a run-off against one of the other candidates. In a couple of cases, it seems safe to think Nichols would have won: there is no reason to think that McGauley would have received more votes than he did in his failed candidacies for the School Committee, while Coakley would have lost by at least the same margin that Pelletier had lost to O'Brien three years earlier.<sup>1769</sup> In a run-off against Glynn, it would have depended on whether Glynn could have appealed to those opposing him in both the Irish working-class and the Irish middle-class, as it would have been hard for Glynn to appeal to both simultaneously. O'Neil, meanwhile, would have had to connect with the working-class Irish he had failed to connect to in the rest of his campaign, which would further not have been helped if the rumors about Curley preferring a Republican to an anti-Curley Democrat are accurate. Finally, the inability of O'Brien, Keliher, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald to have any strong support among the Boston Irish in 1925 makes it unlikely that they would have gained this backing as a unity candidate. Overall, it is safe to say that

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<sup>1769</sup> For McGauley's past showings, see Boston Election Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1922* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1923), 209-217; Boston Election Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1923* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1924), 50-58.

Nichols' victory in 1925 was aided by certain electoral circumstances that were personally advantageous. What is impossible to say is if this meant that he had no chance whatsoever under different circumstances.

**Table 1: Total Vote, 1925 Boston Mayoral Election**<sup>1770</sup>

Candidate	Total Vote
Malcolm E. Nichols	64,492
Theodore A. Glynn	42,687
Joseph H. O'Neil	31,888
Daniel H. Coakley	20,144
Thomas C. O'Brien	9,443
John A. Keliher	7,737
W.T.A. Fitzgerald	3,188
Alonzo B. Cook	1,771
Walter G. McGauley	437
Charles L. Burrill	276

**Table 2: Working-Class Irish Wards**<sup>1771</sup>

Ward	2nd	6th	7th	8th	10th
Nichols	1,176	1,239	1,442	1,315	1,542
Glynn	3,244	2,658	2,798	4,014	3,006
O'Neil	2,199	1,509	1,613	733	1,664
Coakley	1,666	2,106	1,535	704	1,128
O'Brien	368	162	200	185	399
Keliher	785	433	605	375	542
Fitzgerald	145	148	156	107	150
Cook	44	29	19	31	47
McGauley	14	19	10	30	18
Burrill	12	7	10	8	5

<sup>1770</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1926), 48.

<sup>1771</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 27, 31-33, 35.

**Table 3: The Brahmin Wards<sup>1772</sup>**

Ward	4th	5th
Nichols	4,895	5,250
Glynn	666	483
O'Neil	696	854
Coakley	438	334
O'Brien	155	236
Keliher	142	212
Fitzgerald	90	121
Cook	99	66
McGauley	19	28
Burrill	14	20

**Table 4: Middle-Class Irish Wards<sup>1773</sup>**

Ward	11th	13th	15th	16th
Nichols	2,074	2,409	1,869	2,940
Glynn	2,892	2,458	2,305	1,632
O'Neil	1,626	1,807	1,822	1,594
Coakley	802	967	1,286	1,056
O'Brien	396	309	301	211
Keliher	299	423	550	304
Fitzgerald	120	220	395	123
Cook	45	61	60	141
McGauley	35	11	16	4
Burrill	14	18	12	11

**Table 5: Jewish Wards<sup>1774</sup>**

Ward	12th	14th
Nichols	3,737	3,278
Glynn	1,508	1,493
O'Neil	1,028	1,307
Coakley	520	549
O'Brien	952	1,570
Keliher	240	335
Fitzgerald	137	145
Cook	136	40

<sup>1772</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 29, 30.

<sup>1773</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 36, 38, 40, 41.

<sup>1774</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 37, 39.



McGauley	16	35
Burrill	16	12

**Table 6: Streetcar Suburban Wards<sup>1775</sup>**

Ward	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st
Nichols	4,480	4,127	4,287	5,568	4,253
Glynn	1,388	1,689	1,631	1,002	492
O'Neil	1,625	1,496	1,305	1,206	834
Coakley	682	504	491	299	423
O'Brien	386	280	301	301	392
Keliher	221	154	378	201	229
Fitzgerald	134	93	136	130	145
Cook	122	260	64	93	95
McGauley	12	10	16	18	6
Burrill	18	8	4	29	5

**Table 7: Wards Which Do Not Fit the Above Patterns<sup>1776</sup>**

Ward	1st	3rd	9th	22nd
Nichols	2,423	1,507	2,647	2,034
Glynn	3,112	968	2,078	1,170
O'Neil	1,956	3,197	883	934
Coakley	1,295	833	772	1,794
O'Brien	429	422	224	1,264
Keliher	427	394	343	145
Fitzgerald	149	164	103	77
Cook	86	61	99	73
McGauley	27	14	67	13
Burrill	10	16	15	11

<sup>1775</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 42-46.

<sup>1776</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Election Commissioners for the Year 1925*, 26, 28, 34, 47.

## **Chapter 7: Fighting Irish: Boston Politics Reborn**

The 1925 election can be interpreted in two different ways in understanding the future of Boston. In one regard, it is something of a last hurrah, as most of the figures of importance in that election (both as candidates and behind the scenes) would never again play substantial roles in Boston political life, supplanted by a new generation of politicians. While this is accurate in part, it misses the most important transformation that occurred in 1925. With this election, indeed, both the politics of ethno-religious solidarity and the sense of Boston politics as the Good Government Association against its foes began to fall by the wayside. In its place came a new politics, in which divisions between the Boston Irish, and especially the Irish middle-class and Irish working-class, would become the chief focus of Boston politics. In this regard, 1925 was a harbinger, as the various candidates who ran in this election largely represented these class divisions in a primordial form. This new brand of politics has been lasting in Boston, even as the city has continued to ethnically transform: the most recent mayoral election was one featuring two Irish candidates on differing sides of the class divide. Moreover, affairs in Boston are of relevance in analyzing ethnic politics elsewhere, as ethnic groups go from being united in fighting a common foe to fighting amongst each other for political power.

### **Exit The Candidates**

In the years following the 1925 election, major changes took place in Boston political life: as demographic transitions further made Boston an Irish city, urban politics lost its ability to focus on ethno-religious solidarity, and increasingly grew to be fights within the Boston Irish community. This shift had a clear impact on the various

candidates for mayor in 1925, who had variable fates to their political careers. Joseph H. O’Neil never ran for public office again, and experienced an unpleasant ending to his business career: the Federal National Bank and eight banks affiliated with it collapsed in December of 1931, losing over \$58,000,000 in deposits and becoming the first major bank in New England to fail during the Depression.<sup>1777</sup> Testimony concerning the failure revealed that O’Neil had played no active role in management after retiring as president at Federal National, enabling others to run it into the ground.<sup>1778</sup> His death in 1935 symbolized the end of a political era, as the pioneering generation of the Boston Irish in politics passed.<sup>1779</sup> This symbolic end was furthered by those who attended his funeral: while Mayor Frederick Mansfield headed the pallbearers, most of those in attendance were yesterday’s politicians, with only W.T.A. Fitzgerald out of all his 1925 foes in attendance.<sup>1780</sup> In this regard, the ways in which the old model of political respectability had been supplanted was represented by the limited attendance, as he was an irrelevancy by 1935.

O’Neil’s candidacy was also a last hurrah for a particular style of politics. This was the last time Martin Lomasney played a significant role in a mayor election. While Lomasney would continue to run the Hendricks Club, the basis for his power in Ward 5 was deteriorating, as an increasingly politically active Italian-American community in the

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<sup>1777</sup> *Lewiston Daily Sun*, 12/15/1931, 11.

<sup>1778</sup> For some accounts of the misconduct at the Federal National Bank, see *New York Times*, 9/24/1933, 26; *New York Times*, 9/21/1933, 2; *Washington Post*, 10/27/1933, 7 (for a specific charge of political influence in connection with Federal National).

<sup>1779</sup> *Globe*, 2/20/1935.

<sup>1780</sup> *Globe*, 2/23/1935.

North End challenged his ability to maintain political power through mattress voters and limited turnout.<sup>1781</sup> In 1929, Lomasney backed Curley for the first time, but the margin of Curley's victory was such that Lomasney's endorsement had little effect on the outcome.<sup>1782</sup> By the 1933 election, Lomasney was dead, and his organization barely outlived him, as Italian-American politicians defeated his successors to win public office.<sup>1783</sup> Overall, Lomasney failed to fully integrate non-Irish in his organization, and failed to establish a clear successor. As a result the Hendricks Club quickly lost a reason to be without Lomasney, and would have collapsed due to increased Italian-American political activity even had he survived.<sup>1784</sup>

Other O'Neil supporters would be sidelined in the coming years in Boston politics. While John F. Fitzgerald continued running for office into the 1940s, he was largely a secondary figure, as a combination of age, changes in local political practices, and a string of electoral defeats led to his increased irrelevancy in local affairs.<sup>1785</sup>

Edward L. Logan stayed on the South Boston District Court until his death in 1939 and held several lucrative appointments concurrently with his judgeship, but never again took

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<sup>1781</sup> For a discussion of this decline, as well as a revisionist interpretation of Lomasney's career, see James J. Connolly, "Beyond the Machine: Martin Lomasney and Ethnic Politics", in Reed Ueda and Conrad Edick Wright, editors, *Faces of Community: Immigrant Massachusetts, 1860-2000* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, distributed by Northeastern University Press, 2003), 189-214.

<sup>1782</sup> For Lomasney's endorsement, see Ainsley, 127. The comment on its significance is based on the election returns in 1929- the size of Curley's victory was such that the number of voters Lomasney could swing (subject for debate, but probably never more than a couple of thousand) was irrelevant for the overall results.

<sup>1783</sup> For Lomasney's death, see *American*, 8/12/1933, in Good Government Association Records, Series I Candidate Files, Reel 20, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1784</sup> Indeed, as early as the 1933 election (held less than three months after Lomasney's death), the Hendricks Club's margin was already noted as being smaller than usual (*Globe*, 11/8/1933).

<sup>1785</sup> *Globe*, 10/3/1950, makes this argument in terms of mayoral elections.

the risk of playing an active role in Boston politics.<sup>1786</sup> Charles H. Cole met a similar end: he narrowly lost a race for Governor in 1928 and spent the next two decades serving in a string of appointed state positions by both parties.<sup>1787</sup> This reflected a broader generational shift in Massachusetts politics: a new generation would rise in the early 1930s as part of a Democratic tide, and their predecessors would largely be left in symbolic positions, rather than ones of actual power. In this regard, O'Neil's campaign was a last chance for a generation of Boston politicians before age and changing times made them irrelevant.

In 1926 and 1928, the four Suffolk County elected officials who had run for Mayor the previous year all came up for reelection. Francis A. Campbell, who had dropped out before the election, had a reasonably uneventful renomination, and, after toying with running for Mayor in 1929, stayed in office until his death in 1936.<sup>1788</sup> W.T.A. Fitzgerald similarly had an easy time obtaining renomination for the position of Register of Deeds, staying in office until his 1946 retirement, and in his later years focused on land title reform rather than frontline politics.<sup>1789</sup> Campbell and Fitzgerald demonstrate how the holders of countywide elective office could have long careers in elective office, while at the same time be essentially divorced from actual political affairs.

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<sup>1786</sup> For Logan's death, see *Globe*, 7/7/1939. For his appointments, see *Globe*, 10/10/1929 and *Transcript*, 5/26/1930, in Good Government Association Records, Series I Candidate Files, Reel 19, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1787</sup> *Globe*, 11/15/1925.

<sup>1788</sup> *Globe*, 5/4/1936.

<sup>1789</sup> *Globe*, 2/25/1948.

Other holders of countywide office had far more complicated reelection bids. John A. Keliher was challenged in 1926 by Governor's Councilor George Curran, who announced his candidacy during Keliher's Mayoral campaign.<sup>1790</sup> Curran charged Keliher with being a political tool of Charles H. Innes, claiming that they had struck a deal in which the Republicans would support Keliher's renomination if he stayed in the race for Mayor.<sup>1791</sup> The Boston Central Labor Union, the Building Trades' Council, Theodore Glynn, and John F. Fitzgerald supported Curran, as a direct product of grievances they had over the aftermath of the 1925 election.<sup>1792</sup> Keliher, with the backing of Lomasney and Curley, managed to beat this combination of forces against him, and served twelve more years as Sheriff.<sup>1793</sup> By 1938, Keliher's deteriorating health caught up to him: he died of a heart attack on election day, several hours before a landslide defeat for renomination.<sup>1794</sup> Keliher's passing was similarly seen as being the sign of an era ending in Boston politics, as he had been one of the last Board of Strategy members that were of importance in the 1890s.<sup>1795</sup> However, his passing was acknowledged: Nichols, Mansfield, David I. Walsh, and five past, present, and future Governors attended,

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<sup>1790</sup> *Transcript*, 9/11/1925, 4.

<sup>1791</sup> *Globe*, 9/14/1926, in Good Government Association Records, Series I Candidate Files, Reel 10, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1792</sup> *Globe*, 9/1/1926; *Globe*, 9/12/1926.

<sup>1793</sup> *Post*, 9/15/1926, in Good Government Association Records, Series I Candidate Files, Reel 17, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1794</sup> *Globe*, 9/21/1938.

<sup>1795</sup> *Ibid.* The same article noted that W.T.A. Fitzgerald was one of the two surviving Board of Strategy members after the death of Keliher.

demonstrating that Keliher had managed to maintain significance by maintaining public office.<sup>1796</sup>

Entering 1926, Thomas C. O'Brien was in trouble in several regards. His sharp criticism of party leaders during the 1925 campaign had only furthered his lack of party support, while his poor showing demonstrated a lack of any firm political base.<sup>1797</sup> Persistent questions as to his effectiveness as District Attorney came into play again, as he was charged with being someone who was good at flinging charges around and bad at making them stick in the form of prosecutions.<sup>1798</sup> Finally, there were signs that many Republicans had lost their tolerance for him, as Charles G. Keene, President of the new City Council, challenged him in the Republican primary.<sup>1799</sup> O'Brien tried to increase his appeal within the Democratic Party, first by changing his staff by removing Republicans, and then by demanding to question Nichols and Innes concerning charges of graft.<sup>1800</sup> He managed to obtain backing from Martin Lomasney, who praised him for fighting State Street, but from virtually no one else in the Democratic Party.<sup>1801</sup> He lost in the

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<sup>1796</sup> *Globe*, 9/25/1938.

<sup>1797</sup> For an attack on O'Brien's party loyalties see the campaign flyer for William J. Foley, 1926, in Good Government Association Records, Series I Candidate Files, Reel 14, Massachusetts Historical Society. This flyer also makes the charge that the 1925 election results demonstrated O'Brien as having no base with the electorate.

<sup>1798</sup> For one critical commentary on his actions in office, see the J.J. McManus article in *Post*, 8/21/1926, in Good Government Association Records, Series I Candidate Files, Reel 17, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1799</sup> *Globe*, 8/4/1926, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1800</sup> *Globe*, 8/18/1926.

<sup>1801</sup> *Globe*, 9/13/1926.

Democratic primary overwhelmingly to South Boston political figure and Curley ally William P. Foley, and lost the general election in a landslide when Keene (who had barely lost the Republican nomination) ran a sticker campaign against him. After leaving office, O'Brien focused on work for the Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen, losing a bid for the Senate in 1930 before attempted a 1926 comeback on the coattails of Father Charles Coughlin.<sup>1802</sup> In that year, he ran for Senate on a Coughlinite platform in the Democratic Party, and in the general election was the Union Party candidate for both Vice President and the Senate from Massachusetts.<sup>1803</sup> While he managed to receive a substantial vote from anti-Curley Democrats for Senate, these candidacies would end his political career before he turned fifty.<sup>1804</sup> By the time he died in 1951, O'Brien was in obscurity, as the promising political career that seemed apparent in the early 1920s never came to be.<sup>1805</sup> In this way, his career demonstrates the limitations of his approach to political respectability, as he never built any support from the electorate, instead relying on outside forces to elect him. Once he picked the wrong outside force, his career was over.

### **Finis for The GGA**

The Good Government Association that had toyed so long with endorsing O'Brien, and whose refusal to do so ultimately sank his candidacy, vanished long before

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<sup>1802</sup> For his platform, see *Globe*, 7/20/1930.

<sup>1803</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 6/21/1936, 3; *New York Times*, 9/20/1936, E6; *New York Times*, 10/18/1936, E6.

<sup>1804</sup> There are references to O'Brien running for Mayor in 1951, but these are out of confusion of him with a Thomas J. O'Brien who did run, and who was of no known connection.

<sup>1805</sup> *Globe*, 11/23/1951.



O'Brien did. The events of 1925 had proven ultimately destructive in several ways. The power that they had once held through their status as one of the few organizations that could deliver votes citywide was negated with the return to electing City Councilors by ward, as that body, having seen them have no effect on their own races, was not inclined to be of any political assistance.<sup>1806</sup> More important were the long-term consequences of supporting Nichols. The resignation of Giblin and Kelley from the Executive Committee served to discourage the Boston Irish from serving with that organization, especially given their public statements as to the reasons why.<sup>1807</sup> This helped to further ossify the GGA, who relied on basically the same leadership that they had in a generation past due to their lack of an actual rank-and-file. This further disconnected the GGA and the public at large, as it became increasingly apparent that they had no connection.

These problems were made worse by Malcolm Nichols' conduct as mayor. Some of these problems could have been resolved had Nichols fulfilled the expectations the GGA had when they endorsed him. This was not the case: during his term, the Boston Finance Commission found that Nichols officials demanded fees for paving outside homes, engaged in suspect deals involving floor oils, and manipulated land sales in

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<sup>1806</sup> For an example of this contempt, see Walter E. Wragg to GGA, 1/23/1928, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 30, Massachusetts Historical Society. The fact that Wragg was a Yankee Republican from Hyde Park only further demonstrates how this contempt was beyond the ethnic lines of the past.

<sup>1807</sup> Theodore R. Kelley to the Members of the Executive Committee of the Good Government Association, 10/25/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society; Thomas J. Giblin to the Members of the Executive Committee of the Good Government Association, 10/25/1925, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 18, Massachusetts Historical Society.

connection with street widening.<sup>1808</sup> Alvan T. Fuller, Governor of Massachusetts during this time, went as far as to charge Nichols as being a front for Innes, lawyer and political fixer (and former GGA executive secretary) Robert J. Bottomly, and advertising executive Ernest J. Goulston, who combined to be the actual mayors of Boston.<sup>1809</sup> Moreover, Nichols had little use for the GGA, dismissing them as “parlor pinks.”<sup>1810</sup> This left the GGA in an embarrassing position, as it seemed like they had backed a political hack as a way to appease membership and financial backers at best, and out of partisan and sectarian biases at worse. In all, the GGA might have fared worse by backing the winning candidate in 1925 than they had backing losers in the past, as the conduct of the winner in office did not aid the credibility of the organization.<sup>1811</sup> Supporting a Yankee Republican in Nichols over the various Irish Democratic candidates running had already damaged the organization by seeming to confirm its biases on political, ethnic, and religious lines. When that Yankee Republican turned out to be as heavily linked to political operators as any Irish politician, it served to completely alienate the Boston Irish, making it impossible for the GGA to gain any support from an ethnic group that by this point was the majority in Boston.

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<sup>1808</sup> The Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 2, Massachusetts Historical Society, contains a document consisting of notes (taken sometime around 1930) concerning Nichols’ administration of public office.

<sup>1809</sup> *Globe*, 2/10/1963, contains a recollection of this by Goulston. There are several uses of this charge contemporaneous with the 1925 election and the years following by Democratic politicians.

<sup>1810</sup> *Post*, 9/27/1933, in Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 130, Boston Public Library.

<sup>1811</sup> Henry Parkman Jr. would state so during the 1933 mayoral campaign, and, while he had a clear bias (the organization had refused to back him for mayor in that year), the point is still a reasonable one (*American*, 10/18/1933, in Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 130, Boston Public Library).

The following years only further demonstrated the growing irrelevance of the GGA. Their endorsements for City Council in 1927 resulted in large sections of the membership objecting to their support of a Socialist in one of the Jewish wards of the city.<sup>1812</sup> In 1929, they threw their support behind Frederick Mansfield as an anti-Curley candidate, only to have Mansfield experience the most decisive defeat of a GGA candidate for Mayor since 1914.<sup>1813</sup> The start of the Great Depression complicated things further, resulting in the worsening of their always-precarious financial situation. In 1933, the problems of the organization were best demonstrated by how they handled the race for Mayor. There was a sense of the organization being sick of the office: they proposed abolishing it and replacing it with a City Council elected by proportional representation that appointed a city manager.<sup>1814</sup> The GGA decided to back Mansfield a second time for Mayor, and Mansfield managed to win narrowly, giving the GGA their third success in selecting a candidate for Mayor.<sup>1815</sup> However, their support seems to have had little influence on the voters: many Republican supporters of the GGA openly broke with that organization to support Henry Parkman Jr. for Mayor, while the Republican rank and file that had so often voted in line with the GGA stuck with Nichols in his bid for a second

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<sup>1812</sup> Anonymous letter to GGA, 1927, Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 1, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1813</sup> *Post*, 9/9/1929, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 22, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1814</sup> *Transcript*, 9/29/1933, in Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 30, Boston Public Library.

<sup>1815</sup> *American*, 10/18/1933, in Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 30, Boston Public Library.

term.<sup>1816</sup> This, combined with the aging leadership of the organization, the fact that they lacked the funds to send out their traditional campaign mailers, and the lack of any promise for improving situations, meant the end of the organization.<sup>1817</sup> In a final twist, a couple of members of the Executive Committee received appointments from Mansfield, obtaining the political favors that they had long opposed politicians granting.<sup>1818</sup> In the aftermath of 1933, the collapse of traditional reform came in Boston, as an organization that was seen as being hidebound and as having never fully gotten out of the 1900s ended with the generation that founded it.<sup>1819</sup> The GGA had ultimately lost its connection with its traditional Yankee following without making any headway among the Boston Irish. With no connection with any wider electorate, there was no reason left for the organization to be.

In the decade following 1925, Theodore A. Glynn would consider running for public office several times.<sup>1820</sup> However, perhaps in memory of how 1925 went for him, he kept withdrawing for another candidate, and never campaigned again for public office. While he seems to have had a dispute with Curley after the 1925 election, this appears to

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<sup>1816</sup> Letter to “Dear Voter”, 11/6/1933, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1817</sup> *Herald*, 12/4/1933, in Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 30, Boston Public Library.

<sup>1818</sup> For example, Hilda Hedstrom Quirk, who had been one of the first women to serve on the GGA Executive Board and had been serving during the 1925 election, was appointed City Registrar by Mayor Mansfield (Frederick W. Mansfield Scrapbooks, Boston Public Library).

<sup>1819</sup> *Herald*, 12/4/1933, in Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 30, Boston Public Library, notes this imagery as having long surrounded the GGA.

<sup>1820</sup> For Glynn’s various considerations of bids for public office, see Glynn’s files in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 15, Massachusetts Historical Society.

have been resolved prior to 1929.<sup>1821</sup> Glynn continued to benefit from Curley's patronage, becoming President of the Board of Street Commissioners during his third term as Mayor and Clerk of the Roxbury District Court when Curley became Governor.<sup>1822</sup> Taking this position ended his active political career: Glynn kept the position until his death in 1950, but never again played a major political role.<sup>1823</sup> In this regard, Glynn continued to be a coattails politician who used his support for a more prominent politician as a means of gaining office for himself. This made 1925 a major aberration to his political career, as it was the one time Glynn faced an audience in a citywide race.

The Republican challengers to Nichols in 1925 had mixed political outcomes. For Charles L. Burrill, the combination of his poor showing and the image of a political traitor he received from accepting Purcell's nomination papers served to end his political career, as, between 1925 and his 1931 death, he lost three bids for statewide office in the Republican primary.<sup>1824</sup> In Burrill's case, the limitations of making a break were apparent, as he lacked any base that would support him once he broke from party regulars. Alonzo B. Cook, on the other hand, had more success, as the combination of Prohibitionists, Protestant church members, and Klansmen and their sympathizers that he was unable to mobilize in 1925 were strong enough statewide to reelect him as State Auditor in 1926 and 1928. His political career, however, collapsed rapidly following his

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<sup>1821</sup> *Globe*, 9/15/1929.

<sup>1822</sup> *Globe*, 8/29/1935.

<sup>1823</sup> *Globe*, 2/7/1950.

<sup>1824</sup> *Globe*, 9/15/1931.

defeat for reelection in 1930. In 1933, his candidacy for mayor ended with his being removed from the ballot.<sup>1825</sup> By February of 1935, he was reduced to examining files at the Registry of Deeds for a WPA project, and, by April of that year, he had filed for bankruptcy for the second time.<sup>1826</sup> After 1935, he faded as a politician, receiving a patronage position in the Curley administration and becoming basically a nuisance candidate for public office.<sup>1827</sup> In this sense, he reflects changes in Massachusetts demographically: as the Catholic population of the state grew in political importance, a candidate who appealed as explicitly to Protestants as Cook could not survive, particularly when the organization of his own party despised him. In this respect, Cook's statewide deterioration replicated his lack of support in Boston, as the combination of sectarian and partisan opposition converged statewide as well as locally. Boston politics had long been shaped by the sense of a Protestant Republican state that had been acting against the wishes of a Catholic Democratic city. As the state politically grew to resemble the city more, Cook's ability to politically survive through sectarian appeals was thoroughly negated, ending his political career.

James T. Moriarty's career in electoral politics basically ended with his failure to qualify for the 1925 ballot. However, he managed to remain a force in state politics, due to his importance within organized labor in Massachusetts. He served for over forty years as an official in the Sheet Metal Workers union, and used this position to gain significance on a statewide level, serving from 1930 to 1934 as Massachusetts chair of

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<sup>1825</sup> *Globe*, 10/25/1933.

<sup>1826</sup> *Globe*, 2/16/1935; *Globe*, 4/9/1935.

<sup>1827</sup> *Globe*, 12/23/1956.

the American Federation of Labor.<sup>1828</sup> This position resulted in important appointments during the Depression, as Moriarty served on committees concerning unemployment and on compliance with the National Recovery Act.<sup>1829</sup> He had been loyal to Curley in the years following 1925, resulting in his being rewarded with the post of Commissioner of Labor and Industries when Curley became Governor in 1935.<sup>1830</sup> From here, Moriarty built a power base independent from Curley, ultimately serving until 1947, receiving reappointment from Governors in both parties.<sup>1831</sup> In a sense, the same sense of political flux that hurt Moriarty's career in Boston aided it in Massachusetts, as the political realignment that reduced the ability of organized labor to elect candidates in Boston was negated by rising significance in Massachusetts politics. Overall, Moriarty demonstrates a career of political adaptability, using the rise of the labor movement as a way for his own rise.

Others who had aspired to become Mayor of Boston had quick ends to their political career following 1925. Walter G. McGauley disappeared from public life after his large expenditure of funds did not correspond to any political popularity, receiving press attention only through lawsuits and court cases.<sup>1832</sup> Frances G. Curtis outlived virtually every other candidate for Mayor, but did not play a further role in Boston

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<sup>1828</sup> *Globe*, 4/6/1950.

<sup>1829</sup> *Globe*, 11/15/1931; *Globe*, 12/22/1934.

<sup>1830</sup> *Globe*, 11/28/1935.

<sup>1831</sup> *Globe*, 12/10/1944, noted this lasting status at the time of his last appointment to the position.

<sup>1832</sup> *Globe*, 3/11/1927, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 21, Massachusetts Historical Society; *Herald*, 1/19/1928, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 21, Massachusetts Historical Society.

political life after failing to make the 1925 ballot.<sup>1833</sup> John H. Dunn briefly returned to the position of Commissioner of Soldiers' Relief after being reappointed by Curley, but resigned from that position at the request of Malcolm Nichols, ending both his political career and his career within veterans' organizations.<sup>1834</sup> James T. Purcell managed to get the first liquor license in Boston after Prohibition, and spent the years following 1925 focusing on the restaurant business.<sup>1835</sup> To a heavy degree, all of these candidates demonstrate the nature of Boston politics being in flux during the mid-1920s, with some careers ending while others never fully got off the ground. They also reflect the ongoing realignment of Boston politics during this period, as the political climate that had aided Curtis, Dunn, and Purcell in receiving citywide office vanished with the growing importance of factionalism amongst the Boston Irish. There was no longer room for a Yankee woman like Curtis to rise in school politics as had been the case in the 1910s, Dunn's military record was not enough to unite a divided Irish community, and the contradiction between Purcell's middle-class lifestyle and working-class political style could no longer be reconciled with the return to wards. As a result, they faded away politically, leaving no path for others to follow.

Daniel H. Coakley managed to have the most notable political career of the various candidates for public office. After spending a few years speculating in Florida real estate, he ran for Mayor in 1929 as an alternative to both Curley and the GGA-

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<sup>1833</sup> *Globe*, 9/7/1957.

<sup>1834</sup> *Herald*, 6/15/1926, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 21, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1835</sup> *Globe*, 12/6/1933; *Globe*, 7/13/1944.



backed Frederick Mansfield.<sup>1836</sup> Coakley in his campaign stood strongly for municipal ownership of the Boston Elevated, and engaged in negative attacks against Curley, noting his political inconsistencies, his desire for wealth, and his willingness to terrorize his opponents.<sup>1837</sup> Ultimately, this campaign had no effect: in the polarized political climate surrounding Curley, Coakley finished a distant third and had no impact on the result. However, it did serve to reestablish him as a force in Boston politics. In 1930, he successfully campaigned for Joseph Ely and Marcus Coolidge against the joint opposition of Curley and Fitzgerald, gaining notoriety through radio campaigning.<sup>1838</sup> In 1932, Coakley once again ran in terms of personal vindication, winning a landslide election to the Governor's Council for a seat in which he did not live.<sup>1839</sup> In 1933, he ran again for Mayor, dropping out in order to prevent the election of either Mansfield or Nichols.<sup>1840</sup> However, his main focus was on having his law license restored, using endorsements from thousands of people (including Alfred E. Smith, Ely, and Innes), his political success, and charges of political conspiracy by the Klan, Loyal Legion, and Watch and

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<sup>1836</sup> *Globe*, 9/22/1929.

<sup>1837</sup> This campaign rhetoric is extensively documented in the *Globe* during October and early November of 1929, as well as in his GGA candidate file (Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 4, Massachusetts Historical Society).

<sup>1838</sup> His speeches over the radio were later published in book form: Daniel H. Coakley, *Broadcasting With Dan Coakley: A Series of Liberal Radio Talks that Changed the Political History of Massachusetts* (Boston, P.E. Fardy, 1930).

<sup>1839</sup> *Globe*, 9/21/1932.

<sup>1840</sup> *Globe*, 10/25/1933; *Globe*, 10/27/1933.

Ward Society in an attempt to regain his license.<sup>1841</sup> Opposing him was the Boston Bar Association, led by his old foe George R. Nutter, who noted a lack of regard for the truth from Coakley and that he was largely using irrelevant issues in his appeals.<sup>1842</sup>

Ultimately, this line of argument won out: the Massachusetts Supreme Court denied Coakley readmission in April of 1934, and, while Coakley continued to campaign for readmission, he never succeeded in having his law license restored.<sup>1843</sup>

Coakley's failure at reinstatement was negated by his rising political power during the 1930s. Following the 1934 election, the Governor's Council, which had traditionally been a Republican bastion, gained a Democratic majority through a combination of elections and appointments. Coakley used his position as a way to return to favor with Curley, supporting Curley in his campaigns against the holders of most state positions with authority over Boston in exchange for large amounts of patronage in public works projects and state departments.<sup>1844</sup> His willingness to use this position to antagonize his foes, including Curley's successor as Governor, gave him a reputation as someone neither party was willing to cross, giving him a large amount of political power.<sup>1845</sup> This power collapsed in 1941 with investigations into his use of the pardoning

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<sup>1841</sup> "Coakley Impeachment, Volume 1", Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, includes both a typescript of his application for reinstatement, and considerable commentary concerning this application.

<sup>1842</sup> Ibid, 470-477. Coakley charged the Bar Association with trying to make this a political issue: see *Globe*, 9/24/1933, and *Globe*, 9/27/1933, for him using this while campaigning for Mayor.

<sup>1843</sup> *Globe*, 3/29/1934; *Globe*, 10/9/1934.

<sup>1844</sup> "Daniel Henry Coakley, Sr." (1941?), Sidney A. Aisner Papers, Harvard Law School Library, 13-15.

<sup>1845</sup> *Globe*, 9/19/1952.

powers of his office. Coakley was charged with engaging in fraud in connection with several pardons, most notably that of future New England Mafia boss Raymond Patriarca, where he lied to obtain the signature of one priest, forged that of a second, and made up the existence of a third.<sup>1846</sup> This led to his impeachment and a removal trial that revealed that he was depositing tens of thousands of dollars annually with no clear source for the income.<sup>1847</sup> Even Coakley's defense for this charge was unsavory: he claimed it was money he had saved when practicing law, an admission that, if true, meant he had perjured on his reinstatement application.<sup>1848</sup> Once again, Coakley attempted to play the martyr, claiming that his impeachment had been solely for political reasons.<sup>1849</sup> This failed, as he was both removed from the Governor's Council and barred from holding elective office in Massachusetts.<sup>1850</sup> Coakley ran once last campaign for political vindication in 1942, challenging two foes in Boston politics, including John F. Fitzgerald, for the Senate.<sup>1851</sup> He finished a distant fourth, and, now in his mid-seventies, responded by retiring from politics. Ultimately, Coakley's career demonstrated the double-edged

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<sup>1846</sup> The Sidney A. Aisner Papers at the Harvard Law School Library contain a complete transcription of the removal trial of Coakley, and all citations of materials from it shall be taken from it.

<sup>1847</sup> Transcript of Testimony, Coakley Impeachment, 2815, 2817-2819, 2823.

<sup>1848</sup> Transcript of Testimony, Coakley Impeachment, 2250-2254 (for deposit testimony), 3375 (for his defenders admitting to the financial claims being an issue).

<sup>1849</sup> Transcript of Testimony, Coakley Impeachment, 2728 (charge made by his defense attorney), 3394 (charge made by opponents of his impeachment).

<sup>1850</sup> Transcript of Testimony, Coakley Impeachment, 3348-3370.

<sup>1851</sup> *Globe*, 7/11/1942; *Globe*, 9/10/1942.

sword that having a political career with absolutely no scruples held, as his lack of scruples gaining him power, while his lack of control served to end his political career.

### **The Quick Fall of Malcolm Nichols**

Malcolm Nichols acquired a poor reputation in office, being charged with being dominated by political bosses to the point of being charged with trucking in patronage with Curley.<sup>1852</sup> This charge of lacking independence from political leaders was reflected in his appointments to high-level positions, as many who were long active in Boston Republican politics received major posts from him.<sup>1853</sup> He also had problems with the Republican members of the City Council, in several cases backing Democrats loyal to him over Republicans who were not.<sup>1854</sup> His relationship with both city employees and organized labor, however, was far better than predicted by his political foes: he did not purge city employees for political purposes, and arranged for the city to employ union labor at prevailing wages.<sup>1855</sup> He also appeased Catholic social mores, as the cultural censorship which had been already become notorious in Boston continued in full swing

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<sup>1852</sup> Henry Parkman Jr. charged Nichols and Curley with working together to prevent investigations of each other in an unidentified newspaper sometime during his 1933 campaign for Mayor (Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society).

<sup>1853</sup> Untitled notes on Malcolm Nichols appointees, c.1933, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society, demonstrates this quite well- of the twenty-three officials listed, eighteen are identified as being active in politics through holding elective or appointive office, or has having been active in Republican organizations, before their appointment by Nichols.

<sup>1854</sup> *Transcript*, 3/8/1928, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 17, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1855</sup> Robert Gardiner Wilton to Henry Lee Shattuck, 4/21/1937, Carton 27, Folder 61.5, Henry Lee Shattuck Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; *Labor Chronicle*, 5/1/1929, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society.

under his administration.<sup>1856</sup> Overall, Nichols in office was not what anyone quite expected it to be, disappointing the GGA while gaining him backing from city employees. Unable to run for reelection in 1929, he refused to publically back any of the candidates to replace him.<sup>1857</sup> After a few years focusing on his law practice and being considered for appointed positions, he reentered electoral politics in 1933, running once against for Mayor.<sup>1858</sup> A combination of foes old and new emerged in that election: John F. Fitzgerald vowed to do whatever it took to defeat him, the GGA refused to back him, and anti-Innes Republicans rallied around Henry Parkman Jr. as their candidate for Mayor.<sup>1859</sup> Nichols also gained some support: while there is no evidence to back the claim that Curley was backing Nichols behind the scenes, there is clear evidence that city employees campaigned for him in 1933.<sup>1860</sup> In this respect, Nichols had transformed as a candidate between 1925 and 1933: he was starting to crossover among Irish voters to a degree that he had not done in 1925, but had lost support among his 1925 backers. In

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<sup>1856</sup> *Globe*, 4/22/1926, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society. Perhaps tellingly, one of those in this article protesting Boston censorship is George R. Nutter, and the commentary in it suggests that this was not something he was expected to do.

<sup>1857</sup> *Post*, 5/5/1929, in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1858</sup> For an example of the positive rhetoric he tried to engage in during the campaign, see “A Brief Talk with The Voters of Boston” (1933), in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1859</sup> For Fitzgerald, see *Globe*, 2/10/1933, in Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 30, Boston Public Library. The GGA’s stance is evident in much of the content of their candidate file for Nichols post-1925 (Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 24, Massachusetts Historical Society). For an example of how Parkman campaigned against Nichols, see “Draft of Plans for Speeches” (1933), in Good Government Association Records, Series I, Candidate Files, Reel 26, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>1860</sup> *Herald*, 10/1/1933, in Malcolm E. Nichols Scrapbooks, Volume 30, Boston Public Library, has this charge being made by Mansfield, with him noting that city cars and employees were clearly campaigning for Nichols.

these ways, Nichols personally symbolized the breakdown of ethno-religious solidarity, as he simultaneously lost his ability to unite one ethnic group while beginning to form a cross-ethnic coalition that had not usually been present in Boston politics.

The final election results of 1933 demonstrate the transformation of Nichols' electoral base.<sup>1861</sup> Nichols did far better in the working-class Irish sections of Boston in 1933 than in 1925, improving his vote totals in Charlestown, South Boston, and lower Roxbury. In certain regards, it is tempting to think that this reflects a shift in the working-class anti-Curley vote, with the voters who had backed Coakley over Glynn in 1925 deciding to support Nichols over the pro-Curley William J. Foley in 1933. However, his performance in the Republican sections of Boston reflects the division caused by the Republican split and the desertion of the GGA. Henry Parkman Jr., while running fourth in the city overall, carried the Back Bay and received strong support in Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, and southern Brighton. Further complicating matters for Nichols was that Mansfield had managed to consolidate the vote for respectability amongst the Boston Irish that had split between O'Neil, O'Brien, Keliher, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald in 1925. When combined with demographic transitions in the streetcar suburbs of Boston, this resulted in Mansfield improving his performance relative to the various Democratic candidates of 1925, carrying southern Dorchester and running close to Nichols in Hyde Park, West Roxbury, and southern Brighton. This led to the narrow defeat of Nichols, who lost to Mansfield by fewer than two thousand votes. Ultimately, it is hard to tell how he would have fared if Parkman had not been a candidate, as contemporary observers

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<sup>1861</sup> All commentary on the election results in this section are taken from the official results published after the 1933 election, which are broken down by ward and precinct.

disputed if Parkman split the Nichols or Mansfield vote.<sup>1862</sup> However, it is clear that his inability to unite the non-Catholic vote of Boston in 1933, compared to 1925, led to his political defeat, as upper-class Yankee objections to his administration led to their refusal to continue to back Nichols.

Nichols deteriorated rapidly politically in the years following 1933. His third bid for Mayor in 1937 was complicated both by the candidacy of James Michael Curley and by the decision of Parkman and other anti-Nichols Republicans to support Maurice J. Tobin, the candidate of anti-Curley Democrats.<sup>1863</sup> Nichols finished a distant third: the working-class Irish support he had in 1933 deserted him, and he finished behind Tobin in the Back Bay and third in the streetcar suburbs.<sup>1864</sup> In a fourth attempt to be elected Mayor in 1941, he combined nonpartisan pledges, claiming independence from both Curley and from the Innes organization, criticism of the tax rate, and opposition to American involvement in the Second World War.<sup>1865</sup> Nichols ran with virtually no funds and proved to be politically irrelevant, receiving 6000 votes and finishing last in a field of four, ending his career in elective politics.<sup>1866</sup> Nichols' last years were difficult ones: he failed to establish a career either in law or in the private sector, leaving him strapped for

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<sup>1862</sup> For the view that Parkman took votes from Mansfield, see *Globe*, 11/8/1933. For the belief that Parkman took votes from Nichols, see *New York Times*, 10/1/1933, E1, E7.

<sup>1863</sup> Beatty, 413.

<sup>1864</sup> For a consideration of his poor showing after the fact, see *Globe*, 11/4/1937.

<sup>1865</sup> *Globe*, 10/26/1941; *Globe*, 10/28/1941; *Globe*, 11/2/1941. Innes had died by 1941, but leadership had passed to his son, Charles J. Innes, who served in the Massachusetts Senate

<sup>1866</sup> He claimed to be running on little money in *Globe*, 10/31/1941, and this was confirmed by the financial report of campaign funds after the fact (*Globe*, 12/5/1941).

cash and ultimately relying on private legislation from the Massachusetts House in order to receive a pension.<sup>1867</sup> To stay afloat, he relied on political appointments, serving on the Selective Service Appeals Board of Boston and returning to the position of chair of the Boston Transit Commission after endorsing Curley in his 1945 bid for mayor.<sup>1868</sup> After his death of a heart attack in February of 1951, Nichols' funeral came to symbolize the passing of an era in Boston and Massachusetts politics.<sup>1869</sup> Mansfield, Tobin, Curly, Foley, and Cook, who had all opposed him at various times, attended, as did three future federal Speakers of the House and a future Secretary of State. However, most of the others in attendance were old political associates from the 1910s and 1920s, largely fellow members of the Innes organization who by this point were either judges or completely out of Massachusetts politics. In this sense, Nichols' funeral also served as a funeral for a style of politics, as the Boston Republicans who had remained a force into the 1910s and 1920s were basically obsolete by 1951. Due to a combination of demographic transitions in the city and political transitions in the state, the political structures that had kept Boston Republicans important in early twentieth century had ceased to be, serving to politically retire the Boston Republicans who had been of importance in the 1910s and 1920s, and to guarantee that there would be no generation following them.

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<sup>1867</sup> Beatty, 510. This pension was arranged by Thomas P. O'Neill, then speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

<sup>1868</sup> *Globe*, 1/8/1946; *Globe*, 1/22/1946.

<sup>1869</sup> *Globe*, 2/11/1951.



### **Ethnic Transformations: The Rise of a New Politics in Boston**

The obsolescence of the Boston Republicans reflected several changes in the years following 1925, in many cases, reflecting long-term transitions within Boston. The Yankees and Jews of Boston continued to migrate out of the city into neighboring suburbs. In their place came the Boston Irish, as the Irish middle-class continued moving from the core of Boston to the periphery. This trend was especially evident in the streetcar suburbs, which increasingly voted for Democratic candidates from the late 1920s onward. By the late 1930s, the Republicans who did have electoral success in these sections of Boston had it due not to the strength of the party, but due to their personal following.<sup>1870</sup> This demonstrates how the decline in Nichols' support and the strength of the Mansfield vote in 1933 indicated ongoing demographic shifts, reflecting how these neighborhoods had transitioned from Yankee to Irish over the previous decade, a trend that would continue in following decades. Other shifts involved the transformation of politics on the state and national level. The success of Al Smith in Massachusetts in 1928, followed by Democratic landslides in the years following 1930, demonstrates that the Republican dominance of Massachusetts that had largely been the case since the Civil War had ended.<sup>1871</sup> This political transition resulted in a decline in traditional positions of importance for Boston Republicans. The political escalator that resulted in many Boston Republicans being elected to statewide office collapsed with increased Democratic

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<sup>1870</sup> This determination has been made by reading the electoral statistics published by the Boston election authorities for the 1920s and 1930s. As Boston has used the same wards since 1925, changes can be interpreted as being due to changes within the wards, rather than changes in the wards.

<sup>1871</sup> For some background as to this transition, see Huthmacher.

strength, having a last hurrah in the back-to-back slating of Boston Republicans for Governor in 1932 and 1934.<sup>1872</sup> Similarly, the administrative positions in state government over Boston that had been dominated by Republican politics in the 1920s left their hands during the 1930s.<sup>1873</sup> This meant that Republicans had lost the access to patronage that had helped them maintain a role in municipal affairs even as they became a permanent minority party, and resulted in a further breakdown of the party, as a lack of clear importance aided in the deterioration of general support.

Further political deterioration came about as a result of shifts in ethnic political support. Starting in the 1890s, the Republicans gained substantial political support from the Jews that had settled along Blue Hill Avenue in Roxbury and Dorchester, who were often second in their support of Republicans only to the Back Bay.<sup>1874</sup> These neighborhoods did not experience demographic shifts in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and continued to elect Republicans (Jewish and otherwise) to local office. Starting in the mid-1930s, however, these areas shifted from being heavily Republican to heavily

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<sup>1872</sup> These were William S. Youngman of Brighton, who had been elected Lt. Governor in 1928 after service as State Treasurer and in the State Senate, and Gaspar G. Bacon of Jamaica Plain, who had been elected Lt. Governor in 1932 after serving as President of the Massachusetts Senate.

<sup>1873</sup> The changes in those elected to statewide office can be determined by reading the published election results for the era. The changes in administrative posts have been determined by examining lists of those appointed to these administrative positions, and engaging in research into their backgrounds. This combination indicates a shift in the late 1930s- even when the Republicans were making the appointments, they tended to include fewer Republican politicians than they did during the 1920s peak for partisanship.

<sup>1874</sup> A feeling for this can be found in the Elihu D. Stone Papers, American Jewish Historical Society, housed at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, as these papers contain much about Jewish Republican politics from the 1910s into the 1940s. More complicated as a source is Francis Russell's "The Hill, The Hollow, And The Jews", republished at least twice by Russell. There are elements to his recollections that seem to have some basis in fact (his father, Leo Hamburger, served as a Republican legislator for Dorchester during the 1910s), but there is also enough of fictionalization (including with names) and a general lack of sources to make it wary to use this for means other than impressionistic ones.

Democratic in federal elections, as part of the urban realignment associated with the New Deal.<sup>1875</sup> Realignment took slightly longer to sink in on a local level due to the Irish domination of the Democratic Party, but started to becoming fully apparent by the early 1940s.<sup>1876</sup> This ethnic realignment even led to further Republican deterioration in other parts of the city, as the migration of Jews into southern Brighton starting in the 1920s led to that area losing its status as a Republican bastion. By the 1940s, the Republicans in Boston were limited in consistent support almost solely to the well-to-do of the Back Bay and Beacon Hill. This meant that, even if another split took place among the Boston Irish, the Republicans were in no position to take advantage of it because they had no backing from a mass electorate. This fact served to destroy the old calls for ethno-religious solidarity, which no longer made sense in a world where the Yankees were permanently on the political sidelines.

The divisions in the 1925 election among the Boston Irish suggested Boston's future politics. Theodore A. Glynn and Daniel H. Coakley both ran campaigns aimed at the working-class Irish of Boston, with Glynn trying to get their support through pledges for civic improvements and Coakley using the politics of ethnic and religious resentment. Similarly, Joseph H. O'Neil, Thomas C. O'Brien, John A. Keliher, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald had all run campaigns that appealed to the Irish middle-class, running to various degrees on issues concerning the suburban areas of Boston and for honest government in Boston.

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<sup>1875</sup> For a study of ethnic transitions in Boston politics during this time, see Gerald H. Gamm, *The Making of New Deal Democrats: Voting Behavior and Realignment in Boston, 1920-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

<sup>1876</sup> This comment, as well as the ones that follow, are based on a study of the election results and of the elected officials in the decades following 1925.

By combining these candidates as a group, one can see the development of particular political platforms in which the Boston Irish mobilized in class terms. Moreover, it is clear that these divides had a basis in spatial terms, as well as in rhetorical terms: Glynn and Coakley generally fared best in core neighborhoods of the city with large working-class Irish populations, while faring relatively poorly in the outlying neighborhoods of the city. This suggests the formation of new divisions within the community, as older divisions centered around ethnicity began to lose their charge as the Irish became more and more predominant within Boston. Instead, class divisions among the Boston Irish could serve as an incipient force organizing Boston politics. Instead of fighting the Boston Irish for control, other ethnic groups would in this climate join forces with one of these two divides, to share in political reward should they back a winner. This was still obviously a weak force in 1925 Boston, as demonstrated by the fact that these two divisions were represented by six different candidates. However, the fact that this division can be seen is highly important in demonstrating the arrival of a new force for Boston politics.

The emergence of a politics based on divisions amongst the Boston Irish developed slowly in the years after 1925. By 1933, the consolidation of working-class Irish and middle-class Irish around a singular candidate began, with William J. Foley and Frederick Mansfield respectively receiving the bulk of their support from those communities. However, the presence of two Republican candidates who collectively receiving 40% of the vote demonstrates that this consolidation had not yet reached a point where a clear binary between the two options was in place. The full development of this

state of political affairs became evident in the 1937 and 1941 elections, as Maurice J. Tobin and James Michael Curley fought one another for mayor. In 1937, Tobin began to consolidate the middle-class vote generally, obtaining support by anti-Nichols Republicans as well as from other Irish Democrats. This consolidation, however, became especially evident in 1941, when Tobin and Curley combined to receive over 90% of the vote.<sup>1877</sup> In that election, the vote split on class lines, with Curley obtaining votes from the non-Irish working class (such as the Italians of the North End and East Boston and the African-Americans of the South End), while Tobin received the support of the city's middle-class, including the Yankees and Jews that had been strongly for Nichols in 1925. In this regard, we see the development of a clear class politics in which middle-class and working-class Irish fought for power. By the 1950s, it became clear that this division was not simply one associated with Curley as a candidate, as it continued even after he fell from political significance. In this way, a new political system had emerged, in which class divisions amongst the Boston Irish began to matter when the old divide of the Irish community against the Yankees did not.

In noting the rise of this new form of politics, it is essential to note what did not go away in connection with it. Ethno-religious solidarity remained a calling card in Boston urban life, politically and otherwise, in the decades that followed 1925. Political appeals based on ethnicity have lasted in Boston, and attempts are still made to use ethnic background as a way to receive votes, going beyond the Irish into conflicts between Latinos and African-Americans for public office. Moreover, the other side to ethno-

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<sup>1877</sup> Unless otherwise sourced, all comments on the election results in this section are based on the official election returns for Boston.

religious solidarity, the dislike of the other, has remained continuous in Boston, with a continued sense among working-class Irish of the community being beleaguered and oppressed by its foes. Much of the rhetoric by foes of busing in 1970s Boston, for example, demonstrated a feeling that busing was imposed on them by suburbanites. This has led to backlash against other ethnic groups that have been seen as threatening, be it Boston's Italians and Jews in the 1930s, or African-Americans in the decades following the 1960s.<sup>1878</sup> However, the ability for ethno-religious solidarity to hold continued political sway vanished for a pair of reasons. The most important of these was the disappearance of any group that could challenge the Boston Irish for control of the city. Until the rise in political power of the African-American community of Boston in the 1970s and the 1980s, after the mid-1920s there was no ethnic group in any position to challenge the hegemony of the Boston Irish. Even when African-Americans rose in significance, the appeals made by Boston Irish politicians shifted, as they went from being those of ethno-religious solidarity to having a more explicitly racial sense of solidarity.<sup>1879</sup> Until then, however, there was no longer a need to rally around ethnicity if there was no chance of the ethnicity being politically threatened, which resulted in a shift in terms of what was politically important, going from attempts to unite the Boston Irish to fighting on differences within the community.

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<sup>1878</sup> For a book-length study on 1930s ethnic tensions, see Stack. There are several works dealing with racial tensions in Boston post-WWII. Of these, James Jennings and Mel King, editors, *From Access to Power: Black Politics in Boston* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Books, 1986) has some interest as an understanding focused both in political terms, and with some interest in the historical origins of this climate.

<sup>1879</sup> The previously cited Jennings and King work heavily focuses on this as done in the 1970s and early 1980s, and contains much to demonstrate this point.

The other reason for the collapse of ethno-religious solidarity is evident when looking at the various appeals of the Irish candidates for Mayor of Boston in 1925. Looking at these appeals, there was little present that was both substantive in form and which could serve as a form of uniting the community. The campaign of Daniel Coakley demonstrates this quite well, with his explicit campaigning against the lace-curtain Irish of Boston. In these appeals, he openly discarded the possibility of ethnic unity by stating that he had no use for a substantial section of the community. Moreover, if the vote he received in Charlestown, South Boston, and Brighton can be used as a gauge, this appeal had legitimate popularity among many working-class Irish, suggesting a broad base for these resentments among working-class Irish. At the same time, his performance in the streetcar suburbs, where he sometimes polled fifth, demonstrates that the lace-curtain Irish had as little use for him as he did for them. In other cases, the stances of the candidates were ones that could not be reconciled. James T. Moriarty's campaigning on labor matters was not going to appeal to the same voters who had backed Joseph H. O'Neil's campaign for suburban street and garbage improvements, nor were Thomas C. O'Brien's campaigns for reform likely to have a chance among the same voters that liked James T. Purcell's opposition to reform. Even certain vote splits suggest this class divide, such as O'Neil running even with Glynn in middle and upper-class areas while losing decisively in working-class areas. This all further indicates that ethno-religious solidarity had fallen apart in 1925, and that new divisions based chiefly on class were emerging amongst the Boston Irish, even as the various candidates failed to recognize this. This was only furthered by other demographic shifts, such as the increased rise of the Irish

middle-class following 1925. Unity in 1925 was ultimately impossible because those who were running for mayor were running on issues that inherently split the community. In the future, rather than trying to force a unity that no longer existed, politics in Boston would center along these differences, making electoral politics demonstrative of divisions among the Boston Irish.

This transition from the politics of ethno-religious solidarity to the politics of class divide were furthered by the demise of the Good Government Association after the 1933 election. The GGA had always been as much of a hindrance as it was an aid for those who gained its support. As an organization, it had long held the image of being the private preserve of the handful of people who made up the Executive Board, and, in terms of ethnicity, class, and political affiliations, was regarded as having no connection with the electorate of Boston as a whole, explaining why there was no real rank-and-file behind the organization. This further led to charges that the organization's goals were self-serving, particularly in an economic sense, and that they didn't play fair in their political practices. Some of this, of course, was self-serving in nature: it cannot be a surprise that the basically unethical Coakley and the patronage-dependent Glynn were the major candidates for Mayor in 1925 most explicitly against the GGA. However, the events of 1925 in certain regards justified their charges: the GGA had waited to the last minute to back the one Yankee Protestant with a chance of winning in the face of a rank-and-file who seems to have been heavily split about backing him due to his ties to Innes. Moreover, there is some evidence that this was not a fluke occurrence: the diaries of George R. Nutter, by the 1920s the leading figure in the GGA, demonstrate quite



frequently that he had no use for the Boston Irish politically or otherwise.<sup>1880</sup> As a result, their presence helped to complicate the issue of political respectability that had long been important among middle-class Boston Irish by coming across as an organization trying to dictate reform from above. This was an especially poor image to have in Boston, as the tradition of city offices being controlled by state government made them especially sensitive to this matter. Overall, the death of the GGA helped to further the shift away from ethno-religious solidarity in two regards. By no longer existing, the GGA could no longer be used as a club to encourage the Irish to unite against it and its candidates. Additionally, it was now possible for middle-class Irish candidate to build coalitions, running on the platform of respectability in government, without the GGA to emerge as an issue. In these ways, paradoxically, the GGA might have held back what it was hoping for more than it had accomplished its goals.

Overall, the events of 1925 were both an end and a beginning in Boston local politics. The efforts by the Democratic City Committee to find a unity candidate marked the last time that organization tried to claim the role that it had in Boston politics before the Charter of 1909. O'Neil, Keliher, and W.T.A. Fitzgerald, similarly, can be seen as making a last stand politically before their generations in Boston politics permanently vanished. Even Malcolm Nichols' election as Mayor can be seen in this way: besides being the last Yankee and last Republican elected Mayor of Boston to date, he was also the last example of someone getting elected Mayor of Boston through a united non-Irish vote and in the face of Irish opposition. However, it is the events that point to the future

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<sup>1880</sup> The George R. Nutter Diaries are held at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

of Boston politics that would be of most importance. Chief among these is the sense that class divisions between the Irish working-class and the Irish middle-class would matter heavily in later years. The division between the political objectives of Glynn and Coakley versus those of O'Neil, O'Brien, Keliher, and Fitzgerald, would be those that Curley fought Tobin over, and that future generations of Boston Irish politics would fight over. This establishment of ideological lines is especially notable, in the sense that it was not an election that would produce figures of future importance in Boston politics. Even Coakley, who had the most success afterwards, basically went from being a behind-the-scenes fixer to a fixer in the public eye. Instead, it is the setting of the ground rules for future political engagement in Boston that made this election of significance. While those who ran in 1925 would largely not play important roles in Boston's future, the way in which they fought set a pattern for future political engagement. Rather than trying to unite against a common foe, the Boston Irish would fight one another for political power. Moreover, this has lasted: in the last mayoral election, State Representative Martin Walsh was elected mayor with the strong support of organized labor, defeating City Councilor John Connolly, who ran a campaign focused on school reform. In their ethnicities and their bases of support, they demonstrate the continuance of Boston politics reflecting class divisions amongst the Boston Irish, continuing the pattern set in 1925.

### **Conclusion: The Nature of Urban Politics in The 1920s**

Having considered urban politics in Chicago, Detroit, and Boston, there is one question that merits consideration. What can we learn about the 1920s, and particularly about urban politics in the 1920s, by having looked at these three case studies? When aggregated, there are several points that become clear about the working of urban politics during the period.<sup>1881</sup> One of the most important of these is the sense that the image of reformers fighting bosses for control of the city, the mode of analysis that tended to dominate studies of urban politics during the twentieth century, loses its relevance when looking at specific examples of urban political conduct. None of these cities had one boss with hegemonic control over a party organization; instead, multiple forces were present in the urban political sphere, fighting for a say on policy matters. All three of these case studies demonstrate the limitations to theories in which political organizations have unquestionable dominance. In Chicago, the selection of candidates by both the Democrats and the Republicans was meant to try to unite factions at war with each other within the party. Charles Bowles' rise without any factional support demonstrates how limited a role these organizations played in Detroit. Finally, the failure of the Democratic City Committee to clear the field for one candidate in Boston demonstrates their complete irrelevance. Even notable factional leaders have clear limits: William Hale Thompson couldn't really find a candidate to replace him in Chicago, and both James Michael Curley and the combination of John Fitzgerald and Martin Lomasney had

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<sup>1881</sup> For the most part, material discussed in this section has been considered in either the Introduction or in the case studies for Chicago, Detroit, and Boston. Citations for claims made, when not already granted, can be found in those sections.

limited abilities in terms of getting the electorate to back their candidates. In all of these ways, then, it is clear that much about urban politics is lost by fixating on bosses, as they usually did not have the powers attributed in myth.

By the same token, the imagery surrounding reform is complicated in this study. On the one hand, it is very clear that reform still had importance in the 1920s: all three candidates in the Chicago general election, all three candidates in 1924 Detroit, and most of the candidates running in Boston portrayed themselves as reformers of one stripe or another. This is a useful corrective, as it demonstrates that reform imagery had not died off during the 1920s. At the same time, it becomes clear that reform was a concept with a vast array of interpretations. William Dever, Arthur Lueder, and William Cunnea were reform candidates in Chicago offering significantly different types of reform, and, based on the final results, these types of reform reflected differences in opinions on the subject by various groups in the city. In Detroit and Boston, the major reform groups in electoral politics were faced with conflicting demands on who they should support. The Detroit Citizens League was torn between the demands of the businessmen who funded the organization and the Protestant laymen who tended to follow their political advice; the Good Government Association with the choice of backing a Protestant Republican or a group of reformist Irish candidates. In both cases, the organization took the former route, with consequences: the DCL watched much of its normal support desert the organization for a candidate who represented their values more, while the GGA guaranteed their permanent alienation from the largest ethnic group in Boston by backing Malcolm Nichols. Even the question of who had the right to claim to be a reformer was at stake:

Dever and Lueder backers both pointed to unsavory supporters of the other, various charges of bossism and misconduct was in the air in Detroit, and, if the campaign charges meant anything, all the candidates in Boston were running as fronts for someone else. Overall, this demonstrates that reform was still held to be a value of importance, but that there was no clear sense as to what this concept meant in practice.

Further demonstrating the complexity of reform was the conduct of those elected as reform candidates once in office. William Dever changed his reform style, going from focusing on social reform and municipal ownership to structural reform and the enforcement of Prohibition. In these ways, he ended up becoming less the candidate his backers thought they were getting and more like the vanquished Lueder in his stances. Charles Bowles, long associated with opposition to vice, once in office gained close ties to gamblers, resulting in his recall after nine months in office. Malcolm Nichols, meanwhile, turned out to be what such foes as Thomas C. O'Brien had charged him with in 1925, being seen ultimately as the flunky of Republican political operatives and running an administration that managed to damage GGA credibility even more than backing him in the first place had. None of these transformations can be considered identical, but all of these have in common the sense of a reform candidate who abandoned the audience who had backed them into office originally. In all of these cases, there were political consequences: Dever lost his reelection bid due to the desertion of working-class ethnic voters, Bowles rapidly devolved into being a fringe candidate in the 1930s, and Nichols lost a bid for mayor in 1933 when upper-crust Brahmin refused to vote for him even as many working-class Irish were. This change of affairs suggests a

complication in regarding urban voters as abandoning reform. Once looking at the particularities in each circumstance, it become apparent that what urban voters did was less giving up on reform generally, and more responding negatively to candidates they felt betrayed them in one form or another. With this in mind, it becomes clear that more about reform requires an understanding of audiences for reform, rather than just the ideas and stances of reformers.

A notable trend during the elections under survey is the rise and fall of the Ku Klux Klan as a force in urban politics during the 1920s. 1923 Chicago can be taken as representing an early emergence of the Klan, as non-elite Protestants homeowners on the fringes of the city turned to Arthur Millard and Klan-backed candidates for the City Council in response to the threat of Catholics and Jews with far different values entering their neighborhoods. Ultimately this had a limited impact overall: there weren't enough of these residents to become a dominant force in Chicago politics, and no one backed by the Klan made it into elective office. 1924 Detroit, however, demonstrates the Klan at its peak: tapping into the established culture of political Protestantism in Detroit, the Klan came within a recount of winning the office of mayor through the backing of non-elite Protestant voters. 1925, however, demonstrates the ultimate failure of the Klan as a political power in spite of a serious campaign. In Detroit, the efforts of the Klan to elect their candidate failed as elite Protestants, finding no particular reason to back Bowles, broke away with their working-class peers to back John W. Smith, who may have been a Catholic with labor ties but who still had been respectful to their interests in office. In Boston, meanwhile, the Klan was seen as not being a real issue in the election, and that

the use of the Klan (and of Alonzo Cook, widely seen as being at least sympathetic to that organization) by Curley was more a way to scare voters than as a warning of a serious threat. In these ways, these races demonstrate the rise and fall of a movement, and suggest the value both of using similar races in other cities to observe the same practices and the importance of preexisting local conditions for the Klan to take a foothold.

Another commonality that becomes clear looking at these elections is the way in which the ways cities were able to govern themselves affected the nature of their political practices. The presence of two parties and multiple factions dueling for control in Chicago, for instance, came from a political system where power (and, not coincidentally, patronage) was divided between various governments and where the Mayor needed to build a faction in order to have authority against a City Council with substantial powers. In Detroit, home rule and a new charter had wiped away the governing structures of previous decades in the 1910s, helping to create a system where various groups held power rather than parties and where the factional system was weak enough to enable someone like Charles Bowles to have a major breakthrough. Finally, the various ways in which the commonwealth of Massachusetts took powers from the city of Boston helped fuel a political system where much campaigning reflected resentment of state government, while the lack of a role for political parties helped ethno-religious solidarity rise as a form of mass mobilization. All of these points are essential in order to understand the ways in which local politics worked in these cities, and they also point to a need to understand differences in structures in other cities. Only by understanding differences in governmental structure and powers can we understand fully the political

workings of the city, as the forms of urban politics served to deeply influence how urban politics functioned.

### **Issues: What Was At Stake?**

Another point of relevance involves issues that were constant in each of the cities under consideration. The most notable of these issues was that of mass transportation. In all three of these cities, opinions concerning mass transportation ended up playing a significant role in shaping the politics of these cities. In Chicago, one of the largest issues separating the candidates was that of municipal ownership, with the strong stances taken for it by Dever and Cunnea being seen as in contrast to a Lueder who was seemingly not interested in that subject. In Detroit, municipal ownership had been accomplished by 1924, leaving a situation where the threat of John Smith wrecking municipal operations was contrasted with the charge of Joseph A. Martin having enabled the mismanagement of the Detroit United Railways, helping to create the climate where Charles Bowles was able to make a breakthrough in part out of resentment of negative campaigning. The next year, one of Bowles' chief issues became opposition to building a subway system, arguing that putting sections of the streetcar system underground would be both cheaper and quicker to do. In Boston, the existence of a long-term public-private partnership operating the Boston Elevated complicated the issue, as municipal ownership was seen as impossible while the contracts were in effect. However, even there transportation emerged as an issue, with both subways and elevated highways being proposed as new forms of transportation in the core of the city. In these respects, a clear continuity is present between the 1920s and the Progressive Era, as issues concerning control of public



transportation were a mainstay of that era, and the introduction of municipal ownership in Detroit in particular served as a 1920s resolution to something that had been an issue since the 1890s. In this respect, the ways in which the 1920s were not a clean break from past decades becomes clearer, as one of the leading issues of the past still was key politically in this period.

Another issue that appeared in all of these cities is that one most associated with the 1920s, Prohibition. Here, three different perspectives on the issue were present. In Chicago, the issue was most heavily contested in the Republican primary, with staunchly anti-Prohibition Bernard Barasa and staunchly pro-Prohibition Arthur Millard making their stances on the subject their chief issue. In both their cases, these stances were of limited effectiveness: Barasa was largely unable to overcome his lack of any factional support, while Millard failed to cross-over to any voters beyond those non-elite Protestant homeowners who were both his base and the chief backers of Prohibition in Chicago. In the general election, neither side made it much of an issue in a city heavily opposed to Prohibition, but a climate where the actions of William Hale Thompson made appeals to lawbreaking unpopular. Detroit, on the other hand, was much more split on Prohibition, with large numbers of residents having backed it in a public referendum in 1916, while the city at the same time gained the reputation as being the most fervent one in terms of breaking the law. Charles Bowles in his campaigns made his support for law enforcement and opposition to the “blind pigs” operating in Detroit one of his key campaign issue, while his chief foe John W. Smith came across as being utterly indifferent to Prohibition enforcement. In this case, the cultural divide on Prohibition becomes very apparent, as

Bowles carried almost all the areas in the city that had voted for Prohibition just a few years earlier. In Boston, Prohibition played a more complicated role. The two leading Boston Irish candidates, Theodore Glynn and Joseph O'Neil, were non-drinkers themselves, and even Daniel Coakley did not make anti-Prohibition appeals a chief part of his campaign. Instead, this emerged chiefly as something used against Malcolm Nichols, a Prohibition opponent in the 1910s, by foes of his within the Republican Party to try to prevent his election. The fact that this utterly failed is significant, as it demonstrates that very few Republicans were willing to focus on that issue in Boston when it could cost them the chance to elect a Mayor. In these ways, all three of these cities demonstrate both that Prohibition was an issue unavoidable in urban politics, but also that its ultimate significance was mixed and heavily dependent on the overall climate of a particular city.

Still another issue that connected all three of these cities was infrastructural expansion. In all three of these cities, the matter of building city infrastructure had become an issue due to specific local conditions: Chicago due to the popularity of the Chicago Plan and the use of building by William Hale Thompson as a way to gain support, Detroit due to the rapidly growing outlying areas that had been annexed in the preceding decade, and Boston due to the clout that neighborhood-based civic improvement associations had gained after the enactment of the Charter of 1909. As a result, infrastructure emerged as an issue in all three of these cities, particularly aimed at voters in outlying areas. In Chicago, all candidates pledged to build a subway to resolve transportation difficulties. Joseph A. Martin's mayoral bid in Detroit was complicated by

charges of misconduct during his administration of the Department of Public Works, and the confirmation of substantial rottenness in the department shortly after the election seems to have played a key role in ending his political career. Finally, stances on infrastructural matters demonstrated a major division among the Boston Irish, with more middle-class candidates having a greater focus on building in outlying neighborhoods compared to a greater interest in the city's core by working-class candidates. This serves generally to point to infrastructure as something that simultaneously united almost all candidates during the period as a major concern, while at the same time demonstrating substantial differences among them in terms of audience based on the nature of this construction.

Just as important as noting constant issues in these cities is understanding why some issues mattered in certain cities but not in other ones. In Chicago, for example, the administration of public schools was a major issue in the mayoral election because of both major scandal in school administration and the fact that Mayors, by appointing Board of Education members, held considerable authority over the school system. In Detroit and Boston, this was not an issue of the same nature, as the school systems were run by independent elected boards who were not responsible to the mayor: schools were not really an issue in Boston, and in Detroit they were an issue because of the Klan's desire to ban parochial education rather than due to concerns with the public schools. In Detroit, all candidates engaged in some discussion of metropolitan government, while Joseph A. Martin managed to be the candidate of the city's elite while still being able to urge municipal ownership of the city's gas service. Metropolitan government did not

emerge in either Chicago, with its fractured government, or Boston, where such government was associated with increased state control over local affairs, while calls for municipal ownership beyond streetcars were largely limited to the Socialists in Chicago and basically non-existent in Boston due to limitations on those cities' ability to control public utilities compared to state regulation. Finally, the Boston election saw partisan loyalty emerge as a chief issue, as various candidates among the Boston Irish used the threat of a Republican mayor as a means to try to gain votes. This practice, seemingly tied to the strong connection between ethnicity and partisan loyalties in Boston, was in sharp contrast to the practices both in Chicago, where the candidates for the most part avoided being narrowly partisan, and in Detroit, where all candidates were Republicans and the partisan issue was completely negated. As a result, it is clear that issues in many cases were similarly place-based, making an understanding of the history of a place essential to understand their political practices.

### **Group Practices**

Beyond common issues that were at stake in these elections, it is relevant to note common divisions in terms of group political behavior. Most notable among these was efforts to make religion a major issue in the election. In Chicago, whispering campaigns broke out late in the race concerning William Dever's Catholicism, and the charge was made that backers of Arthur Lueder were playing a role in spreading this campaign. In Detroit, religion was the main issue: the rise of the Klan in 1924 connected directly to the development of an ethos of political Protestantism in the previous decade, and was supported by many as a reaction to the fact that both Martin and Smith were Catholics.

Boston had religion as an explicit issue and as a latent one: Daniel Coakley's campaigning for mayor often explicitly called on his Catholicism and that of the Boston Irish as a reason to support him in denunciation of both Brahmin and of better-off Irish who were seen as abandoning their Catholic values, while campaign tactics by others, such as James Michael Curley's exaggerating the importance of Alonzo Cook as a candidate, seem meant to have a similar appeal. In all of these cases, the effects of this campaigning seem to have been short of what was desired. This campaigning against Dever may have swung some outlying areas against him, but was ineffective against a more general landslide in beating him; the Klan was able to make Charles Bowles a serious candidate for mayor but was unable to unite Protestants on his behalf to elect him; and Coakley's campaigning made a behind-the-scenes figure a major candidate but was unable to unite the Boston Irish. In all, these approaches point to religious feelings as being a common issue, but those resentments, by themselves, were not enough to swing elections.

Another way in which religious issues made themselves present involved sectarian divisions among the various candidates in the final vote. All three of these elections had such a division, but, in all cases, the division was more complicated than simply Protestants versus Catholics. In Chicago, a rough division was present between white Protestants for Lueder and Catholics for Dever. However, this splitting demonstrated clear differences based on ethnicity, and, while Lueder did poorly among all heavily Catholic ethnic groups, Dever received substantial support from some Protestant groups, reflecting a campaign where he had scorned sectarianism and had

made a strong campaign to gain independent support. In Detroit, working-class Catholics voted heavily for John W. Smith in both 1924 and 1925, while working-class white Protestants did the same for Charles Bowles. Upper-class Protestants, however, were more complex with their vote: they backed Joseph Martin in 1924 and John Smith in 1925, in both cases suggesting that stances on the issues, rather than pure sectarianism, were their most important concerns in voting. Finally, Malcolm Nichols had been able to win a united white Protestant vote in his bid for mayor of Boston, and received very little support in working-class Irish areas. However, there was no real consolidated Irish vote: relative support for Theodore Glynn, Joseph O'Neil, and Daniel Coakley varied depending on levels of class and suburbanization within various wards, while middle-class Irish portions of the city seem far more willing to vote for Nichols than their working-class peers were. Once again, these divisions reflect religion as being a key item in understanding political patterns during the 1920s. At the same time, however, they demonstrate a need to be careful in understanding these issues, as ethnic status and class status both resulted in breaks from the pattern of simple religious divisions even in places where the greatest levels of polarization would seem apparent.

Demonstrating the complexities of ethnoreligious voting in this period are two groups that did not fit into the Protestant/Catholic pattern. In Chicago, Jewish voting appears to have been split based on class and national origin divisions: working-class Russian Jews in Lawndale gave support to William Dever similar to that of their Italian, Polish, and Bohemian neighbors, while better-off German Jews in Kenwood and Hyde Park appear to have narrowly supported Arthur Lueder. In Detroit, the presence of the

notoriously anti-Semitic Klan as a political force led to mixed patterns in voting: after largely backing Joseph Martin in the 1924 primary, Detroit's Jews swung to John Smith in the 1924 general election and supported him overwhelmingly in 1925. In Boston, the political practices of the city's Jews reflected both a growing trend to back Republicans in the 1910s and the ways in which much of the campaigning by Irish candidates was exclusive of the interests of other ethnic groups. Malcolm Nichols overwhelmingly won the support of Boston's Jews as a candidate, while Thomas C. O'Brien's refusal to use ethnicity as a campaign issue and efforts to gain Jewish support resulted in his doing far better among Jewish voters than he did amongst the Boston electorate as a whole. In these cities, it is clear that there was no one monolithic Jewish vote: divisions took place based on class and national origins, and specific issues and local conditions resulted in different patterns of political activity. This meant that varying stances could take place along other sectarian divides: Jewish voters could support a Catholic in Detroit, a Protestant in Boston, and both in Chicago while still engaging in interest-based voting.

For African-Americans, both their particular voting patterns and the significance of this varied from city to city. In Chicago, perhaps the most notable political shift of the election was the hard work engaged in by various committees and politicians to obtain African-American support for William Dever. This led to Dever carrying the African-American vote at a time when it was considered to be monolithically Republican. In Detroit, most African-American groups and organizations active in politics (with the Universal Negro Improvement Association a notable exception) heavily backed John Smith in both of his campaigns, in spite of efforts by other candidates (most notably

Charles Bowles in 1925) to court their support. Finally, the African-American community in Boston was less significant than that in Chicago or Detroit: it backed Malcolm Nichols overwhelmingly, but received little attention in the campaign. These results indicate that, as their numbers grew in Northern cities, African-Americans became a more and more important group for political considerations. This also indicates that, even before the realignment of African-Americans starting in the 1930s, there was already a growing sense of independent political action, with African-Americans not being simply a brokered vote in any of these cities but backing candidates based on their own interests.

Women held a complicated political role in the cities under consideration. In Chicago, women played a significant role in organizing for both the Dever and Lueder campaigns, with African-American women playing a key role in Dever's carrying the African-American vote, and with female backing seen as symbolizing both candidates' status as reformers. However, there were also clear limitations to the roles they were playing: no women were major candidates for public office, and they were treated in a decidedly auxiliary role, with the Lueder campaign's abuse of Margaret Haley's support of Dever demonstrating the limitations to what roles could be played by women. In Detroit, the Martin and Smith campaigns largely sidelined women, while Bowles' backing by women was considered highly significant: women were among the rioters outside the Arena Gardens, and a woman got his campaign in trouble in 1925 by making remarks about tar and feathers. In this respect, one can see both how Bowles' message against vice and malfeasance could appeal to Protestant women, and how this gave them



a political role that they had not held in Detroit in the past. Finally, Boston had certain visible spheres present for political action by women: the School Committee was considered as being a place for women, but, as Frances Curtis discovered, there were limitations to how seriously a female mayoral candidate would be taken, and many candidates seemed to have limited interest in engaging in specific outreach to women. In all three of these cities, women were trying to claim some role in the urban political landscape, and, while approaches differed, in each case it became apparent that there was a line in place for women's political activities.

The role organized labor had in local politics in these cities reflected differences in both the strength of labor and the structure of local politics. In Chicago, the Chicago Federation of Labor had been in decline starting in the late 1910s due to a combination of failure in organizing steel and stockyard workers, the rapid decline of the Farmer-Labor Party, and such challenges as injunctions and the Landis Award. Given this set of circumstances, it is no surprise that the CFL largely did not play a role in this election, though the competition between Dever and Cunnea for labor backing suggests that labor support was still seen as significant. The Detroit Federation of Labor was operating in a heavily open-shop city, and largely had been limited to organizing craft labor. That John W. Smith was heavily criticized for his labor backing in 1924 is therefore not surprising, though his success demonstrates that labor backing was not the political kiss of death in Detroit. The Boston Central Labor Union, which had been challenged in labor organizing after the Boston Police Strike and politically by the return to a ward-based City Council, chose to throw its support to James Moriarty, of note as both a labor leader and a City

Councilor. When Moriarty failed to qualify for the ballot, however, the BCLU had no fallback candidate, resulting in it playing a limited role in the election. The general decline of organized labor is clearly apparent, but it is also clear that labor still held some political vitality even in places where it was limited in organizing labor, suggesting that it should not be dismissed in political terms.

Organized business interests had just as mixed a level of political importance and significance as their rivals in organized labor held. There seems to have been no coordinated effort by business as an organized group to play a role in the 1923 election in Chicago, with William Cunnea ultimately charging both Dever and Lueder with having close ties to corporate interests. To a large degree, this reflects the nature of the election and of government structure in Chicago: the rival versions of reform being offered in this election largely would only bother utilities, and even then the limitations of local control over utilities served to limit this as a threat. Detroit, more than any of these cities, was one where business interests like the Employers Association and the Association of Commerce held economic power during the 1920s. However, they had limited success in the political world: Joseph A. Martin, backed by many business associations in 1924, finished third in his bid for mayor, while the victorious John W. Smith did well enough courting business that he was able to largely have their support the next year. Finally, Boston was a place where the structure of government gave local government relatively limited regulatory powers over business. This seems to have led to a position where business ties were open to a variety of candidates: the Brahmin of the city might have largely voted for Malcolm Nichols, but his chief rivals were a meatpacking executive in

Theodore Glynn and a banker in Joseph O'Neil, both of whom used their business ties as positives while campaigning. In these ways, business had a complicated political position in urban politics: many candidates favorable to business were present, but the ability and desire of business interests to elect their own candidates for office was far more limited than the traditional images of the decade in urban politics would suggest.

The political left, like organized labor, is commonly regarded as having a rough decade in the 1920s, which is demonstrated to some degree in these elections. William Cunnea in Chicago had the best performance to date by a Socialist candidate, in a race where he blended calls for civic reform with Socialist economic concerns. However, this performance was still worse than polling had suggested, behind the Labor Party's performance in 1919, and based heavily on ethnic support from German-Americans on the Near North Side, all of which suggests why the Socialists continued a long-term decline in Chicago. Detroit was a place where the left was focused chiefly on trying to organize automotive workers, and even the threat of Klan government did not result in organized left political movement in either 1924 or 1925. Boston, meanwhile, was associated with left fervor in the 1920s, often in connection with various elements of city and state administration used to suppress speech in Boston. However, this lacked any clear political impact: no candidates of left-wing parties ran, and even the likes of Daniel Coakley, in his flamboyant appeals to the Irish working-class, cannot be considered on the political left. Ultimately, however, these limitations in action reflect local political traditions: Chicago had long had a political left of strength, while Detroit had not had that be the case since the 1880s and Boston never had such a tradition. As a result, while there

is a clear decline, part of this reflects limitations in terms of being political players overall.

The press, particularly the major daily newspapers, had decidedly mixed role in terms of being able to shape these elections. In Chicago, it was widely believed that the influence of both the *Daily News* and the *Tribune* had played a major role in the citizen committees that helped make Dever and Lueder serious candidates. However, it is hard to say what impact the press had in this election otherwise: the fervent support of Dever by Hearst publications was seen as much as a hindrance to Dever as a help, and the rest of the daily press was largely nonplussed in their coverage. Similarly, the Klan rose to be a force in Detroit politics in 1924 in spite of strong opposition from all newspapers in that city, and the *News*' decision to downplay the Klan in 1925 due to resentment of John Smith seems to have aided Charles Bowles not a bit. More complicated is the role of the press in Boston. In general, press decisions about endorsements seem to have reflected positions already taken: the *Post* backing Joseph O'Neil demonstrating a perspective on politics similar to that of the Irish middle-class, or the various Boston newspapers that were ordinarily Republican backing Malcolm Nichols, while the decision of the Hearst newspapers not to play a significant role seems to reflect the changing nature of William Randolph Hearst's political ideology. However, there is one exception to this in the *Telegram*, which staunchly and in a very distinctive style backed the candidacy of Daniel Coakley. This publication aimed itself heavily at the Irish working-class of Boston, and in its distinctive style may explain part of Coakley's success in gaining Irish working-class support. Overall, however, the press held a mixed political position at this point: it

clearly still had some significance in political practices, but was not as influential as either itself or its critics wanted to believe.

### **So, What's The Greater Significance?**

Having made these comparative points, it is of great value to take a step back and note what larger points are demonstrated by these case studies. One of significance involves the roots of the New Deal urban coalition that realigned American politics in the 1930s. The coalition of working-class Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans, combined with substantial minority backing from an intellectual and elite set, that supported William Dever strongly resembles the coalition that came to back the New Deal in many other urban areas during the 1930s, while the Protestant homeowners in outlying areas that were most likely to back Arthur Lueder would become the voters that were most likely to oppose the New Deal in later years. The fact that this was a coalition built around social reform is similarly important, as this matches the ideological impulses present in the New Deal. The importance of this concerns understanding how the New Deal urban coalition came to be. Some analysis chose to root in voters backing Al Smith in 1928, or in those supporting Robert LaFollette in 1924, while others have noted the massive increase in turnout nationwide in the 1930s, and still more have noted how this coalition developed slowly during the 1930s, rather than all at once.<sup>1882</sup> This Chicago example suggests yet another important way to look at this in which local political practices rather than national are key, and in which these coalitions were starting to emerge long before the New Deal. This further suggests a grassroots origin for this

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<sup>1882</sup> For a discussion of these theories, focusing ultimately on increased turnout, see Kristi Andersen, *The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

coalition based in desires already present, rather than simply being a reaction to events at the national level.

The nature of the Detroit election has important suggestions involving the presence of class unity in American politics. In Detroit, those voting for Charles Bowles were non-elite Protestants who found themselves unable to tolerate the appeals to the business elite that the Detroit Citizens League and such figures as Joseph Martin engaged in. At the same time, however, these voters could not unite with class peers for John Smith, as they considered Catholicism and the chance of a Catholic mayor to be a great threat. As noted earlier, this is rooted in the political Protestantism that had emerged in Detroit in the 1910s, championed by the same Detroit Citizens League that was rebuked by it a decade later. The full significance of this emerged later, as a series of candidates backed by the United Auto Workers met with defeat in the 1930s and 1940s. In all of these cases, this was the product of a Detroit working-class that, due to religious and (especially in the 1940s) racial divides were unable to closely cooperate with one another. A lack of unity across racial lines has been noted by many scholars as present in national and local politics. The rise of the Klan in Detroit suggests that this had roots beyond racial tensions, and that anything that served to divide the working-class could make their cooperation impossible. More importantly, the Klan was a decidedly grass-roots phenomenon, suggesting that the belief that these tensions are solely the creation of elites splitting the working class is a gross oversimplification. This is a point that could use further development for its applicability elsewhere, but may provide strong for future research.

While Detroit points to ethnic divisions preventing class unity, Boston points to divisions developing within an ethnic group. In the two decades prior to 1925, ethno-religious solidarity had grown in significance as a means of uniting the Boston Irish politically, even as growing changes within the community made this unity less tenable. In 1925, solidarity broke down, demonstrating significant differences between the opinions of the working-class of South Boston and the middle-class of Dorchester. Moreover, these differences were often issue-based: it is hard to see where Joseph O'Neil and Daniel Coakley would have found common ground. In these ways, the 1925 election demonstrated the evolution of the Boston Irish from a group united against a common foe to one fighting amongst itself for political power. This suggests an evolutionary point in ethnic politics generally, in which ethnic groups start off in political life calling for unity against outside threats, and, once the need for unity declines, beginning fighting internally for political power as a result of underlying divisions within the community. This overall suggests another point of future study, in terms of understanding how other ethnic groups have transitioned from unity against external threat to internal disunity, and seeing how this has held over time. In any event, this serves as a useful corrective as it concerns previous understandings of the Boston Irish, as it shows that they were not a monolithic bloc and suggests that other ethnic groups should not be regarded as monolithic blocs in their political practices.

In addition to these points on national matters, there are several points relating to urban politics that are reflected generally in this study. The first of these is the demonstration that the urban electorate was by no means passive during the 1920s. In all

three of these cities, urban voters clearly took a strong interest in local affairs, be it the organization of numerous political committees in Chicago, the emergence of the Klan in reaction to existing political factions in Detroit, or the mass demonstrations that took place throughout Boston. It is clear in all of this that these voters were not following the dictates of others, but were acting in their own interests. The general reform wave in 1923 Chicago reflected strong grassroots support, the Klan rose in 1924 Detroit with the universal opposition of the political establishment, and the general fragmentation of the electorate in 1925 Boston demonstrates the lack of any force that could engage in unified political action. In these regards, the limitations of approaches to urban politics that focus solely on elite actors become readily apparent. In order to fully understand matters of urban politics, we cannot merely rely on understanding what those in high positions thought on such matters. Rather, we shall need to take seriously what the opinions of the electorate were, and treat it as something meriting consideration rather than being simply the results of them following dictates. In these regards, this demonstrates that there was no automatic deference to boss or businessman in the 1920s urban politics, and that the voter was willing to defy both if they felt that it was in their best interests.

Similarly relevant concerning the activity of the electorate in 1920s urban politics is that these actions were based on substantial issues. There is a tendency in writing about urban politics to describe it as if it were issue-free and suggest that the ability to obtain patronage was all that matters. This is clearly not the case in the three cities under consideration. Chicago was offering three different types of reform: did voters want economy in government and a focus on school reform, municipal ownership of the



streetcar lines, or an enactment of the Socialist platform? Similarly, those backing the Klan had a general idea in terms of what they wanted politically: they were wishing for the enforcement of Prohibition, general opposition to vice and corruption in municipal government, but also for a sense of government focused in individual interests, rather than being simply focused on the needs of business. Similarly, the divisions among the Boston Irish including differences in terms of general administration of the city, as voters were faced with the infrastructural program of Theodore Glynn, the fiscal conservatism and focus on outlying neighborhoods of Joseph O'Neil, the promise to strike a blow against all who had wronged them that Daniel Coakley offered, and the corruption fighting of Thomas O'Brien, to consider just the four most popular Irish candidates who made it into the general election. It is also clear that these issues as issues cannot be easily dismissed, as in all of these cases it is quite clear that these pledges are connecting to very different elements of the electorate. As a result, it is clear that more specific considerations of urban politics as issue-based are necessary, as the patronage-based assumptions that have been popular in the past are not tenable given the limitations of political party resources.

Having noted the basis of political participation as connected to issues, the nature of how these issues were understood merits consideration. Various attempts have been made to analyze electoral behavior on the basis of actions taken on either class or ethnic lines, and assuming that there was some level of inevitability in following these loyalties. There are limits, due to the nature of the existing source material, to any efforts to make sweeping judgments on this matter in one direction or another. However, it is clear when

looking at the example of these three cities that political practices were more complex than a purely ethnic or a purely class-based approach. Boston demonstrates the limitation of ethnic understandings well, as internal divisions among the Boston Irish shaped that election, while the ultimate failure of the Klan in Detroit came from upper-class and working-class Protestants having different political understandings. At the same time, even class politics could have an ethnic tinge: the Socialists in Chicago did better among Germans than other groups, and the Irish middle-class of Boston, even when it didn't politically correspond to its working-class peers, still was considerably different than the Yankee middle-class in their political loyalties. This suggests another place for future research, as it demonstrates that there is a need to understand these points better in order to fully understand urban political practices during the period.

Yet another point that is of value looking at these elections is the demonstration of a range of political options being present in the political climate of the 1920s. The traditional tendencies in imaging local politics as free of issues has also served to negate the wide variety of political options that were present for the voters in the urban sphere. In the case of these cities alone, it is apparent that there was a range of political options present for the voter, both in direct terms of stances taken and in connection with what approaches were seen as politically relevant. Ethnic nationalism and cross-ethnic cooperation, focuses on business and on the common man, and reform of government narrowly versus reform of general living conditions were all able to face off against one another as approaches to urban life that could be taken by the voters. It is clear that these impulses were able to exist in spite of any theoretical structural limitations to

government: the campaign of Charles Bowles in 1924, where he refused to admit primary defeat and ran as a write-in candidate, is simply the most notable example of how a cause could be seen to trump ordinary rules of governance. To a certain degree, all three of these case studies can be seen as violations of norms: reformers in a city notoriously hostile to reform, the Klan as a major urban mass movement, and a breakdown of ethnic unity in a city associated with ethnic homogeneity. However, it is my belief that it is precisely because of this sense of breakdown that larger tendencies that were hidden in other regards came to the forefront, and I suspect that these general points can be found in many cities other than those used as case studies. As a result, I believe that this study's findings can be transferred to others cities in the 1920s, and that, while the exact cases would differ, the general points would remain strong.

### **The Lasting Impact of The 1920s**

The events of the 1920s had impacts in all three of the cities under consideration as case studies that are still evident to the present day. In Chicago, the basic structural system that helped shape political practices in the 1920s has not gone away. While Rahm Emanuel has certain powers that his predecessors did not, such as more direct control over the Board of Education, there are still significant limitations present to the power of him or any mayor present in the structural system of Chicago government.<sup>1883</sup> There is still a need for the Mayor to have control over the City Council in order to be effective, as the “Council Wars” during most of the first term of the Harold Washington

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<sup>1883</sup> For a discussion of these changing rules, see Pauline Lipman, “A Brief History of the Board of Education”, <http://ilraiseyourhand.org/content/brief-history-board-education> (accessed 11/2/2015).

administration demonstrates.<sup>1884</sup> As a result, the impulse remains that those who lead the city must have control over party machinery as a means to prevent a return to the factionalism that was dominant during the era before the 1930s. While the exact ethnic formula has differed since 1923, there is also a lingering sense that, in order for challenges to the party apparatus to have any success, some broad coalition would need to be formed. To a degree, both of these coalitions to have emerged since 1931 demonstrate different views of reform present in 1923: the mix of lakefront voters, African-Americans, and residents of outlying areas who elected Jane Byrne in 1979 was in certain regards a combination of the voters Arthur Lueder was backed by in 1923 and the most notable group that broke away, while the African-Americans, Hispanics, and lakefronters who elected Harold Washington in 1983 and 1987 were the 1980s equivalent of the William Dever coalition.<sup>1885</sup> In general, however, groups challenging the organization have not been able to build these coalitions, leading to a string of reform defeats at the polls dating to 1939. In these ways, the machine built on the ethnic foundations formed by a social reform coalition has managed to last, surviving many of its contemporaries of eighty years ago.

In the case of Detroit, the bad feelings that came to the fore in 1924 and 1925 have remained powerful to the present day. White flight was closer to be absolute in Detroit than in any other major city, and this willingness to flee in many regards is connected to this sense of continued ethnic resentments. To a heavy degree, metropolitan

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<sup>1884</sup> For a study of Chicago politics largely focused on the “Council Wars” period, see David K. Fremon, *Chicago Politics, Ward by Ward* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

<sup>1885</sup> For the election results by ward in 1983 and 1987, see Fremon; the 1979 results are in *Chicago Tribune*. 2/28/1979, 10.

relations involving Detroit over the last forty years have been of a black city towards white suburbs, and have been notoriously rancorous, with the moves towards metropolitan government present in many other areas unable to take place in Detroit due to a mutual lack of goodwill. The flight of African-Americans out of Detroit, which has become especially pronounced in the last fifteen years, has done little to change these dynamics, nor has the migration of new immigrant groups to Detroit resulted in substantial change. Transportation, a major issue in Detroit during the 1920s, demonstrates these failings particularly well: after fifty years of work, no proposition for metropolitan transportation has managed to gain any traction due to distrust between city and suburbs, leading to Detroit being unable to establish the metropolitan bus systems so common in many other areas, and reaching the point where local funding for rail infrastructure had to come from private sources.<sup>1886</sup> This rancor has demonstrated itself in other ways: the appointment of an emergency manager to oversee Detroit's bankruptcy in 2013, while a substantial deviance from the home rule traditions that had emerged in Detroit in the early twentieth century, connects directly with this mutual distrust.<sup>1887</sup> Overall, there is a continued sense of fear and loathing present in the Detroit metropolitan

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<sup>1886</sup> For the transportation situation, see <http://m-1rail.com/about-m-1-rail/> (accessed 11/2/2015), and compare the official map of the SMART suburban system (<https://www.smartbus.org/Portals/0/System%20Maps/9-7-15%20Website%20System%20Map.pdf>, accessed 11/2/2015) to the unofficial one for the DDOT urban system (<https://detroitography.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/ddot-system-09-20132.png>, accessed 11/2/2015).

<sup>1887</sup> A full discussion of this law would take far more space than is available in this section, see [http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2012/09/michigan\\_decides\\_2012\\_emergenc.html](http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2012/09/michigan_decides_2012_emergenc.html) (accessed 11/2/2015), <https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/mi-citizens-take-emergency-manager-law-court-citing> (accessed 11/2/2015), and [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/EMF\\_Fact\\_Sheet2\\_347889\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/EMF_Fact_Sheet2_347889_7.pdf) (accessed 11/2/2015) for a range of perspectives.

area that has direct roots in the climate that led to the rise of the Klan, which has helped to make various issues concerning the governance of Detroit remain lasting problems.

Boston has experienced substantial transformations in terms of its population since the 1920s: the Jewish neighborhoods along Blue Hill Avenue are now African-American, the West End was redeveloped out of existence, and young professionals have replaced Brahmin in the Back Bay. In theory, these changes would mean an end to the hegemony of the Boston Irish in terms of local politics: with less than a quarter of Boston residents of Irish heritage, simply math suggests their continued dominance would be at an end. However, the results of the most recent election for mayor suggest that predictions of the end of the Boston Irish politically have been made early.<sup>1888</sup> In the 2013 race to replace Thomas Menino, the first non-Irish mayor since Malcolm Nichols, both candidates to make the run-off were of Irish heritage. However, this similar background hid differences in policy: State Representative Martin Walsh, who won the election, ran with the backing of organized labor, while his opponent, City Councilor John Connolly, ran on more conservative lines calling for school reform.<sup>1889</sup> Even their residences demonstrated differences, with Walsh's Dorchester being far more working class than Connolly's West Roxbury.<sup>1890</sup> The literal pattern of politics has changes

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<sup>1888</sup> For one example of this prediction, see Jack Beatty, "Whose City, Whose Hill?: The Tradition of Exclusivity in Boston Politics", in Emily Hiestand and Ande Zellman, editors, *The Good City: Writers Explore 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Boston* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 119.

<sup>1889</sup> For the relative positions of Walsh and Connolly, see Stephanie Ebbert, "John Connolly Was Out-Spent and Out-Organized", *Boston Globe*, 11/06/2013, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/11/06/john-connolly-falls-short-mayoral-dream/Wj4kodM86pvFK11GVaGmSJ/story.html> (accessed 11/2/2015).

<sup>1890</sup> For a reference to their residences, see Andy Metzger, "Latest poll shows dead heat in Mayor's race", *Dorchester Report* 10/23/2013, <http://www.dotnews.com/2013/latest-poll-shows-dead-heat-mayors-race> (accessed 11/2/2015).

compared to 1925: both Walsh and Connolly needed non-Irish support in order to be viable, whereas virtually none of the Irish candidates in 1925 were concerned with that. However, their candidacies in 2013 reflect a continuing remnant of politics from 1925, as Walsh and Connolly demonstrate continuing traditions of working-class and middle-class politics among the Boston Irish, with divisions within the community creating an audience. In these ways, 1925 as a turning point is continued, as the new ethnic politics coming to the fore then have managed to continue.

### **Retrospective: A Last Point on Significance**

The week after the 1923 election, Harold L. Ickes, longtime leader in Chicago reform causes, wrote to his longtime political associate Hiram Johnson concerning the election.<sup>1891</sup> He took pride in the success of the Independent Dever Club, noting in particular the success of himself and his associates in fighting the deployment of anti-Catholic rhetoric against William Dever. He also took great glee at the failure of Medill McCormick, who Ickes regarded as having betrayed Progressivism in the years following the mid-1910s, noting success in forcing McCormick in taking personal responsibility for Arthur Lueder, that Lueder's reputation as an effective Postmaster had been ripped to shreds, and that this in all likelihood had served to wreck McCormick's chances for reelection in 1924. Most important were two thoughts that Ickes had concerning the political future. He felt that he, Charles Merriam, and Raymond Robins had ended up in a stronger political position than they had in years, as a result both of the election of Dever

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<sup>1891</sup> All material in this section taken from Harold L. Ickes to Hiram Johnson, 4/10/1923, Harold L. Ickes Papers, Box 33, Folder 3, Library of Congress.

and their ability to work together on political matters for the first time in years. Even more important, however, were the hopes that Ickes had for Dever: Ickes believed that Dever would be able to offer an administration that could fix the mistakes of Thompson, and that he would be his own man in doing so. In all of these regards, Harold Ickes was clearly regarding a changed political future ahead of him, in which older factional matters would not be as relevant, and in which reformist policies would take to the forth. In this analysis, it is clear that real change was expected as a result of this election, demonstrating that it was seen as important.

Reinhold Niebuhr was in a funk as the 1924 Detroit election came to a close. Then pastor of the Bethel Evangelical Church in Detroit, he was dismayed at the rising tide of religious bigotry associated with the rise of the Klan, a rise which he desired to fight.<sup>1892</sup> In that mood, he sent a letter to William Lovett of the Detroit Citizens League the week before the election, congratulating him for his remarks on the mayoral election.<sup>1893</sup> In these remarks, there was a distinctly fatalistic tone: Niebuhr felt that nothing would be enough to fight against this bigotry, assuming its rise as being inevitable. Notable, Lovett was in no better mood about this situation: in his response, he regarded this bigotry as being just as inevitable as Niebuhr did, and noted that he could

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<sup>1892</sup> Unfortunately, there are limits to what can be said about either of these: almost nothing from Niebuhr's Detroit years is in the Reinhold Niebuhr Papers at the Library of Congress, and the Bethel Evangelical Church Records at the Bentley Historical Library contains virtually nothing related to Niebuhr.

<sup>1893</sup> R. Niebuhr to William Lovett, 10/27/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 8, Detroit Public Library.



only hope for a better situation in the future.<sup>1894</sup> In Lovett's case, this reflected weeks spent arguing with the Protestant laymen that had usually followed the Citizens League's advice, and trying to explain to them why the League could not support Charles Bowles. Overall, however, both Niebuhr's and Lovett's remarks suggest sort of shock at the strength religious bigotry held politically. They also suggested a complicated situation in terms of fighting back against this, as neither one of them was sure that anything could be done to stem this outbreak now that it had taken place. Overall, this suggests a sense of doom over the future of Detroit, in which bigotry would be enough to sway the voter in terms of who was selected to office.

In 1933, Henry Lee Shattuck, treasurer of Harvard and former member of the Massachusetts House, was observing the ongoing race for Mayor. Eight years earlier, Shattuck had been the most notable local Republican not to back Malcolm Nichols for mayor, resulting in the rumor that he was backing Joseph O'Neil.<sup>1895</sup> He grew vocally critical of Nichols as time passed: he noted in 1929 how alienated most Nichols backers had ended up concerning his administration, and in July of 1933 regarded Nichols' election as not having been one that had added to the reputation of the Republican Party.<sup>1896</sup> In late October, the Good Government Association, in what would be its last

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<sup>1894</sup> Lovett to Niebuhr, 10/19/1924, Detroit Citizens League Papers, Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 8, Detroit Public Library.

<sup>1895</sup> For this suspicion, see *Boston Post*, 10/31/1925, 1, 8.

<sup>1896</sup> Henry Lee Shattuck to Waldo L. Cook, 9/18/1929, Henry Lee Shattuck Papers, Carton 27, Folder 61.3, Massachusetts Historical Society; Shattuck to Theodore Robinson Plunkett, 7/15/1933, Henry Lee Shattuck Papers, Carton 27, Folder 61.4, Massachusetts Historical Society.

election, had engaged in planning for which Shattuck had obtained notes.<sup>1897</sup> The GGA had determined no chance for a Republican candidate unless the field was as split as it had been in 1925. They had no desire to back Nichols again, and regarded the possible election of William Foley as even more appalling. After discussing the possibility of Henry Parkman Jr., the GGA decided to back Frederick Mansfield, feeling it would be best to support the best Democratic candidate in the race. In this turn, a clear shift was present compared to 1925, when the GGA had been willing to back Malcolm Nichols even if it meant splitting the organization. It also suggested a change in understanding the relative qualities of candidates: after Nichols' administration, it was clear that being a Yankee Republican was no guarantee of good government, and that it therefore made the most sense to back a candidate who could offer that regardless of ethnicity and partisanship. It was also reflective on Frederick Mansfield, who was a candidate of Irish heritage whose record as a lawyer and in politics had led to trust by the GGA. While Shattuck did not back Mansfield, instead supporting Parkman in a bid more or less designed to keep Nichols out of office, the presence of these materials in his possession is notable in suggesting the rapid changes in understandings of reform that took place in a relative short period of time in Boston.<sup>1898</sup>

These three bits of correspondence varied in terms of their predictive powers. For Ickes, a change would come to Chicago politics, but not the one he anticipated.

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<sup>1897</sup> Planning notes, Good Government Association, 10/24/1933, Henry Lee Shattuck Papers, Carton 27, Folder 61.4, Massachusetts Historical Society. All references to the stance of the GGA in this paragraph is taken from this source.

<sup>1898</sup> Henry Parkman Jr. to Shattuck, 11/10/1933, Henry Lee Shattuck Papers, Carton 27, Folder 61.4, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Reformers like himself, Merriam, and Robins would be further sidelined in later years, and Dever would not lead a new form of governance to being. Instead, consolidation of party organizations took place, in which the election of Dever served to further the consolidation of the Democratic organization under George Brennan, and their future development of the Chicago machine. Niebuhr and Lovett were even more accurate than either of them could have expected or wanted concerning the future of Detroit politics. The bigotry that they saw being unleashed in Detroit in 1925 ultimately never went away, and it has left long-term consequences for Detroit that meant a future far more negative than either Niebuhr or Lovett would have ever imagined in 1925. Finally, the GGA planning notes in Shattuck's possession did suggest the future of Boston politics, but not quite in the way the GGA was expecting. The ethnic matters that had been relevant in previous decades began to be sidelined, and the GGA itself would be no more after this election. Instead, the Boston Irish would fight each other on a class basis for political power, and Frederick Mansfield and William Foley would serve as exemplars of the pending middle-class and working-class factions in Boston Irish politics. More important than any specific predictions, however, was the sense that what all of these observers noted both in and about the 1920s would take hold and serve to remake urban politics in ways that none of these observers could fully anticipate at this time. In these ways, the power of the 1920s becomes apparent, as the world that Ickes, Niebuhr, Lovett, and the GGA knew would be swept away, and would have a new political system take root to replace it.

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