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Political Bosses and Machines in the United STates

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POLITICAL BOSSES AND MACHINES IN THE UNITED STATES

by
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An Independent Study
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
University of North Dakota
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May
1975

This Independent Study submitted by Paul Harold Jensen in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The American political scene is an unique potpourri of political occurrences that have flourished under the freedom democracy offers. But throughout the history of the United States, none has been as uniquely American as the era of boss rulers in the cities. The political "machine," a powerful institution in American life, thrived in the years between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of World War II. During this period, all American cities, large and small, were at one time or another under the control of a political machine.

In its classical form, the machine is a thing of the past, although Chicago may be considered a notable exception in most respects. But nowhere else does this political phenomenon still control municipal government as it once did. While in many cities party organizations continue to conduct campaign activities, handle patronage at all levels, and nominate candidates for public office, the power they once maintained is no longer there.

But regardless of its present or future role, the machine is worthy of study because of the large part it played in the history of this nation during its years of growing into the giant it is today.

Another major reason for further study is what Chester I. Barnard dubbed, "equilibrium of incentives." As any other formal organization, the machine offered a combination of inducements (friendship, jobs, favors, protection, money) that elicited from various classes of actors (voters, precinct captains, ward leaders, elective officials) the actions the organization desired. It then used these actions to replenish its supply of inducements so that the system was able to breed itself. "Because of its heavy reliance upon personal, material inducements, the machine represented an extreme--and therefore analytically interesting--type of organization. Analysis of the extreme is likely to be productive of insight into the 'equilibrium of incentives' of other kinds of party organization, including those that are very unlike it."[1]

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[1]Edward C. Banfield, Editor, Urban Government--A Reader in Administration and Politics (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 166.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

Throughout the study of any era, one is inclined to try to characterize or categorize in some way the people and methods that banded together to make the period of time so interesting. In all the literature pertaining to city bosses in the United States, a number of recurrent characteristics continually arose that are worthy of note.

The most unlikely trait considering the heights reached by these men in public service was their lack of formal education. "Colonel" Edward Butler of St. Louis was the most noteworthy case, having admitted to never having attended school at all. Many never got beyond the grammar grades and some did not even approach that. Martin Behrman of New Orleans, when including night school, received an education equivalent to the mid-high school years. Philadelphian Israel Durham's education also included only a portion of high school. Pittsburgh's Chris Magee managed to enroll as a special student at Western University without having graduated from high school.

A noteworthy few fared far better, although in no way commensurate with the educational levels achieved by the high public office holders of today. New York City's

George Olvany attended business college and later received a law degree from New York University. "Doc" A. A. Ames of Minneapolis received his medical degree from Chicago's Rush Medical School before entering public life. Undoubtedly the scholar of the group was San Francisco's Abraham Ruef. After graduating with honors at the University of California, he went on to post an excellent record in law school at the same institution in attaining his law degree.

Ancestors in public life and families of note do not appear to have aided these men in achieving their political prominence. Quite contrarily, most seem to have worked for everything they achieved. They were men of the present rather than the past. Only three bosses claimed relatives of distinction. New York City's Richard Croker could claim a governor of Bermuda, a member of the British House of Commons, and a British army major among his ancestors. From an American standpoint, C. L. Magee was the most distinctive. Included in his family tree was Peter Hogg, an associate of George Washington in the French and Indian Wars, David Hogg, a Revolutionary army fighter and frontiersman, and Robert Hogg, the county commissioner of Allegheny County in the early nineteenth century. The family of "Doc" Ames were leaders in Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio. A brother of his father, who was a frontier physician and leading promoter of the Episcopal Church and Masonic Lodge, later served as an American consul in Europe. In addition

to these three, Brooklyn's Hugh "Old Man" McLaughlin's father helped build Fort Greene during the War of 1812, and Gotham City's "Honest John" Kelly married into the family of Cardinal McCloskey, the first American cardinal.

In keeping with the lack of family distinction, few bosses came from families of any means. "Doc" Ames, whose father was a physician, had the only father to follow a profession. The parents of Edwin "Duke" Vare of Philadelphia and Roger C. Sullivan of New York City's Bowery were farmers, and Pittsburgh's "Senator" William Flinn's father engaged in public contracting. New York City's notorious William Tweed's sire made chairs and was part owner of a brush manufacturing business. The elder Kelly ran a failing grocery store, and Boston's "Czar" Martin Lamasney's father was a tailor. The list goes on. Richard Croker's father was superintendent of stables at the prison on Blackwell's Island, "Judge" Olvany's father labored as a boss truckman, and the fathers of "Judge" Durham, Chris Magee, and the "Curly Boss" Abraham Ruef milled flour, made hats, and sold fancy goods respectively. The fathers of Cincinnati's George Cox and New York City's Charles "Commissioner" Murphy were casual laborers.

Whether it had an effect on their tastes for power later was debatable, but it was surprising to note that a number of the bosses lost their fathers at an early age and consequently were forced to assume at least part of the burden for the family's support. Sullivan, Kelly, Cox,

Lomasney, McLaughlin, and Magee were left fatherless at 7, 8, 8, 11, 13 and 15 years of age respectively. Martin Behrman was an infant when his father passed away, and Vare, Flinn, and Sullivan were in their early teens. Edward Butler emigrated to the United States alone at eleven years of age, and because of lazy or unskilled parents, Croker, Murphy, Philadelphia's "King" James McManes, and Chicago's Frederick Lundin went to work at early ages to help support their families.

Another characteristic that undoubtedly affected their careers in politics was the longevity of residence in the municipality later served or "ruled," whichever is more appropriate. Every one of these men resided in his particular city by his nineteenth birthday, with many having lived in his particular city since infancy.

With the possible exception of gang membership and penchants for fisticuffs, the boys who became city bosses showed no interest in activities that were not innate of either youths of the day. Seven were leaders of gangs. William Tweed led the "Pig Tailers," Croker the Fourth Avenue Tunnel gang, and Tim Sullivan a powerful East Side aggregation. Murphy, Lomasney, McLaughlin and Cox guided less notorious gangs. But in keeping with more conventional youthful activities, Murphy, Cox, and Lamasney organized baseball teams. Other meritorious endeavors included John Kelly's acting in Shakespearean plays and in defense of

when it be stated that only two passed the four million mark."[2]

Of course, the other extreme was prevalent, also. "Honest John" Kelly, in spite of his opportunities, was only worth about $500,000 at his death. Edwin Vare's property only amounted to $595,191, and "Colonel" Butler only managed to accumulate $800,000 in his career. And though the "Honorable" William Tweed admitted on the witness stand during his legal battles to having amassed a personal fortune of $2,500,000, he died virtually penniless. Although Timothy Sullivan was credited with being a millionaire at the time of his death, his estate turned out to have been long insolvent after years were spent untangling the estate. "Doc" Ames was the pauper of the group, although he did not die bankrupt. His total assets, including all personal belongings and bank accounts, only amounted to $1,413 at his death.

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[2]Harold Zink, City Bosses in the United States

CHAPTER III

BOSSES OF THE DAY

Tweed

The most infamous and corrupt in the entire history of city bosses was the "Honorable" William Marcy Tweed. He also held the distinction of being recognized as the first American municipal boss. His career ran the gamut from nearly absolute domination of New York City to a sentence of twelve years in prison and fines totaling $12,750 for the corruption he was best remembered for, namely, the enormous thefts of his "ring" from the city's public treasury and the corruption of ballots in every one of the city's twenty-two wards.

Born April 3, 1823 in New York City, Willie Tweed was the youngest child in a family of three boys and two girls. Since his great grandfather had crossed the Atlantic from his native Scotland, every Tweed generation had resided in New York City.

Tweed's political ambitions may be traceable to his boyhood activities as a gang leader and volunteer fireman. Known as the "Pig Tailers," his gang justified their existence by stealing pig tails from meat and provision shops. His volunteer fireman days helped found the Americus Fire

Engine Company Number 6, more commonly known as the "Big Six." Since both organizations took active part in the politics of the day, it is believed Tweed's political appetite may have been whetted during his formative years.

Tweed's political career began in 1850 with an unsuccessful run for the office of assistant alderman, losing by less than fifty votes. Success came two years later as Tweed was elected to the board of aldermen of the Seventh Ward. He soon became recognized as a leading spirit by his peers, which included a group known as the "Forty Thieves," so nicknamed for its penchant for outlandish speculation and bribery. Tweed's career in politics and corruption had truly begun.

From here Tweed desired to climb the political ladder and sought election to the United States House of Representatives. Although elected, Tweed did not find the Washington, D.C. atmosphere to his liking. Most likely, the unpleasantness was tied in with less opportunity for profit than he found in his native New York City. So at the conclusion of the Thirty-third Congress, he returned home jobless to the city he loved but with which he had grown out of touch.

After a defeat at the hands of the "Know Nothings" in an unsuccessful attempt to gain an aldermanship, 1857 again brought a period of political prosperity for Tweed. Of note was his position on the New York City board of supervisors and the county board of New York from 1857 until 1870.

With his political career again on firm ground, of note were his life style and deficiencies. At five feet, ten inches, and nearly 300 pounds, Tweed was an imposing figure. In spite of his size, he worked hard, once declaring, "Idleness is my aversion."[3] He sported brown hair, a mustache, and a neatly trimmed beard, and loved expensive materialistic luxuries, including massive jewelry, two elaborate Fifth Avenue residences, a yacht, and silver-fitted mahogany stables at his country abode. Despite his use of liquor, profanity, and keeping the company of a mistress, Tweed never used tobacco and seemed to campaign against its dangers.

Historians list his weaknesses as excessive vanity including an insatiable appetite for flattery and a poor judge of men. Many of the people he surrounded himself with took advantage of these shortcomings with continual praise and crippled Tweed's effectiveness at times. "He was a 'pure disciple of political expediency and policy,' and absolutely without scruples during the height of his political career, and inclined to be superficial in certain respects."[4]

With his appointment to the board of supervisors mentioned above, Tweed consciously directed his attention to the construction of a political machine.

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[3] Ibid., p. 103.

[4] Ibid., p. 104.

He decided the existing Tammany Hall offered more than any machine he could set up, so he concentrated his efforts on its capture. He began his project in the early 1860's until 1869 brought the culmination of his efforts--appointment as grand sachem in the Tammany Society. Using the energy of the hall on political matters, Tweed's political power finally came into its own. During this period, he began to manage state conventions and legislatures from a luxurious suite of rooms at the Delevan House, for which he paid a weekly rent of $500, obtained a seat on the Democratic state committee, and sat as a delegate at the Democratic National Convention.

By the end of the 1860's, Tammany Hall and Tweed's power reached its zenith. In 1868 with John T. Hoffman, governor of New York, A. Oakey Hall as mayor of New York City, George G. Barnard, Albert Pardozo, and J. H. McGumm on the bench, and the Board of Supervisors, the Board of Aldermen, the School Board, the street department, the city comptroller, the corporation counsel, the treasury of the city and county, and a powerful faction in the state legislature all subject to his beck and call, William Marcy Tweed indeed ruled New York City absolutely.

1869 brought the start of the rampant corruption that marred Tweed's reputation and career. His "ring" as it grew to be called, employed a system of robbing the city and county of New York of large sums of money. Their major means

of making money was through the use of padded bills. "Rake-offs" by the supervisors reached a zenith in 1869 of 65 percent, with tradesmen receiving 35 percent of all bills. When the charter of 1870 replaced the board of supervisors with a board of audit, the 35-65 rate remained the same. By admission of the ringsters, this system robbed the city of as much as eighteen million dollars at one point. Tweed generally kept an honorarium of 25 percent for himself, and allowed the remainder to be divided up among his colleagues.

Tweed's later problems with the law brought to light the injustices he had perpetrated the city. For example, J. H. Keyster and Company received by record $1,149,874.50 for repairing fixtures in a new court house. Among the most absurd fees was the $138,187 paid to Andrew J. Garvey for two days of plastering in an iron building. Other examples included payments of $7,500 for court house thermometers, and $179,729.60 for forty chairs and three tables.

As might be expected, this corruption led to Tweed's downfall. A disenchanted compatriot of Tweed's took damaging evidence to the media, which the powerful and influential New York Times began to publish by installment.

The public placed little credence in the startling accusations until Samuel J. Tilden, with the help of famous cartoonist Thomas Nast, picked up the banter. Tweed's finish was not long to follow.

While his cohorts in crime were taking necessary vacations in foreign resorts, a confident Tweed remained to fight the onslaught, feeling no one could touch anyone as "honorable" as he. But the press, public, and Tilden failed to hold Tweed with the same reverance, and by October, 1871, forced his arrest.

In spite of the fact that Tweed employed the eminent William Fullerton as his counsel, along with a rising young attorney, Elihu Root, the jury found the "Honorable" guilty on two hundred and four counts. As mentioned earlier, that totaled twelve years in prison and $12,750 in fines.

It was upon Tweed's entrance to Blackwell's Island to serve his prison sentence that he uttered his now famous replies to the questions of the warden: "Occupation?" "Statesman." "Religion?" "None."

But prison did not bring the end of Tweed's legal entanglements. After one year in prison, the court of appeals managed his release by refusing to sanction cumulative sentences. Nevertheless, immediate re-arrest followed, and Tweed faced civil trial, made possible by a special act of the New York legislature, in a suit to recover six million dollars. In spite of the defense offered by another distinguished lawyer of the day, David Dudley Field, the state won a judgment of $6,537,117 against "Honorable" Tweed.

Lundin

The city of Chicago is often synonymous with boss rule. The present mayor, Richard J. Daley, is responsible for much of the notoriety in this area, but he is an exception. He is a man past his time. So let us look at one of the more typical bosses of the day.

The word typical is not an altogether appropriate introduction to Frederick Lundin. Also known as the "Silent Boss," "Poor Swede," and "Congressman," Lundin was the exact opposite of the stereotype of the big-faced, overweight, Irish boss who began with a gang of toughs and employed might all the way up the political ladder.

Born in Sweden in 1868, he emigrated at age eleven to the United States and settled with his family in Minneapolis. Within a few months they moved to Chicago where Lundin spent the rest of his life. Despite scarcely two years of schooling, Lundin handled English fluently. He possessed a tremendous administrative ability, and was extremely industrious, with an effective touch of tenacity.

A soft drink maker by trade, Lundin was forced into politics in an attempt to protect his "Juniper Ade" from imitators. Therefore, he successfully ran for the 11th District seat in the state senate in 1894, and won reelection two years later. This was noteworthy in that the 11th District had traditionally been Democratic, but the appearance of Lundin changed the character to Republican which remained as such through 1922.

But a disasterous attempt in 1910 for a congressional seat prompted the "Poor Swede" to announce his retirement from politics, despite talk that he would be the Republican candidate for mayor of Chicago.

Little did Lundin realize his political career had hardly begun. 1912 saw him make connections with William Hale "Big Bill" Thompson, one of Chicago's most famous and colorful mayors. After Thompson's unsuccessful candidacy for commissioner of Cook County, the "Congressman" urged him to set his sights on the office of mayor in 1915 and promised to direct the campaign if he would run. For three years, Lundin devoted practically every day and night in preparation for the election. His efforts were well rewarded, as Thompson was elected by a plurality of 147,977, the largest for a mayoral election in Chicago up to that time.

With Thompson in office, Lundin suddenly set aside his open manner for one of recluse, taking on the character of a "Mystery Man." He flatly refused his choice of any of the jobs at the mayor's control, but consented to serve only on a patronage committee which he dubbed the "committee of kicks." In such a position, Lundin accepted an extremely precarious job but a very powerful one, too. With twenty thousand or more jobs at the mayor's disposal and a labor situation of 200,000 unemployed workers threatening trouble, Thompson was more than happy to pass off the responsibility of parceling out the jobs to someone else. The committee was finally comprised of Lundin and two others, with the

"Poor Swede" actually doing all the work. He interviewed job seekers personally, received their applications, sorted them, and made recommendations to the mayor.

Lundin continued his personal transformation. He withdrew even further, exemplified by his refusal to visit city hall for six years. He refused to appear on the streets or in public places, refused to talk to public officials over the telephone, sent out letters with a typewritten signature, and paid bills with currency instead of by check. Instead of receiving callers he employed go-betweens to deliver messages and transact business while he secluded himself in his suite or at his country retreat or in his five-door offices in downtown Chicago. Part of the reason for his silence was his feelings towards the press. He once said he had nothing but difficulty with newspapers and hence refused to talk for publication. Resenting public curiosity, the "Mystery Man" was not willing to admit his political influence and blamed the Attorney General for starting the slogan that he was the "Czar" of Chicago.

In keeping with his personality, Lundin used unconventional methods to gain support for his political machine. Clubs were started and enrolled people of all ages and both sexes by offering inducements of one kind or another. Social opportunities attracted youth, and outings for restless children gained the attention of weary parents. All in all, it created a tremendous amount of favorable publicity for the machine.

Lundin's career and influence reached its zenith in the six years following Chicago's 1915 mayoral election. In 1921, the "Poor Swede" dominated most of the officials of city hall, the office of the state's attorney, the sanitary district, the election machinery, a part of the county officers, and two of the park boards. With the governor of Illinois an ally, much of the patronage in Cook County also fell to Lundin.

But he had seen the apex of his power. 1921 brought the first of a number of political defeats in the next two years that virtually ended the Lundin-Thompson machine. In 1921, the judicial election went adversely to the Lundin camp by approximately one hundred thousand votes. A little later in the year, the usually dependable aldermen voted several measures into practice that were directly aimed against the machine. Also, the board threw out one thousand temporary appointments and at another reduced the large salaries paid to special lawyers in the employ of the city. Two major pieces of legislation which Lundin had given his full support were defeated by the state legislature.

These political setbacks and the defection of Attorney General Brundage and State's Attorney Crowe are given credit for the machine's downfall. In the fall of 1922, Brundage and Crowe made an extended investigation of the machine, and in January, 1923, brought an indictment against the "Poor Swede" for conspiracy to defraud Chicago's Board of Education of approximately one million dollars.

Consequently, San Francisco has had many overlords over the years, but none approached the power wielded by Abraham Ruef for a period of approximately seven years following 1900. As was the case with all too many of the bosses of the era, Ruef's career turned from political advancement through hard work to one of graft, corruption, deceit, money-making schemes, and ultimately prison. Although Ruef pretended to be a public servant of the working class, he actually depended on business firms desiring public favor as boldly as few bosses have ever dared. Public service corporations provided most of his corruptly obtained wealth, with French restaurants, saloons, prostitution rings, boxing trusts, and various other "dives" bringing in the rest.

Ruef was also thought to have been the only Jew to have gained control in the manner of a boss over any of the larger cities of the United States. Because he also prided himself with an elaborate head of curls, for which he spent ample time in the barber's chair, he was dubbed the "Curly Boss." A small man in statute, standing only five feet, seven inches and weighing 160 pounds, his vanity pervaded his personal demeanor. Besides his head of unnatural curls, he dressed immaculately and drove around San Francisco in a sports car nicknamed the "Green Lizard."

A native of San Francisco, Ruef spent his entire life there from his birth on September 2, 1864. He was the most educated of all the bosses of the era. A proven and gifted student all his life, he finished grammar and high schools

at an early age, entered the University of California and graduated with the class of 1882 at the tender age of 18. His excellent academic record gained him admittance to California's law school at Berkeley, from which he emerged with a brilliant record and began to practice law when just of age. Ruef also spoke seven languages fluently, and in college found time for courses of interest to him; Greek, philosophy, art, and music.

Ruef's entrance into public life was not long in following. After a short stint with a political reform club, he soon became convinced of the impracticality of popular government and joined the regular Republican machine. Although he would not obey and constantly made demands for greater recognition, the bosses humored him along for some years and gave him the chance to learn politics from the inside. With a typical twinge of intellectual scorn, Ruef at the end of the period "prided himself on being a young political genius, educated at a University; born master of the ward game, but with the ideals of a cultured mind."[6]

The "Curly Boss" eventually managed to gain control over the Republican organization of San Francisco's Latin Quarter, but until 1901, no further opportunity allowed Ruef to expand his influence.

But when 1901 saw Ruef successfully direct the mayoral campaign of Eugene Schmitz, he had his foot in the door.

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[6] Ibid., p. 352.

Apparently Ruef had raised some eyebrows, as the following message was sent to Mayor Schmitz shortly after his election by Fremond Older, editor of the San Francisco Bulletin. "Tell Schmitz that while I fought him in the campaign he is not to let that linger in his mind, but to remember this--that he has in his hands the greatest opportunity that any politician has had in America for many a long year. If he will be really true to Labor, to the people that elected him, and not associate himself with the evil forces in San Francisco, there is nothing that he cannot achieve politically in the United States. . . . Tell him that, and warn him against associating with Abraham Ruef, for Ruef will lead him astray."[7] Blindly, the new mayor returned Older's correspondence with a reaffirmation of his friendship with Ruef and that they would stand together.

Nevertheless, Ruef carried on city affairs without serious corruption until a second term had been assured his candidates. Along the way, Ruef never missed an opportunity to strengthen himself in the graces of those who sought public favor and were willing to pay for it. Ruef was gaining power and making money, but always explained away any improper innuendos over his relationships in such cases by saying he was merely acting as any lawyer would for his clients. But the volume of business and fees coming his way scarcely fitted his explanation. From an office occupying one room, Ruef's business grew until it occupied a suite of

[7] Ibid., p. 353.

several rooms and employed a staff of five or six legal assistants and numerous clerks.

Although the working class had propelled Ruef to his powerful position, he never seriously concerned himself with their needs except near election time, as their votes did concern him. His energy and time was generated toward corporate interests. In spite of his lack of concern for the working man, the Union Labor Party mysteriously continued to offer its support, and Schmitz won another term as mayor, having again won the consent of the "Curly Boss." This was a remarkable feat considering a combined alliance of Republicans, Democrats, and the Southern Pacific Railroad group were backing Schmitz's opponent, John Partridge. Truly, the 1903 election gave Ruef control over everything in San Francisco proper and surrounding San Francisco County, with the exception of the office of the district attorney and the board of supervisors.

Despite token opposition from the San Francisco Bulletin which was easily dismissed through Ruef's allegiance with certain interest groups, the "Curly Boss" furthered his power in the election of 1905 when he added a majority of the board of supervisors to his ranks.

With his power complete, Ruef became more open in ruling his kingdom and the corruption that followed. One of Ruef's most corrupt deals had to do with the fight trust of San Francisco. Promoters desired permits to stage matches, and being unable to obtain permits through ordinary channels,

they turned to the "Curly Boss" at a retaining fee of $18,000. The permits were issued speedily. Not long after, the Home Telephone Company desired a franchise in the Bay Area, despite the fact that the Pacific States Telephone Company held the franchise through a fee of $1,200 per month payable to Ruef. Undaunted, the Home Company offered Ruef an outright payment of $30,000 and suddenly found themselves with the franchise. A third example was the Pacific Gas and Electric Company's desire to increase their gas rates by eighty-five cents per 1000 cubic feet. Despite public sentiment against such an increase, it became a reality when Pacific Gas and Electric paid Ruef a lump sum of $20,000 plus $1,000 per month.

The corruption spread. Ruef went so far as to organize the board of supervisors into a workable machine to handle the business of obtaining franchises and similar favors. Appropriate bribe money was dispersed as needed. Soon collections from courtesans, gambling joints, and certain French restaurants were flowing into the pockets of the "Curly Boss" and his machine.

Despite this open and widespread corruption, it might have gone unnoticed had it not been for a single incident involving the frameup of the United Street Railways. An outside prosecutor and investigator, Francis J. Heney, was brought down from land fraud prosecutions in Oregon to team with the attorney general to end the Ruef-led corruption in San Francisco.

It was the end of the line for Abraham Ruef. Despite the support of several interests, including a group of bankers, two trials for bribery in 1908 finally put him behind bars at San Quentin under a fourteen year sentence.

CHAPTER IV

A CONTEMPORARY BOSS--DALEY OF CHICAGO

He is called the last of the big city bosses. Actually, he is a man living past his day--some fifty to seventy-five years beyond the era of the political bosses in America. But this has not hindered him. In the tried and true stereotype of the city boss, Richard J. Daley, Irish, Catholic, blue-collar born and raised, and forever an organization man, rules the city of Chicago in the true dictatorial tradition of his predecessors.

While holding a law degree he has never employed, "His Honor the Mayor" has become a dominant political figure in the United States, a household word throughout the nation. It has been said that outside of the years of Democratic occupancy of the White House, Daley has reigned the most powerful Democratic political figure in the country.

Coldly efficient, he exudes the warmth of a January evening. The meetings of "his" Central Committee take on the aura of a religious service. (The Cook County Democratic Central Committee is comprised of the fifty city ward committeemen and thirty suburban township committeemen who run the party. Daley has chaired the committee since 1953.) References of ". . . the greatest mayor in the world. . ."

Central Committee, he decides who runs for office, which also permits him control over the rise of any would-be political competitors. In support of this accusation, it is of note that in the fifteen years he has been both committee chairman and mayor, not a single political figure has risen through the ranks of the Democratic party to a position of being his obvious successor.

He has shied away from the pomp and frivolities his position could so easily accord him. If his status has brought him wealth, he doesn't flaunt it. He resides in his boyhood home in the still blue-collar neighborhood not far from Chicago's slums. A devoutly religious man, Daley stops for mass daily on his way to work and has on more than one occasion dismissed an employee for breaking his personal moral standards. "If one of his aides or handpicked office-holders is shacking up with a woman, he will know it. And if that man is married and a Catholic, his political career will wither and die. That is the greatest sin of all. You can make money under the table and move ahead, but you are forbidden to make secretaries under the sheets."[10] Indeed, even in his younger days while spending eleven years in Springfield as a state legislator, he refrained from the "wine and women" that pervaded the free time of many politicians.

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[10] Ibid., p. 24.

Mayor Daley lives by the creed of "the organization" which is directly attributable to his youthful labors in the party on the way to the top. As a personal secretary in the ward organization, he observed the system at work at the local level. He saw the doling out of patronage jobs to the deserving and the firing of the undeserving; the helping of friends through "a fix" and the punishing of enemies through pressure from city inspectors; the adjustment of a case at the police station; the totaling up of votes until they add up to the desired total; and all the other skills a ward leader must have and not get caught at. These types of things permeate Daley's Chicago.

For example, something is always being built in Chicago. More than likely, instead of needed housing for the poor, it will be edifices which will remain as monuments to Daley, and nomuments which make many contractors rich. When Daley wants a project completed, he approves the necessary overtime pay, night work, and extra shifts, all of which send the total cost to the city soaring. The mayor's reasoning is that it would be a good thing for the people of Chicago if it could be completed by the earlier date. While being superficially true, one must realize it would also be a good thing for the office-seeking Democrats in the upcoming November elections who are able to cut the ribbon at these new projects. What ribbons are their opponents able to cut?

But what of this man who has helped Chicago's political machine weather the destruction that has come to all others

around the nation? How has he kept it from happening in Chicago too?

The central city of Chicago is overwhelmingly Democratic, but the outlying wards (suburban Cook County) are moderately or strongly Republican. With their inclusion, Cook County is only marginally Democratic. Since Daley needs to now expand his area of concern, the old style of boss politics is no longer enough. He must try to carry the country and state for the party. Their loss deprives him of patronage jobs, weakens his power in the councils of the party, and exposes him to the possible attacks of Republicans who might hold the offices of state's attorney, sheriff, governor, and the state legislature. Consequently, in an attempt to draw voters from suburban Chicago, Daley has played down his use of patronage and payoffs, and tried to run "blue chip" candidates for offices outside Chicago's city limits.

Mayor Daley, therefore, has shrewdly chosen the civic projects in Chicago. The street cleaning and lighting, road building, O'Hare Airport, McCormack Place Convention Center, Civic Center, John Hancock Building, and the Sears Tower, the world's tallest building, are all highly visible, and benefit the outlying areas as well as the city. "They did not require much increase in taxes while creating many good paying jobs to be doled out as patronage. The main discontent

over this type of construction came from the inner city, whose political support Daley could count on anyway."[11]

The patronage army is a large part of any political machine. Chicago is no exception. Nobody except Daley knows precisely how many jobs the machine controls. Some patronage jobs require special skills which excludes the employee from political work, but most do not and extra participation is expected. The mayor has circumvented the civil service reform to allow civil service jobs to slip back into patronage by giving tests infrequently or making them so difficult that few can pass.

Nobody goes to work for the city, and that includes governmental bodies that are not directly under the mayor, without Daley's knowing about it. And this influence is not limited to the twenty or twenty-five thousand government jobs. The machine also has jobs at race tracks, public utilities, private industry, and Chicago's bus and subway system (Chicago Transit Authority). He demands to see every name because the person becomes more than an employee: he joins the political machine that will help win elections. And in Daley's eyes, that is part of their jobs.

"Some jobseekers come directly to him. Complete outsiders, meaning those with no family or political connections, will be sent to see their ward committeemen. That is protocol, and that is what he did to the tall young black man who came to see him a few years ago, bearing a letter

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[11]Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 124.

from the governor of North Carolina, who wrote that the young black man was a rising political prospect in his state. Daley told him to see his ward committeeman, and if he did some precinct work, rang doorbells, hustled up some votes, there might be a government job for him. Maybe something like taking coins in a tollway booth. The Reverand Jesse Jackson, now the city's leading black civil rights leader, still hasn't stopped smarting over that."[12]

Daley sits alone atop the machine and views his job as one of keeping all the parts functioning smoothly. It is often difficult to find any differentiation between his political and mayoral duties. One factor that has been the single most important ally of the machine's survival in Chicago is its alliance with organized labor. Labor provides Daley with his strongest personal support and contributes great sums of money to his campaigns.

Besides being a source of employment at top rates for the workers, "His Honor" always appoints at least one labor leader to every policy-making city board or committee. In recent years, the list includes the head of the Janitors' Union on the Police Board, the Park Board, the Public Buildings Commission, and several others. The head of the Plumbers' Union is on the Board of Health and runs the city's St. Patrick's Day parade, a big event for Irishman Daley. The head of the Electricians' Union is vice-president of the Board of Education. The Clothing Workers' Union has a man on the

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[12]Michael Royko, Boss--Richard J. Daley of Chicago (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc.), p. 26.

library board. The Municipal Employees' Union boss is on the Chicago Housing Authority. The list goes on and on.

The other large source of strength for Daley and his machine are the city's blacks, who Daley has found politically exploitable. In differing from their native South, Chicago's blacks are allowed to vote, as long as it is for the Democrat of their choice. The machine's precinct captains go so far as to stroll right into the voting booth with them. The machine's major weapon is the threat, as the blacks are left to realize their failure to vote the right way may mean the loss of their welfare check, public housing apartment, or menial job.

Amazingly enough, despite its complete stranglehold on the city's political life, the machine never fails to run scared. Consequently, vote fraud is rampant. Most of it occurs where the voters are either black, lower-middle class, poor white, or alcoholics. In John F. Kennedy's close win over Richard M. Nixon in the 1960 presidential election, Daley's machine is thought to have turned up votes for Kennedy from people long since deceased and blocks of votes from vacant lots. In some wards, politically obligated doctors sign stacks of blank affadavits, which when filled in, attest to the illness of people they have never seen, thus permitting precinct captains to vote the people in their homes as absentee voters for reasons of illness.

Undesirable political competition is often kept off the ballots from the beginning. Red tape often mysteriously

blocks the path of political aspirants, all of which will be Republicans, independents, or other "foreigners." In speaking of them, Sidney Holzman, long-time head of Chicago's Board of Election once remarked, "We throw their petitions up to the ceiling, and those that stick are good."[13]

Even leading Republicans help the machine in Chicago. Some, such as Charles Percy, now the Republican United States Senator from Illinois, would give nominal donations ($100 to Daley's mayoral opponents in election years) during his tenure as president of Bell and Howell. Others give outright monetary contributions to the machine. Republicans can't do anything for them, but Daley can. And with that type of support of fellow Republicans, their chances for election are slim at best.

And so life goes on the shores of Lake Michigan just as it has the past twenty odd years since Richard J. Daley became monarch.

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[13] Ibid., p. 77.

CHAPTER V

MACHINE STRUCTURE

Any study of the boss era in the United States finds much similarity in the organizational structure of the machines in the various cities. At the risk of generalizing and stereotyping, I will attempt to describe a typical machine organization.

A political machine was a party organization that depended crucially upon inducements that were both specific and material. A specific inducement was one that could be offered to one person while being withheld from others. A material inducement was money or some other physical thing to which value could be attached. Nonmaterial inducements included the satisfactions of wielding power and commanding prestige, doing well, enjoying the "fun of the game," the sense of participation in events, and a pleasant environment. A machine, like any formal organization, offered a mixture of these various kinds of inducements in order to get people to do what it required. But it was distinguishable from other types of organizations by the heavy emphasis placed upon specific, material inducements and its consequent complete control over the behavior of others.

In comparison, business organizations were machines in that they relied largely upon specific, material incentives (such as salaries) to secure dependable, close control over their employees. A political machine was also a business organization in a specified field--namely, the business of getting votes and winning elections. Consequently, the political machine can be said to have been apolitical in that political principle was foreign to it, and even remained a threat to it. D. W. Brogan best emphasized this fact when he said, "The true character of the machine was its political indifferentism . . . . It existed for itself."[14]

Where more than one machine existed in the same city, they did not compete against each other. In truth, they often cooperated in protecting one another from destruction by reformers. Only on election day did their opposing traits come forth.

In its classic form, boss rule (the boss was the leader of a political machine) concentrated control over city government in a hierarchical organization of professional politicians--the machine--which placed its candidates in public office, filled city departments with its appointees, and controlled the actions of the city council.

Besides the common layman's charges of corruption, indifference to public good, and illegal use of power not really his, the boss and his machine were also of significance

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[14] D. W. Brogan, An Introduction to American Politics (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1954), p. 123.

in other areas. It was a vehicle for the centralization of power in city government, a means of providing social services to lower-class, mostly immigrant groups, and served as an organization for the material maintenance of its members. It was in many respects a sociological phenomenon.

The governing body of most cities was some form of city council comprised of aldermen from the various wards in the city. The mayor was usually the presiding officer, although not necessarily the machine boss. In fact, most mayors during the boss era were not the bosses, but rather figureheads for the bosses to manipulate as needed from behind the scenes.

Both of the major political parties functioned through a hierarchy of committees responsible for progressively smaller units: national, state executive, congressional, senatorial, county, city, and township. In the larger cities in question, the city committee functioned through ward and precinct committees, the latter often consisting of one person, the precinct captain.

These local committees were influenced only indirectly by the national organization. The precinct captain was concerned only with the city, ward, and precinct committees. He was on the job in every election, be it congressional, senatorial, city, or ward, but was accountable only to the ward committeeman, who was in turn responsible to the city boss.

The job of precinct captain was to get out the vote for his party's slate and to keep home the vote for the other

party's. He usually had a few hundred voters to keep track of, and was judged by his superiors on how reliable or predictable the party voting was in his precinct.

The precinct captain was chosen by and worked for the ward leader, usually an alderman or elected party official. There were sometimes thirty or forty precinct captains working for the same ward leader, depending on the size of the ward. It was up to this ward leader to recruit these people, manage them, and keep them happy. And for those deserving, he distributed patronage, favors, and protection. He also made himself available a couple nights a week to field problems from his constituency. In short, the ward leader was one of the higher ranking party members in the city. He was always consulted on policy matters and candidate selections that affected his ward.

More often than not, ward leaders held elective offices such as alderman which provided them salaries without taking time from their political duties. Most usually supplemented these incomes with outside interests which were made more formidable due to their political connections. For instance, as an insurance broker, the ward leader might have obtained business from city hall. The thought here was one of "Insurance is all the same price, why not give it to one of the boys?" Or as a lawyer, the leader could pick up lucrative cases in spite of his mediocrity as a lawyer. After all, a mediocre lawyer with "ins" at city hall could get more done

than an extremely bright lawyer who did not. The ward leader who could not find a means of misusing his office for profit was rare.

Innate in the jobs of ward leaders and precinct captains was many hours of visitation, errands, chores and talking politics at the expense of their home life. So in order to get the quality of people needed for the job, the machine was forced to provide special inducements. Precinct captains were often "payrollers," appointive public jobs they would not have had were it not for the party. Some had "no show" jobs--they were paid but not required to show up for work. It had the same effect--the job holders owed their jobs and consequently their allegiance to the party.

But undoubtedly the most binding force for many of these men was the hope of moving up the party hierarchy. Many envisioned one day running for office, hopefully, for alderman.

In retrospect, the machine was run by a coalition of the more powerful ward leaders or by a boss. The boss was usually himself a ward leader who through his control of patronage or by means of other material inducements was able to exercise control over others. As mentioned before, few of these bosses were mayors. But as the era passed, this changed. Cermak, Kelly, and currently Daley in Chicago all wore both hats, as did Lawrence in Pittsburgh. The reason was the increased authority in the mayor's office. The

mayor's office had evolved to greatly influence the police, city budget, contracts, and purchasing. This enabled him to check and ultimately displace any competing, threatening party leader.

CHAPTER VI

THE BOSS, MACHINE MEMBERS AND RUNNING THE ORGANIZATION

The cardinal principles underlying all party organization and their functional traits were all primarily the same, it was only the party labels that differed. And to the professional politician, these labels were not all that meaningful. It was not unusual for machine Republicans to help machine Democrats and vice versa. After all, the future was much longer than the next election, so in respect to each other, the golden rule usually seemed the most sensible course of action.

These men who devoted their lives to the party were motivated by different forces, but most did possess a sociological awareness. The professional politician enjoyed the "feel" of the life he led. And then came the supporting factors, such as power, prestige, recognition, economic gain, love of competition, or personal loyalty to some individual in the organization.

The party organization was strongest where the needs of the voters were most compelling. Consequently, the fundamental work of the party revolved around exploiting the basic wants of the poor. The source of power and the cohesive force of the machine members was the desire for office,

and the office then provided a means of gain. This would seem to account for everything that transpired when considering its employment in the realm of the elected office in the midst of thousands of ignorant, pliable voters.

The career of a machine politician usually began by the acquisition of influence among a group of voters in his neighborhood, or workers at the same place of employment, or socializers of the same saloon, or what have you. By doing this, the politician-to-be had entered a class of the machine called "workers" but more affectionately known as "one of the boys." He had gained the power of influencing people--and votes--and was thus of great use to the machine.

His progression from there depended on his continued ability to control votes, which could bring him the position of delegate to a convention. Party loyalty and conspicuous service at election time helped further his career, too.

Then came the appointment to some petty office in one of the city departments, with the possibility pending from then on to a nomination for elected office.

The next steps of progression involved a seat on a ward committee, then possibly the central committee, having by then surrounded himself with loyal workers who lent credence to his words and deeds. As a member of the central committee, he had reached the power elite who in all actuality ruled the whole city. They controlled primaries, selected candidates, ran conventions, organized elections, and

dictated the political will of the city's politically exploitable poor.

Each man by the time he had reached the central committee was thoroughly enmeshed with a following of loyalists who either owed him something or hoped for a benefit in the future. Besides the physical strength of support, the committeeman had by then learned much in his use to power, such as a working knowledge of men and their weaknesses, and a familiarity with the "powers that be," the bonds of the party.

The aim of these cliques was not only to attain positions for themselves, but to attach themselves to the city by populating its departments and consequently controlling elections to the state legislature which in turn gave them influence over legislation. They were often able to procure statutes to their benefit, and prevent passage of those that were not.

The cliques also nurtured one another to the point of meeting in secret to decide on important matters. The culmination of the group at such meetings was known as a "ring."

The power of the ring was enormous and encompassed the entire city. For example, in the larger cities, thousands of people were employed by city authorities, but all were dismissible by these same authorities for no reason. The ring used this leverage to their political advantage. If the same party happened to reign supreme at the city, state, and local levels, this army of employees was expected to work for the party at election time, primaries, and

conventions. Abstention usually meant the loss of employment. Consequently, the machine had thousands of people at their beck and call.

Within the ring, there was usually one person who commanded more power and held more strings than the rest. He was affectionately labeled the "boss." Like his cohorts, he had worked himself up from humble beginnings. From his days drumming up support at the local taverns, he had attained a position enabling him to deal and gain support from great financiers who helped him with money in return for political blessings the boss bestowed upon him. Any organization needed a leader, one who settled disputes, made decisions in emergencies, inspired fear and loyalty, and stood out as dominant amongst his peers. The boss was such a leader. He was able, then, to reward loyalty, punish mavericks, concoct schemes, and negotiate treaties. Most shied from publicity, contenting themselves with the tremendous power they wielded.

Let us now look at how the typical ring functioned.

A pending city or state election brought the ring's members together to decide on the apportionment of offices. Each member came armed with ideas to help his loyalists. The common party workers were allotted minor positions such as policeman, doorkeeper, or messenger. Such jobs were considered good enough for the average ward worker. Clerkships or positions in the custom-house or post office were saved for those individuals the committee held in higher esteem, as such positions had to be obtained from federal authorities.

The next step, of course, for those deserving were the elected positions such as a seat in the state legislature, city aldermanship, commissionership, or a seat in the United States Senate or House of Representatives.

All such posts to be filled by the pending elections were considered with the object of bringing out a party ticket--a list of candidates to be supported by the party at the polls on election day. A few leading party officials headed in all probability, by the boss, sketched out the allotment of positions, resulting in a final "slate"--a complete draft list of candidates to be proposed for the various offices. Once the slate was made public, changes were often accomodated as complaints were registered. The idea was to secure contentment within the party. Finally, the state was ready for presentation at the convention.

The accepted slate was ready to be turned into the machine's ticket. Little remained but the comparatively easy process of getting the proper delegates chosen by packed primaries and running the various parts of the ticket through the convention.

Internal conflict of the party chiefs was the one great danger to the machine, because unity was the strength of the system. When in harmony, its power was insurmountable. The power of the huge patronage army was the reason, and became mobilized for elections. It concentrated its force on any threatening point where the opposition appeared strongest.

These office-holders and office-seekers had two motivations arousing them. One was self-interest, and the other fear which halted any stirrings of independence. Discipline was strict, and the machine politicians strictly adhered to their own moral codes and standards, although it was quite different from the moral codes of the ordinary citizen. It allowed falsehood, ballot stuffing and corruption. What was not allowed was apathy, cowardice, disobedience, or worst of all, treason to the party. In short, it demanded blind loyalty to the party, its leaders, and the ticket.

The aim of the boss was the power to control people. He was hardly concerned with fame. Patronage was how he did this, not only in the form of salaried positions, but also such areas as the disposal of lucrative contracts. He was surrounded by partisans seeking wealth and/or a salaried position, and the boss placed upon himself the responsibility of providing them with exactly that. As he found these jobs, he strengthened his own position.

His relationship to bosses of other parties was professional, and never allowed hostility to seep into the relationship. Often deals were made between bosses with each faction coming away from election day with specified offices under wing. An appearance of hostility was maintained for the benefit of the public to cover up these bargaining sessions.

The boss, however, saved his hostility for factions within his own party. The faction often demanded a share of

the spoils from the votes the party controls. Such conflicts usually ended in compromise. But reformers, those within the party who wouldn't settle for a compromised share of the spoils, drew the wrath of the boss in all its fury. They were permanent enemies, each seeking the political extinction of the other. These reformers were often handled by the machines of both parties in the city, as even the political machine of the opposing party saw these reform movements as a threat to their system of politics. They would rather see their opponents, the machine of the opposite party, win the election than win it themselves with the aid of reformers from the other party. The system was the most important aspect to maintain.

CHAPTER VII

PRIMARIES--THE MOST VITAL ELECTION

No real grasp of machine politics or power could be understood unless one realized the importance of primary elections to the precinct executive. Without a doubt, they were more important than the general election, and the reason they were of primary concern to the precinct captain was the same reason they were also of equal concern to the ward executive, the district leader, the boss, the machine, and the country as a whole.

As today, the popular tendency of people was to regard primaries as the concern of politicians, and not of real interest to the average voter. Nothing could have been further from the truth. That attitude played right into the hands of the machine. Fewer votes were cast, and consequently, the machine had fewer votes to control.

Primaries were the key to politics. To get on a general election ballot, candidates had to get through the primaries. With this in mind, it should be seen that the general election was ultimately run by the machine. So long as the machine controlled the primaries, it was in a position to limit the choice of the voters in the general election to its own choice in the primaries. This was the secret of the machine's power. And as long as the cycle continued,

the machine remained in power. Defeating its candidates in the general election not only did not break its grip, but often did not make a dent in its armor. The machine continued to function after a general election defeat just as it had as long as it could nominate its candidates.

Government in the United States at all levels was government by parties, and under our system, parties were essential. In all states the two large parties--the Democratic and Republican--were recognized by law. These laws provided that "those parties shall hold primaries, which are preliminary elections, participated in exclusively by party voters, for the purpose of nominating party candidates."[15] The only way in which candidates got on the ballot at the general election, other than through direct nomination in the primaries, or through nominations by conventions composed of delegates chosen in the primaries, was by petition signed by a designated number of voters. This gave a candidate a place on the ballot as an "outsider," but was usually not resorted to because of its small chance for success. Nothing short of a miracle could carry an independent candidate to victory. His only effect on elections was usually through damaging the chances of other major candidates. He could pull sufficient votes from one side or the other to swing the

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[15] Frank R. Kent, "How the Boss Runs the Organization," Urban Government--A Reader in Administration and Politics (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 201.

election against one of the party nominees, but rarely was he himself elected.

Approximately 99 percent of all candidates for all offices were nominated as a result of primaries. Obviously, then, in 99 percent of all elections, the choice of the voters in the general election was limited to the choice of the voters in the primary elections.

The fact that the regular primary voter was also the machine voter would seem to say something about the machine's influence on all elections. It was this influence at the "grass-roots" level through which it derived its real power. It was not fallacious to say that the bulk of municipal, state, and federal office-holders had been elected or appointed to these offices because of the support of the party organizations or machines.

The potent thing of concern here and politically about machine men was that they voted. That was the real secret of machine power. Every election day, regardless of wind or weather, "hell or high water," they got to the polls, cast their straight organization ballots, and they were counted. Voting was a business matter to them. And more importantly, they were primary election voters, not just general election voters. As long as the average voter failed to participate in the primaries, the power of the machines was invincible.

CHAPTER VIII

CORRUPTION--DELIVERING VOTES

Outside of the monarch image synonymous with the concept of the city boss, corruption was easily the most common thing the average American associated with this era of American life. For the record, it should be noted that the regimes of many of the American bosses were not corruption laden. There were numerous examples of bosses, who although autocratic in every sense of the word, were honest, hard-working men dedicated to advancing the best interests of their particular cities. But the fact cannot be denied that many of these bosses were surrounded, and in all too many cases, were active in deeds of corruption. From the most flagrant case of New York City's "Tweed Ring" to the more sublime of the smaller cities, corruption was a black eye to the boss with which the boss era was forever branded.

A basic function of any political machine was to deliver votes. This was done through a variety of means, many of which were unethical. Aldermen and precinct workers relied on a close personal relationship--a type of plastic friendship--with the people in their districts. These friendships were relied upon heavily for delivering votes. After that, there were further steps taken. For example,

there were many "favors" offered at appropriate times of the year--turkeys at Thanksgiving, hods of coal at Christmas, and so on--with which the machine was actually buying votes. The famous settlement house worker, Jane Addams, summed this up quite ably when she once remarked,

> On the whole, the gifts and favors were taken quite simply as an evidence of genuine loving kindness. The alderman was really elected because he was a good friend and neighbor. He was corrupt, of course, but he was not elected because he was corrupt, but rather in spite of it. His standard suited his constituents. He exemplified and exaggerated the popular type of a good man. He had attained what his constituents secretly longed for.[16]

The political machine had a long history of exploiting the poor and uneducated to its political advantage. Working-class people, especially immigrants unfamiliar with American ways who were coming to the United States in droves during this era, were always the mainstay of the machine. The areas where these people lived were termed "delivery wards" for obvious reasons--the machine could easily deliver their votes on election day. These "delivery wards" were without exception the "skid-row" districts, slums, poor and run-down river areas, old warehouse areas, and railroad yards. Almost without exception, the lower the average income and the fewer the average years of schooling in a ward, the more dependable was the ward's allegiance to the machine. These areas were so completely void of articulate, socially accepted,

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[16] Jane Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics (New York, 1902), p. 254.

and educated leaders from within that the machine politicians had the community to themselves.

Also without exception was the fact that these wards sat a long social and geographical distance from the "newspaper wards"--those comprised of the higher income, educated people whose vote was influenced by the printed word. As one moved out from the "skid rows" and river districts into lower-middle class districts, then into the middle-class ones, and finally (usually the suburbs beyond the city proper) into the upper-middle class territory, the machine's influence decreased until it failed to exist.

Another accusation of the boss era was its promulgation of various vices, crime, and the rackets. These were "big business." All one needed to do was compare the combined number of nurses and physicians in the United States, realizing they were outnumbered by prostitutes by one or two hundred thousand, to know just how big the vice rackets had become. Once it was realized that these businesses were only morally distinguishable from legitimate businesses, not economically, it was easy to grasp why the political machines of the day offered much the same functions for both.

Placing moral judgments aside, both "legitimate" and "illegitimate" businesses were both concerned with the provision of goods and services for which there was an economic demand. As in any market-oriented society, it could only be expected that as demands for goods and services arose, so did appropriate enterprises to supply them.

Of concern here was the fact that the machine offered the criminal, vice, and racket clientele an atmosphere free to pursue their economic capabilities without governmental interference. Just as big business contributed funds to ensure a minimum of governmental scrutiny, so did big rackets and big crime.

So to both "legitimate" and "illegitimate" businesses, the machine offered identical protection. There was a market demand for goods and services for which the owners were concerned with maximizing profits while that demand lasted. Consequently, there arose a need for control of government interference which could hinder the business activities, and for a powerful body to provide effective liaison between business and government. All this the machine offered.

As for the immense wealth through embezzlement or the like that bosses and their compatriots compiled, the legends were legion. The graft of William Tweed in New York City was infamous. As Tweed exemplified, the machine to many meant wealth. To the slum dwellers, the machine meant petty jobs, favors, and protection. To precinct leaders and ward workers, it meant soft jobs, and an "in" at city hall. But to the few who controlled them, the machines were a way of making money.

Despite the fact many bosses were corrupt, with Tweed being the extreme exception, most of these men were not wicked. In all fairness, they were victims of the morality of their environment. They saw opportunity to wealth, fame and

power and they took it. Although most avoided the grosser forms of corruption, many had to wink at them when practiced by friends and associates. This type of boss is most certainly portrayed by Chicago's Mayor Daley. Although claiming to have never taken so much as a nickel, the injustices occurring daily in Chicago government are legend.

CHAPTER IX

PICKING THE TICKET

Placing as many machine people on the city payroll was a primary goal of the boss. Getting the jobs for its people after all the toil of getting them elected was what the machine was all about. After all, a lot of work and expense went into building the machine, controlling the primaries and working to elect the ticket after nomination for someone else to get the jobs in the end.

Political organizations ran politics because of the lack of active interest and participation on the part of ordinary citizens. The boss went just as far in the patronage matter as he could, which was directly proportional to the indifference of the voters.

Although machines remained intact despite general election defeats, no machine would follow a "loser" indefinitely. Consequently, the boss tried to load the ticket in the primary with the right mixture of incompetents that could get by in the general election, but no more! To have done that would have been deliberately courting defeat. Invariably, in designing the machine-supported primary ticket, the boss looked for men of sufficient stature and independence not only to command a certain degree of public respect

but also to carry the incompetents or "muldoons" for the bulk of the offices without arising suspicion.

It was a delicate decision and took a wise judge of the overall situation. The boss wanted a ticket that would win, but at the same time, he wanted candidates who when victorious, would not emerge independent and remove he and his machine from city hall.

It was when it came to picking the head of the ticket--candidates for mayor, governor, or judges--that the boss used the most care and judgment in his choice. He knew the head of the ticket was usually what the public used to base its opinion of the whole ticket. If the head of the ticket was a strong enough candidate of known integrity, the rest of the ticket could be loaded with "muldoons."

This practice was known as "perfuming the ticket" or putting a "clean collar on a dirty shirt." In other words, the machine was as clean as, but no cleaner than, the sentiment of the community allowed it to be. As with all aspects of machines, it got away with what the voters tolerated.

CHAPTER X

FINANCES

Besides the services of party workers and voters, the political machine needed cash. From what has been viewed of the machine's techniques so far, one can correctly assume that its means for making money were both reputable and disreputable. But the need constantly remained, nevertheless. For example, even before these days of inflation, the election of a single alderman could cost the machine as much as $40,000. So how were these funds raised?

The legitimate sources of revenue were many. One method was through the assessment of salaries of people who owed their jobs to the party. A type of tax was levied upon these office-holders, varying from one to five per cent of their annual salaries. Even policemen, office boys, and workmen in federal dockyards, whose salaries were meager at best, were known to "give."

Public subscriptions were another legitimate method. Contributions were obtained for important elections from individuals and organizations who wanted to be on good terms with the party or honestly desired the party to win. These contributions may have been given in spite of a feeling of

suspicion for the men running the machine, disapproval of its methods, or no personal fondness for any of the candidates.

Exceptionally audacious machines occasionally obtained appropriations from the city not for the purpose of the city or state, but solely for its own election. It was not thought necessary to bring such an appropriation into the regular accounts to be laid before the public. Actually, just the opposite was the case. Precautions were taken to prevent the item from ever appearing. It was a method available only when machine officials had control of the public funds, and could not have been resorted to by the opposition.

There were also numerous fund-raising events which brought in considerable amounts of money to the machines. Picnics, boxing matches, and golfing days were examples of this type of function.

However, political machines never shied away from more shady means of raising revenue. Contributions were obtained from men who expected something in return. Contractors, for instance, had an interest in getting pieces of work from the city authorities. Railroad men had an interest in preventing state legislation hostile to their lines. "This means of revenue raising was only available for important elections. Its incidental mischief in enabling wealth to control a legislature through a ring was serious."[17]

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[17] James Lee, "Rings and Bosses," Urban Government--A Reader in Administration and Politics (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 188.

Businessmen may have desired a change in a zoning law, a permit for a tavern, or a tax adjustment. Such favors were publicized as "paid for" favors, and some instances surfaced which showed fixed price schedules.

Whether the money so received went to support the party or to personally support the ward committeeman, the alderman, or their political cohorts was seldom discernible. In many wards no real distinction could be made between the coffers of the party and the pockets of the boss.

The most profitable favors were those done for illegal enterprises. Besides raising revenue, it gave protection to gambling joints, unlawful taverns, and houses of prostitution. Some politicians even joined with racketeers to form crime syndicates. A by-product of their activity was the systematic corruption of the police forces, which in one way or another either bribed or discouraged officers from doing their duties.

CHAPTER XI

SOCIOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION

Apart from the actual working of political machines, sociologists have come to some interesting conclusions about their existence; why they flourished, how they flourished, and the sociological reasons that made that particular time span in American history vulnerable to such a phenomenon.

Sociologists agree the machine served certain latent social functions. These were unintended functions, but ones that would have been served by other means had the machine not been so readily available to fill the need.

There was little doubt that political machines violated the moral fibers of the people of the United States. The patronage system was diametrically contrary to the American ethic of impartial job choice through impersonal qualifications. The boss and his workers violated the common belief that votes should be cast by the individual upon appraisal of the issues and candidates involved, not due to loyalty to a boss or sold for petty favors and hollow political friendships. Probably the most difficult thing of all for Americans to swallow was the bosses' propensity for protecting crime.

The obvious question, then, is how did these political machines continue to exist? The sociological answer to this

is relatively simple in that the political machine satisfied basic latent functions. The boss, as the head of an organization committed to the centralization of power, had the opportunity and the power to satisfy the needs of diverse groups in the community that were not adequately satisfied by socially approved structures.

Much of the problem has been traced back to our founding fathers. They feared the consequences of highly centralized power and saw it as a threat to freedom. Therefore, they erected barriers to preclude any concentration of power. This tendency carried down from the national to local levels, and as a consequence, when particular people or groups needed something done, there was no one with enough authority to help them. The machine offered an accessible alternative. This seemed to be a natural offspring of the system of government that was left to the American people, for even when decisions and action were implemented under the law, they were burdened by legal considerations and ramifications. Consequently, the machine emerged as a type of human system of government, a system all too preoccupied with the circumvention of government controls. The illegality so rampant in the political machines was merely a balance to the legality of the structure of democracy.

Through the constitution, political power in this country was dispersed. Powers were separated among different branches of government, tenure in office limited, and rotation in office encouraged. In view of this, Edward M. Sait

stated, "Leadership was necessary; and since it did not develop readily within the constitutional framework, the boss provided it in a crude and irresponsible form from the outside."[18]

It was a fact that the political machine derived its strength from the grass-roots levels of the local communities, going out of its way to avoid treating the local electorate as vague masses of voters. With a sociological instinct, the machine recognized the voter as a person living in a specific neighborhood with specific personal problems and wants. To the people, public issues are abstract, remote, and best left to others for resolution. They were only concerned with private matters which were concrete and pending. Therefore, the machine was highly successful in gaining strength through direct relationships between local representatives of the machine and the voters of the community rather than through generalized appeals to the public at large.

It should have grown clear that basically, what the machine did was transform politics into personal ties. In our impersonal society, the machine fulfilled the important social functions of humanizing and personalizing all manner of assistance to those in need. The precinct captain could provide local constituents, when necessary, with foodbaskets, jobs, and legal advice. He smoothed over minor scrapes with the law, helped a bright poor boy receive a political scholarship to a local college, and helped the bereaved. In short,

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[18] Edward M. Sait, "Machine Political," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, IX, p. 659a.

he gave the appearance of a friend who not only knew the score, but one that could do something about it.

Going one step further, one needed to look past such aid to see why the precinct captain's help was so appreciated. After all, there were welfare agencies, settlement houses, legal aid clinics, free hospitals, public relief departments, and immigration authorities that offered help apart from the machine. But it was the professional techniques of such workers that raised resentment in the minds of the community. These helpers were constant reminders of the cold, impersonal bureaucracy that so frustrated people's lives. The precinct worker, on the other hand, offered the same help without asking questions or snooping into private affairs.

In this struggle between alternative structures for fulfilling the same function of providing aid and support for those in need, it was clearly the machine politician who was better integrated with the community he served than the impersonal, professionalized, and legally restrained welfare worker. The people viewed the precinct worker as "one of us," while the welfare worker usually came from a different social class, educational background, and ethnic group, and was constantly battling a label of aloofness.

Furthermore, the precinct captain added to his appeal through an ability to manipulate official organizations, acts which the professional people had no ability to affect. Boston's famous ward leader, Martin Lomasny, summed this all up in colloquial terms when he said, "I think that there's

got to be in every ward somebody that any bloke can come to--no matter what he's done--and get help. Help, you understand; none of your law and justice, but help."[19]

Moving on from the deprived classes, then, brings us to the second subgroup served by the machine--that of business. To business, the machine's political privileges meant immediate economic gain. Although the public utilities were the most notorious in this regard, private sector business concerns played a large part, too. Corporations were desirous of avoiding the chaos of uncontrolled competition. The machine offered them the security of an economic czar who could control, regulate, and organize their competition.

The needs of business, as found in the poor people of the cities, were not adequately provided for by conventional and culturally approved social structures. Consequently, the machine came to be able to provide these services.

The third subgroup served by the machine was a special group whose social mobility had previously been hindered from advancement by the existing social structure. To these people, the machine offered alternative channels of social mobility. As was a well established fact, American society placed tremendous emphasis on money and power as measures of success. It was subgroups and ecological areas notorious for their absence of opportunity in these two areas that turned to the political machine for satisfaction. With manual labor being the only socially accepted means available to

[19]Lincoln Steffens, The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1931), p. 618.

them for attaining success, their frustrations of visualizing themselves in a place in the white-collar world led them to achieve what they considered success in life by whatever means were available. And the political machine made means available to them.

This success satisfying function was fulfilled by the sheer existence and operation of the political machine. It was through the machine itself that these individuals found their culturally induced needs satisfied. Therefore, the machine was not simply a political body bent on profits and hunger, but one that also provided a means to compete in the race of "getting ahead" in life for people that would have been otherwise excluded from competing.

CHAPTER XII

REASONS FOR CHANGE

For whatever reasons, the boss ruler disappeared from the face of America's cities with the notable exception of Richard J. Daley in Chicago. No longer does a lone man control the very heart of our cities. The systems of government have overtaken these lords and now run our cities more as was intended. The reasons for the decline of the era of the bosses lends itself well to this discussion.

Undoubtedly, the major reason for the decline of the political machines in the United States was a growing unwillingness of the voting populace to be bribed. As educational levels increased, the petty favors and "friendship" of the precinct leaders no longer served as a strong enough medium to secure votes. Besides educational exposure, immigrants began assimilating more successfully, public welfare programs were extended dramatically, and per capita incomes rose due to postwar prosperity. All these factors left the previously machine-exploitable poor with more than they had ever known. Consequently, the former petty favors declined in value as inducements for these people who no longer needed to hand their votes to the nice people who would clothe, feed, and protect them during times of need. Instead of

turning to the precinct captain for help, these same people now had social workers to help iron out problems, people who could guide them to unemployment compensation, aid to dependent children, old-age assistance, and similar helping hands. The precinct captain's Thanksgiving turkey had become a joke.

This was not to say that there still weren't favor-seeking people in America's cities. But their numbers dwindled so as to be hardly noticeable on election day. They were, of course, the slum dwellers, "skid-row bums," extremely impoverished, criminals, and borderline criminals. With times changing, there was little the machine could do for such people except give them information on where to go for help.

The strength of "friendships" in swaying votes also no longer made the impact it once did. The changing ethnic make-up of previously all-white inner-city communities was part of the reason. White precinct captains could hardly expect to form the type of friendships they did before. He was even afraid to venture into black neighborhoods at night. A simple solution was the black precinct captain, but this alternative hurt the machine. The American addiction to television surprisingly enough, also hindered precinct leaders. The captain who visited a family in the evening interrupted its nightly viewing and was forced to either stay and watch in silence or move on. Either way, precious little was accomplished.

The changing class character of the voting public also had a significant impact on the decline of the machine. The value of the vote to the voter increased. Except for the down-trodden inner-city, the proportion of middle-class people was greater than ever before. Since machine-style politics, even at its apex, never worked in middle-class neighborhoods, the downward plight of the machine's influence was, therefore, inevitable. These people thought of themselves as well informed, able to make up their own minds, independent, and didn't need the precinct captain's help to be admitted into the county hospital or to get out of jail. In short, they resented his attempts at persuasion.

In accordance with this increase in the size of the middle class, you also had an influx of the Anglo-Saxon-Protestant ethic which emphasized honesty, impartiality, and efficiency. This affected the political situation in America. If, as seems probable, the majority of the remaining lower class assimilated to the middle class life, the extinction of the machine as once known was a certainty.

There were also contemporary examples, apart from Chicago, where machines failed to compensate for society's changes and were destroyed. Most can be traced to greed for money. For example, the Pendergast Machine in Kansas City was ruined by Tom Pendergast's penchant for heavy gambling which prevented the machine from taking its "cut" in local concerns.

Others failed to adapt because their leaders waited too long to begin reform. Such was the case in the early 1950's in Carmine DeSapio's attempts to remodel New York City's infamous Tammany Hall. By then, the power of the machine had withered away to such a degree that DeSapio could not make the kind of changes that would have saved the organization.

There were also built-in disadvantages for the reforms that caused the machines a disservice and contributed to their ultimate demise.

The constitutionally supported concept of dispersal of authority, which the machine fought, was advanced by the new Protestant ethic mentioned above. In order to overcome this decentralization of authority, systems of inducements were developed by the machine as a means of centralizing influence. But, while LaGuardia's reforms in New York City, Clark and Dilworth's in Philadelphia, and Daley's in Chicago strengthened administrative authority, they ultimately weakened the influence of city government as a whole. Consequently, the machine reforms served to actually decrease their exercise of political power.

Still another reason for the demise of machines was its increasing dependency on other sources of influence. With the shrinking size of the lower class, the politicians turned to newspapers, civic associations, labor unions, business groups, and churches for support. For the first time, support was being sought from non-political sources,

which when projected into the future could only cause problems. Campaign funds were not from salary kickbacks and the sale of favors, but from rich men and from companies doing business with the city. Department heads and any other city administrator who commanded the support of professional associations and civic groups became indispensable to the mayor and were therefore more difficult for the mayor to control. And the "spoils of office" no longer went to "the boys" in the delivery wards, but rather in the form of urban renewal projects, street cleaning, and better police protection for the "newspaper wards."

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

With all its shortcomings and misdeeds, the machine served certain functions for the period that allowed it to thrive. It provided through informal means for the centralization of power necessary for the city administration to govern effectively when the formal governmental structure provided for decentralization of power and responsibility.

Also, the machine provided representation at city hall for interest groups whose voices might not have been heard under other more "pure" forms of government. In an era when business dominated both the economic and political spheres of activity, the immigrants, minority groups, and the generally poorer segments of society were heard by those in positions of authority. The machine, with its free load of coal in winter and its food basket at Christmas, also acted as a sort of public welfare agency for the city's unfortunates, a not inconsequential function in the years before social security, old age pensions, and unemployment compensation.

Granted the political machine had its good as well as its seamy side, but the fact remains that the old style political machine has declined in importance in most American

cities, and in most cases the powers and prerogatives which the machine assumed have been consumed by the mayor.

The rise of the middle class and the development of government welfare programs have severely limited the number of people susceptible to control by the machine, the result of which is that there are no longer enough "deliverable" wards to swing city elections at the will of the machine.

A phenomenon of the past, the political machines and their bosses have, nevertheless, left indelible marks on the cities of the United States. And with a knowledge of the past, we hopefully better the future.

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